

# NEWS release

Santiago Canyon College

8045 E. Chapman Ave., Orange, CA, 92869-4512

June 13, 2011

For immediate release

Contact: Judy Iannaccone

714-480-7503

iannaccone\_judy@rscsd.edu

## Santiago Canyon College Robotics Team Advances to Finals in Global Technology Competition

(Orange)—In July, a four-member student team from Santiago Canyon College (SCC) will travel to New York City to showcase their inventive idea that uses technology to tackle one of the world's most pressing humanitarian problems—disaster response. The SCC team will represent the United States in the finals of [Microsoft Corp.'s Imagine Cup](#), the world's premier student technology competition.

This year, more than 350,000 students from 183 countries registered for the international competition. Of those entries, 124 student teams were selected as finalists in the contest and advanced to the July 8-13 Worldwide Finals event to compete for international recognition and a piece of \$215,000 in cash prizes. The Imagine Cup categories include Software Design, [Embedded Development](#), Game Design, Digital Media, Windows Phone 7, IT Challenge, Interoperability Challenge, Windows 7 Touch Challenge, and the Orchard Challenge.

The SCC team Syntax Errors includes 49-year-old Gary Kelley, Jr. of Santa Ana, 20-year-old Hayden Donze of Orange, 41-year-old Dale Laizure of Anaheim, and Bill Vetter of Orange. The four will compete in the [Embedded Development](#) category against teams from 19 other countries, including China, Germany, India, Japan, Pakistan, Russia, Taiwan, and the United Kingdom. Embedded programming is used in consumer electronics from videogame consoles to digital cameras, to DVD players and GPS receivers and printers. Household appliances, such as microwave ovens, washing machines and dishwashers, often rely on embedded systems to provide flexibility, efficiency and additional features.

The SCC team was born out of computer science study group led by Ron Kessler, SCC associate professor of computer science. According to Kessler, the group has devoured the content of three of his computer science classes since last fall. Kessler, who volunteers to lead the group, says that despite the passion of the group, its numbers were not enough to fill a class so he committed to ensure that the members' thirst for knowledge was met.

"It's incredibly rewarding," says Kessler. "They are motivated and smart; you don't get a chance to often mentor students on this level."

Last fall, one of the group's members came in with the idea of entering the Imagine Cup competition and four members quickly formed the team and submitted a proposal to Microsoft. Their proposal was a turnkey solution that enhances communication and logistics for first responders in disaster relief efforts.

Syntax Errors envisioned a self-contained workstation that could catalog, manage, and track resources in real time using wireless local area network (LAN) and radio frequency identification (RFID) technologies. F.R.E.D. (first responders embedded device), housed in a toolbox-like case, is a battery-powered asset manager with GPS capability providing the user's exact location. Its database driven

system will allow first responders to track key resources—water, food, medical, personnel, supplies, and equipment—tagged with a RFID tag and within proximity of the reader. As if that weren't enough, F.R.E.D. has a solar panel to increase battery life, its own light, a wireless router, and a power inverter to change a DC power source to an AC power source.

SCC's team is one of five teams from the United States to advance to the finals in all categories. The teams are Arizona State University in Software Development, Ithaca College in Game Design – Web (Silverlight), Rice University in Game Design – Mobile (Zune/Phone), and a team with members from UCLA, University of California, Davis, Harvard, and the University of Central Florida in Windows Phone 7.

The Imagine Cup Worldwide Finals, now in its ninth year, will be held for the first time in the United States. Microsoft will cover the travel costs for more than 400 competitors to attend the competition, which will focus on using technology to help solve the toughest problems. The finalists will be able to attend special training sessions, meet peers from around the world, and participate in volunteer and cultural activities in New York.

“I cannot tell you how exciting it is to think that out all of the students that entered from all of the huge technology colleges around the country, a team from Santiago Canyon College will be representing the U.S.A. in the embedded competition in the worldwide finals,” says Laizure. “It seems unbelievable, like a dream come true.”

His teammates wholeheartedly agree. “To say I'm excited about the competition would be a vast understatement,” says Donze. “I'm elated and proud,” says Vetter. “Learning that our team has been selected to go to the finals representing SCC and to solely represent the U.S. in the embedded competition is amazing,” says Kelley.

In the coming weeks until the worldwide competition, Syntax Errors will be working hard to prepare for the grueling competition. They will be training at the Microsoft facility in Irvine to polish their presentation skills to be at the top of their game for the international competition. Whatever happens in New York, the members of this technology team from a community college in Southern California know that to get this far they have beat some of the brightest and sharpest minds from the most prestigious colleges and universities on the planet.

### **About Santiago Canyon College**

*Santiago Canyon College is a public community college of Rancho Santiago Community College District, serving the residents of Anaheim Hills, Orange, Tustin and Villa Park. The college provides education for academic transfer and careers, courses for personal and professional development, and customized training for business and industry. The college is offering a new 15-unit certificate in Applied Robotics and Embedded Programming to help students gain entry-level positions in engineering and development companies.*

###