VEX was a way to break stereotypes. I never thought of doing robotics because I was blonde, I did okay in school, but people didn’t expect me to be smart. And so I stopped expecting it from myself. I got involved in robotics when my friend asked for my help at meet by scouting the other teams for potential alliance partners. This was the first time I had ever experienced robotics firsthand and I loved it. It was all math and science in the form of tactical learning. At the end of the meet she asked if I wanted to start coming to practice with her. I’ve been doing robotics ever since. Being part of robotics made me realize that I liked feeling intelligent. I got more involved and found that I liked computer science and started looking into that as a major in college.

Robotics also means people. I used to be insecure with people or crowds. During meets, hiding in a corner is not an option. As part of this team, I had to be talking to teams, looking at robots, and making alliances. The more I did this, the more comfortable I became with crowds. I got to know the people on the other teams and, at the risk of sounding cliché, I made new friends.

The most important thing robotics did was help me push myself. Everything else was liberating, but the best part was that it gave me the chance to prove myself to me.