

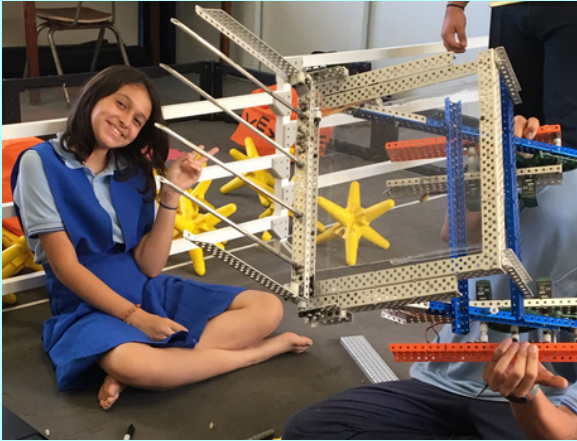
The Little Charlotte



**GIRL POWERED: IN HER WORDS
STORYBOOK CHALLENGE**

A STORY BY ALEXA M. ZARAGOZA

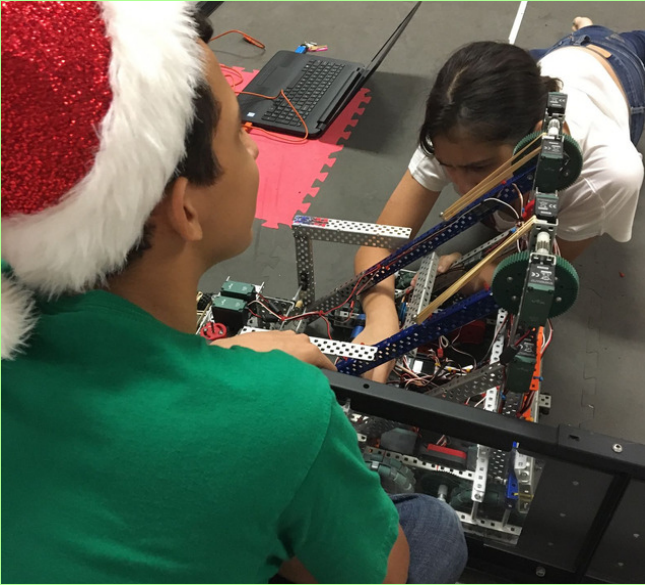
About the author...



Hello! My name is Alexa M. Zaragoza-Torres. Currently I'm in Middle School at Hogar Colegio La Milagrosa in Puerto Rico. Three years ago, started a great adventure... Robotics. I never imagined how many wonderful things we can learn. From simple drawings to scaled drawings, from learning the names of tools to using them correctly, I learned that making mistakes is part of the learning process and offers us an opportunity to try again. I have learned how valuable teamwork is. Through the years in robotics I have understood that STEM skills are the most important tool in the development of our society. In this process, we, the girls involved, can demonstrate how sensitive a field can be dominated by boys. It is important that we shout out loud: we are needed in engineering, technology, mathematics and science ... We can bring our talent, our interest and above all our commitment to achieve a better society.

With this story, I want to share my career in robotics, the most significant moments, and my biggest dream: Make possible that my team can participate in VEX Robotics World Championship for a first time. I want that through my story the girls can feel the emotion and the challenge that it means to be a robotic girl!!

Prologue



"The plane to Kentucky will take off in 15 minutes. Thank you for choosing this airline for your flight." Charlotte listened attentively to the stewardess's words. The butterflies in her stomach fluttered more than usual. Only once in her life had she been this nervous and that moment was her first time at PRIOR Summer Camp two years ago. She never realized that she would go so far and even less, that her job would be one of the most important ones: Programming.

Her memories of how she started in the world of Robotics remain very fresh, including her first tournament as a programmer. What madness! How the years had passed without being noticed.

Story

Two years ago

Charlotte does not know how or when her friend Angy convinced her to go to a summer camp. She thought there was nothing special about this camp because everything was related to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics came with a boring teacher. She was angry at herself for accepting, but it was too late.

Her mother parked the car in front of the university where summer camp would be. Charlotte got out of the car with her bag in hand, said goodbye to her mother, and headed for the assigned room. Inside she found a smiling Angy sitting at a desk.

