

# Independence Community Foundation and JPMorgan Chase Award \$410K to Expand FIRST Programs in Central Brooklyn



Left to right: Aisha Nance, PS 21; Noel Kriftcher, executive director of Poly's David Packard Center for Technology and Educational Alliances; Andrey Ivannikov '08CpE; Vikram Kapila, associate professor, Mechanical Engineering; and Thomas Smith and Principal Thomas Anderson, both of PS. 21. The school took first place in the Team Spirit Award at the NYC FIRST Lego League Championship Tournament.

**THANKS TO THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THE INDEPENDENCE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF NEW YORK AND JPMORGAN CHASE, STUDENTS LIKE AISHA NANCE AND THOMAS SMITH OF P.S. 21 IN BROOKLYN ARE BEING INTRODUCED TO THE WONDERS OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.**

The Independence Community Foundation and JPMorgan Chase have awarded grants of \$300,000 and \$110,000, respectively, over two years to NYU-Poly to bring For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST) programs to 13 public schools in central Brooklyn as part of the Central Brooklyn Robotics Initiative (CBRI).

Marilyn Gelber, executive director of the Independence Community Foundation, explained: "We created this initiative to match a great Brooklyn institution with strong and dedicated central Brooklyn middle and high school principals who are striving to advance their students' math, science and technology skills. By utilizing the engaging and challenging FIRST robotics concept, we hope to make it fun for students to learn the skills that can inspire them to believe that they can be creators of new technology, not just consumers of it. As Brooklyn's largest philanthropy, we hope this \$300,000 investment will be a catalyst to building collaborations between Brooklyn's colleges and universities and public schools, and can serve as a model of how private philanthropy can play an active and productive role in inspiring new partnerships."

During the 2007 and 2008 academic years, teachers from participating schools received training at Polytechnic to become teacher-coaches for FIRST LEGO League and FIRST Tech Challenge teams. Under the direction of Vikram Kapila, associate professor, Mechanical Engineering, and Noel Kriftcher, executive director of

**Central Brooklyn Robotics Initiative Participating Schools, 2008-09**

- PS 11
- PS 21
- PS 81
- PS 233
- PS 399
- PS 636

**Bedford Academy**

- MS 113
- MS 267
- IS 318
- IS 383

- Urban Assembly Institute of Math & Science for Young Women
- Benjamin Banneker Academy

Polytechnic's David Packard Center for Technology and Educational Alliances, NYU-Poly science and engineering students partnered with these schools as team mentors to serve as a technical resource for the students ages nine to 14. Students strengthen their understanding of science, technology, engineering and math while learning to use the Internet and other resources to study competition topics, present their results and test their robotic creations.

"JPMorgan Chase is proud to partner with the Independence Community Foundation and Polytechnic to give students the hands-on experience of technological innovation," said Seth Edwards, vice president of community relations at JPMorgan Chase. "Our \$110,000 grant is an investment in the participating schools in central Brooklyn and we will continue to work with our partners to explore other opportunities that will benefit these students."

Dr. Lester Young Jr., a trustee of the Independence Community Foundation, Regent-at-Large for The State University of New York and the former superintendent for central Brooklyn schools, noted that CBRI is an opportunity that will have a powerful motivating effect on students from central Brooklyn. "It is a clear example of what can be accomplished when concerned groups collaborate on behalf of our children," he said. "Independence Community Foundation, JPMorgan Chase and NYU-Poly are to be saluted."