

I was nine years old when I first encountered VEX. My mum took me to an Open Day. I spent my time wandering around in awe. The robots seemed so hi-tech with metal, nuts and bolts and wire everywhere. It looked really confusing but fascinating. I was hooked.

After that I made mum take me to more scrimmages! Sadly, I was only a spectator because my school did not run the VEX programme.

Eighteen months later I was introduced to the Free Range homeschool team. They invited me to join which was fantastic as they are considered amongst the best in New Zealand. At the weekly meetings I watched the team build the robots, helping wherever I could. Then there was fundraising. All this was new and exciting.

Gradually I became increasingly involved. By Nationals I was the coach of the C-bot. It was intense. Going up against great robots made the game extraordinarily exciting. Every move counted. Mistakes could not happen. The C-bot made the quarter finals while the A and B robots won the event!

Then came Gateway. We discussed and experimented with designs, gradually improving. The Robotic World Cup in November was awesome. Our teams finished first and second which I think was great.

I am 12 now. VEX has given me new friends, knowledge, exposure to programming and interaction with experts in STEM. My mum and I continue campaigning for my school to join VEX. I really want to share with others what I have discovered.

By Aarone Koshy, team 2921