She sat down in the chair next to her and smirked.

"Well, I think we're all here," said a young man about twenty years old. "Hi guys. My name is Adam and I will be your camp leader. Before starting, I will be dividing you into groups of four." Everyone looked at the camp leader confused. "What did he say?

Divide us in groups?" thought Charlotte. She felt like some "magical" butterflies had suddenly appeared in her stomach. "I have chosen the groups. I've went with your ages," said Adam.

"The groups are:

Group 1- Charleen Jops, Saraí Cruz, Joseph Buz and Katherine Johnson.

Group 2- Michael Cruz, Micaela Díaz, Brian Granger and Rose Stone.

Group 3- George Taylor, Gerhard Giles, Isaac Hans and France Hudson.

Group 4- Leyranís Isis, Celaena Gregory, Angelina Fox and Charlotte Trinity.

"At least Angy is in my group," thought Charlotte, hearing her name after her friend's.

Day 1:

July 2, 2013

Charlotte entered the room and the first thing she found was to Angy with two other girls chatting. "Who are they?" she wondered. She then remembered the groups and realized that they were the other two girls belonging to her group.

"Charlotte!" cried her friend Angy. Charlotte returned her greeting with a smile. She approached Angy and introduced her. "Hey, they are Law and Cel."

"Hi," said a timid Charlotte. "My name is Charlotte."

"Hello. I'm Celaena Gregory," said the girl with reddish hair and emerald eyes.

Camp week had passed. For Charlotte, Angy, Cel, and Law had been one of the worst weeks yet. They built the robot they were sent to build, but not in the right way. The Skyrise game was a challenge for our skills. For this, they gained a few scoldings from the camp leader and a nickname: "The group of fools". Adam made some small competitions in which Charlotte's group got last place. Of course! He told all the groups that they had to do a freelancer. The old Charlotte did not even know what that was. She vowed to investigate what a freelancer was and how it works.



"Hey, what are you thinking?" asked Thomas.

"Umm... nothing important" Charlotte said. "How do you feel?"

"Nervous" he answered, taking a seat in the chair next to her.

The tanned boy with jet-black hair played with his hands as they waited for the plane to take off. Thomas and Charlotte were classmates since elementary school, but their friendship started in high school. Charlotte, seeing how her friend's nerves ate him alive, decided to talk to him. "You'll do fine. We will do well," she said calmly.

"I know but..."

"If you tell me you're just scared, I recommend you keep the words," Charlotte replied. "I'm scared and terrified, but I know that if I can't go to the VEX Robotics World Competition this year, I will go crazy."

"Who doesn't? Two years trying to go and always getting the same result..."

"But not anymore," Charlotte whispered.

"I know," Thomas replied. "And that's what terrifies me."

"What? That your dreaming? Well, it's not."

"I'm not stupid, you know," Thomas said.

"Actually I would not be so sure about that," Charlotte answered.

They burst into laughs. The whole plane looked at them with confused faces. Most belonged to people from other countries that did not speak their language. They did not care.

Their friendship makes them do crazy things.



Again Charlotte was lost in her thoughts...

Little Charlotte stared in confusion at the screen of her computer. "Will this help me to program the robot?" she asked. The young woman called Celine nodded. "It will help you a lot. If you put in enough effort, believe me that you will be a great programmer."

What a bundle of nerves they were! HER FIRST COMPETITION WILL BE IN FIVE MINUTES! "Ready?" Angy asked. "Skyrise, it's our first year so don't worry if we don't win." "Of course we will get far," Charlotte answered. "I know I have the best team coach and the best driver."

"Thank you."

"Team 2263D, please stand on the track," a young woman called through the megaphone.

"Come on, Charlotte!" Angy shouted. "We have to go. Greg is there with the robot."

"Charlotte!" shouted Thomas.

"What's up?" Charlotte asked.

"Nothing. It's just that you were daydreaming. What were you thinking?"

"About my first competition."

"The one where you beat the two schools in San Juan?"

"Yes. I remember how Angy made me and Evan nervous," said Charlotte. "I was remembering how Angy yelled at Evan about where he had to go. Then he realized that she was just nervous."

