**Zachary Conte**

VEX, boy I like the sound of that word. Throughout my school experience everything has always been about who is the best, and therefore is always a ton of barbaric-like, competition. Now I play sports, so I’m pretty competitive. VEX is my escape from all of this. Through VEX my leadership skills and ability to work in a team has grown immensely. I have learned to solve problems, not alone, but through sharing my ideas freely with my team.

Aside from VEX being my escape, building robots is pretty awesome. I fell in love with VEX the first time I had heard about it. I was literally “hooked on VEX!” The idea of having a problem and solving it through building a robot was thrilling. Once I got into the program, it was better than I had ever imagined.

Although we are only halfway through the year, VEX has made me rethink some things. I have spent the last few weeks since our first tournament working on a scissor lift system with my team. All of this has made me want to become a mechanical engineer. I had no knowledge of any of the mechanics of how things work before I joined VEX. Now I see things through new eyes. I hope to grow up and create new engines with the best gas mileage ever. I can’t wait until next year, so I can be the one to spread my knowledge and inspire the incoming seventh graders.