

## Union College

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### Building a better robot

Sixteen area middle school students are spending this week learning how to build their very own robots as part of the ninth annual "Robot Camp."

"Robotics is a burgeoning industry that has been compared by experts to the computer industry's growth 40 years ago," said Fernando Orellana, the camp's director and assistant visiting professor of Visual Arts. "This camp is an excellent doorway for young students to become familiar with the basics of robotics, engineering and computer science to perhaps one day lead the way in this promising new field."



*Christine Farrell '09 works with John Kowalski, 13, from Farnsworth Middle School in Guilderland.*

Each day from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Steinmetz Hall, students learn to solder and program in PBasic as they take a bag of parts and transform it into a working Micromouse or Carpet Rover Robot. The camp also includes sessions on general

robotics and demonstrations of working robots developed at the College.

Among the campers are 12-year-old Hannah Wistort and her 14-year-old brother Zack. Their father is Peter Wistort '85.

"My dad found the camp online and I knew it would be fun," said Wistort, a student at Van Antwerp Middle School in Niskayuna. "I've always been interested in robotics and electronics."

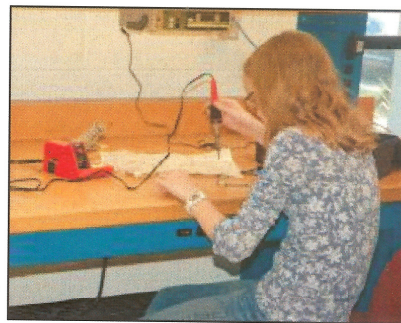
Union students and recent alumni help out, including Christine Farrell '09, Sarah Mueller '09, Tristan Beeble '07 and Andrej Vrzal '07, who plans to return to the Czech Republic in August to pursue a Master's in Cybernetic Measurement.

The camp, which is sponsored by the department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, wraps up Friday with an exhibition for parents and the public at 3 p.m. at the Schenectady Museum.

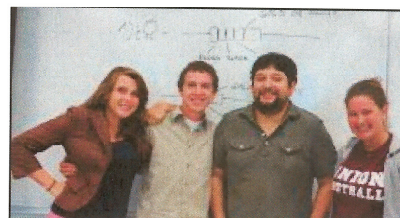
The cost to attend the camp is \$350, which includes the robot kit, software, programming cables, a manual and lunch. Partial funding is provided by Lockheed Martin.

For more information, visit <http://doc.union.edu/RobotCamp/> or contact Orellana at (518) 388-6473 or [orellanf@union.edu](mailto:orellanf@union.edu).

[Capital News 9 Coverage](#)



*Hannah Wistort works on her robot Monday.*



*Sarah Mueller '09; Andrej Vrzal '07; Fernando Orellana, assistant visiting professor of visual arts and Robot Camp director and Christine Farrell '09 at Robot Camp 2007.*