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PRESS RELEASE

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Awesome Fund Grants are Big Investments

Literacy for Freedom – \$1,840
Students Kinsley Pratt, Isaac Draper
Faculty Advisor Keenan Jones

Literacy for Freedom is an exciting new club forming at North Junior High, tapping into the collective energy of young Black males to discuss their history and their place in today's world. Through novel studies and literacy strategies, Language Arts teacher Keenan Jones will guide conversations ranging from social justice and Hip Hop to the value of an education. *Literacy for Freedom* is designed to offer and reinforce the tools for navigating today's America – a place that does not fully embrace or understand these young men's perspective, nor provide them with an adequate supply of role models. This safe space will enable students to build confidence, delve into self-reflection, and increase social skills through the study of literature relevant to them.

Westside Rovers Robotics – \$1,520
Student Paul Bremer
Faculty Advisor Geoffrey Boeder

A \$1,520 HEF Grant may not seem like a huge amount of money but for a growing robotics program, it's a big long-term investment. A student from The Westside Rovers, West Junior High's FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) robotics competition team, requested the grant to purchase a full FTC Regulation Playing Field complete with competition obstacles. The Rovers is now one of three teams of eight students at WJH, with another team based at North Junior High, and all will share this portable practice field. Coach Geoffrey Boeder, WJH science teacher, says, "The field provides an authentic space for testing the team's robot designs, coding and sensors as students prep for competition, as well as offering the ability to host outreach activities at all the district's elementary schools." These four junior high teams, one of which is the first all-girl

robotics team at Hopkins, fill the gap between Hopkins' long history of high school robotics – the Technocrats - and the FIRST Lego League teams at the elementary schools.

In addition to hands-on, engaging STEM experiences, Hopkins robotics is developing a strong legacy of mentorship. The junior high teams began last year when the Technocrats' two captains, Arianna and Jenna, approached Boeder about helping them start a junior high program. In addition to coaching, Boeder is now FTC Robotics Program Coordinator, and The Technocrats have been instrumental in guiding and inspiring their younger peers. The program is excited to have grown so quickly and looks forward to continued growth in providing these positive experiences for Hopkins youth.

Photos included

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The Hopkins Education Foundation's Awesome Fund '**Empowers Student Clubs to Do Cool Stuff**'. It provides modest grants to registered new or existing Student Clubs to pursue ideas/projects that help other students, enhance the community, or heighten students' educational experience and their interest in school. The Awesome Fund is supported by a generous Hopkins alumnus, a matching donation from his employer, and the family & friends of Ethan Lang (Class of 2009).