"It was the second best game I ever had. I bet the first one is why we're here," Thomas said smiling.

"You're right. I will never forget that competition."



The programmer and coach Charlotte, along with Thomas, the co-driver, and Evan, the driver and leader of the team were next to their alliance 011111A in the Latin American finals. Their opponents were none other than another team of their own school and the alliance of these.

“Very good. I think everyone already knows the rules. Two matches and pass. Well, ready blue?” he looked at the opposing alliance and they nodded. “Ready red?” The red alliance nodded.

“Ok, the game starts in 3, 2, 1.”

The game began with Charlotte’s team’s robot moving towards the front with the intention of knocking down the stars on the opposite side, then catch the stars in the back and the alliance catching the cube. The opposing alliance only made two points because one of the robots was damaged.

“Red Alliance, the winner of the autonomous,” said the referee.

“The next game will start in 3, 2, 1.”

“Evan's blue eyes focused on the robot as it began to move. The clamp grabbed four to five stars at a time. The base moved very fast and its alliance cast five to six stars. The red alliance finished emptying the track in 15 seconds, but just then the robot dropped a wheel. Charlotte's team opened their eyes.

They expected anything but that.

At that moment, the referee let them remove their respective robots. Charlotte's team quickly repaired the robot. The shaft had twisted in a very unpleasant way. They had to ask for 2 minutes to be able to change the axis. Evan and Thomas were in charge of changing it because Charlotte is not very skilled in the assembly. Just at the moment the clock marked 15 seconds, finished mounting the wheel. They did a quick review of the robot and changed the batteries. Later, after finishing the "review", they took the robot to the track.

Charlotte put the robot in a different position than the first time. It would make a different autonomous. This time, the robot would take the bucket and the others would throw the stars.

"All right. Blues ready?" The opposites nodded. "Reds ready?" The alliance and the little girl's team nodded. "OK, let's start in 3, 2, 1!" The autonomous began and as expected the red alliance won.

"At least we got four guaranteed points" Thomas whispered. "Ok, the game will start in 3, 2, 1!" The game started. The red alliance had the advantage, but that did not stop the blues from giving everything they had.

"Evan at 20 seconds you get up," said Charlotte.

"But Al told me not to."

"I don't care what the mentor said. You're going to do it because I see this game even."

"All right. Tell the alliance to go for the cube when there are 30 seconds remaining.

"Okay." Charlotte spoke in a whisper with Esteban, the coach of the allied team and told him the following, "Go for the cube at 30 seconds. The coach just told the same to the driver, Jonas. When the thirty seconds arrived, the alliances shifted position leaving Charlotte's group on the right side. The groups only defended their zones until the clock read 20 seconds.

The clock struck at 20 seconds. The alliance took the bucket and threw it to the opposite side. At 10 seconds Evan guided the robot to the pole, where it had to rise more than 12 inches. Evan tried to fit the hook for the first time, but failed. He settled down and tried again, but like the first time, it didn't work. He tried a third time and this time it hooked up. Evan commanded the engine to "lower arm", and so the robot went up, being above the 12 inches. Just at that moment, the whistle sounded indicating that the game was over.

Charlotte saw that the competition was tied, but they passed. They had won the autonomous and taken an advantage.

The referee finished counting and went to one of the computers to put the score. After 5 minutes, the computer turned on, clearly showing 65 for the reds and a 30 for the blues, making it clear that the red alliance would go to the world championship.

"Hey, wake up!" someone shouted beside Charlotte. It was Thomas.

"We're here."

"What time is it?" Charlotte asked.

"3 p.m."

"3 p.m!"

"Take it easy. It's not the end of the world."

"Sleeping from 10 in the morning until 3 in the afternoon is the end of the world for me."

"All right," said Thomas. "Get up. We've arrived."

"Oh, okay."

"Ready?"

"More than ever!"

The Vex Robotics World's Competition is ours!!!



Credits

Story written by: Alexa M. Zaragoza Torres

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This story involves fiction and non-fictions situations. I'm showing my story during this wonderful trip inside VEX Robotics. My team, 2263D, never won a pass for the World's Competition, that's our biggest dream!