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EcoBot students with teacher Jennifer Reyes at Lights On Afterschool! breakfast.

EcoBot Students Attend Breakfast to Promote After-School Activities

October 22, 2010

Students from the New Caney Sixth Grade Campus took part in a civic leadership breakfast to kick off a national campaign called *Lights On Afterschool!*, which raises awareness of the need for monetary support for after-school programs. It was held in Houston Thursday, October 21. The annual EcoBot competition called the All-Earth EcoBot Challenge, www.ecobotchallenge.com, was specifically highlighted as an after-school activity. It's designed for fifth- through eighth-grade students who learn to build, program and operate autonomous robots. The program culminates on April 16, 2011. EcoBot students at the breakfast included New Caney 6th grade students Riley Andrews, Skyler Christian, Kali Simpson, and Michael Steichen, YES Prep Gulfton from Houston ISD, and Alice Johnson Jr. High School from Channelview ISD. Houston Mayor Annise Parker welcomed the group and offered her support for after-school programs through a prerecorded video message. After the breakfast, the students gave a robotics demonstration.

The kids met the presidents of various energy and engineering companies, including Jason Few, president of Reliant Energy, the presenting sponsor of the 2010 All-Earth EcoBot Challenge. The students had a great time!

In greater Harris County as in Texas, 26 percent of children in grades K-12 are responsible for taking care of themselves after school. Currently the federal government contributes 11 percent of the cost of after-school programs while 29 percent of children in the programs meet the definition of low income.

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