

Long Island Volunteer Hall of Fame

Archive Project

Inception to Induction

School-Business Partnerships of Long Island

Year of Founding: 1984

Issue Addressed: Creating opportunities for businesses to share responsibility for school change and curriculum reform

Induction Category & Year: Education, 2007

Founder: Fred Breithut

Personal Quote: *“We don’t have kids building robots...we use the technology required to build robots to open and strengthen the minds of our children, preparing for the 21st Century!”*

History: In 1984, Fred Breithut started a nonprofit organization that he envisioned would bridge the gap between the skills learned in school and the skills needed to succeed in the workforce. Thus, he began the School-Business Partnerships of Long Island.

In 1993, SBPLI conducted a demonstration project called the TEAM Project. This was created to offer high school dropouts an alternative to a life of crime by offering the coordination needed for agencies to provide these youth with the proper counseling and case management. SBPLI received a \$300,000 grant to run the program for 3 years. The overall number of incarcerated youth who are or become repeat offenders is 48% of the population; of the 300 young people who were involved with TEAM Project, only 1% was repeat offenders. This program saved taxpayers over \$1,000,000. After the three year grant was over, Nassau County funded the project for another two years.

Just six years after TEAM Project was started, SBPLI came up with another way to help teens on Long Island. In 1999, SBPLI collaborated with the FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics Competition to help bring together the Long Island Regional FIRST Robotics Competition. At the time, there were just eight schools on Long Island who participated in this competition. Today over 40 schools in the Long Island area, including programs in the New York City boroughs and up-state New York, and even reaching as far as New Jersey and Pennsylvania are brought

together annually by these two organizations. The winner of the regional event earns the opportunity to move on to the National Competition. Each year SBPLI collects over \$200,000 in donations from government and private donors towards the competition. At last year's competition, over thirty scholarships were given out from schools such as MIT, Harvard, Boston University, and Princeton.

Since 1984, SBPLI has successfully and effectively worked with over 100 major companies and organizations on Long Island and raised millions of dollars to help thousands of students reach their potential.

Agency Mission: The mission of SBPLI goes further than just teaching kids about how to build robots; it helps prepare them for the future and it teaches them the skills needed in today's workforce. Students are paired with some of Long Island's best engineers for this project, who take the teen's ideas and teach them to turn their dreams into a reality.

SBPLI has also helped greatly in the classrooms of participating schools, boosting funding for science and technology programs and reforming the curriculum, to give each teenager, not just those who compete, an opportunity to reach their potential. This is accomplished through the program SBPLI that linked businesses with high schools. This gave them the opportunity to help the community by reforming the curriculum, and sharing the responsibilities of school change. They help to develop new approaches to improve the quality of the teachers in these schools, as well as helping to improve learning outcomes by establishing new organizational patterns and management strategies for the schools.

Volunteer Involvement: All but two positions in the company are held by volunteers, who give their time and effort to help the children build the robots for the competition and organize all the details for the events. Ninety percent of volunteers have been involved for over ten years.

Affiliate Organizations: FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology)

Funding Sources: It costs over \$200,000 to run the Long Island Regional FIRST Robotics Competition each year, as well as almost \$10,000 for each school to be able to compete. While the programs receive almost half of the funding from the government, that still leaves more than \$100,000 in funds that is needed to allow these programs to run smoothly. Each year SBPLI works vigorously to collect funds to organize their programs, reaching out to companies all over Long Island like Motorola, Teachers Federal Credit Union, FESTO, BAE Systems, and Northrop- Grumman and to solo sponsors such as Senator Owen Johnson. Aside from soliciting major donors, SBPLI host two fundraisers annually: a golf outing, and the other, 60 over 60. This is a fund raiser which honors 60 individuals over the age of 60 who have contributed greatly to Long Island, while raising money for the 60 over 60 of tomorrow. Funds are not the only thing donated to the organization. This year, Hofstra University donated the space to hold the Robotics Competition, and will be hosting forty- seven schools and thousands

of people who will flock to this event. You can also make a personal donation by visiting the website listed below for School-Business Partnerships of Long Island.

Contact Information:

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FIRST — For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology

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**Submitted by:
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