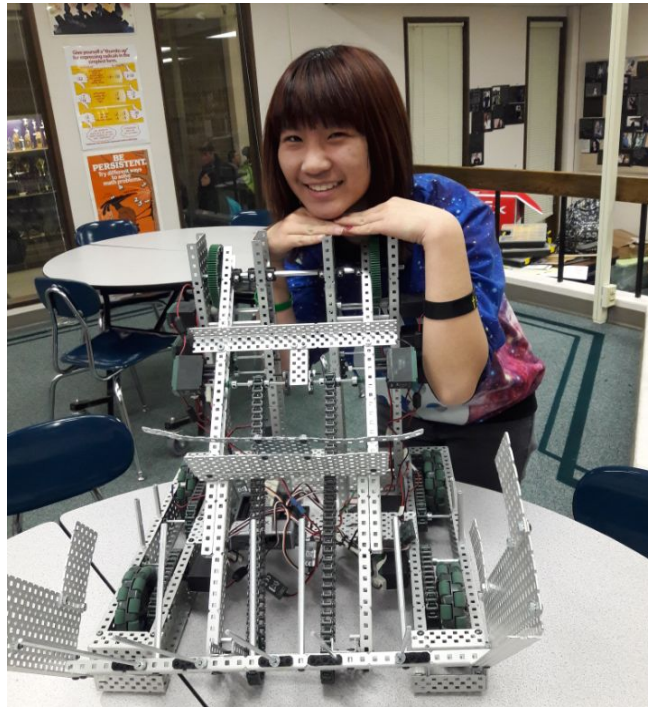


My Vex Story

When I was a little girl, I used to watch cute shows on Disney channel that portrayed the robotics club in one way. A bunch of nerdy boys with glasses that knew way too much for their own good. Constantly getting the same impression from media, I assumed that's what it was like. Never in a million years did I think I would ever be part of one. But then my entire perspective got turned 180 when I joined my high school's Vex robotics team. To be honest, the members are still a bunch of nerds that know way too much for their own good, but I know they are boundlessly more. Before high school I didn't want any relations with engineering or programming. The way media portrayed it was so negative and mundane. I never thought I could possibly find joy in typing monotonous lines of code which appeared to be gibberish. But I made the decision to try new things in high school. The reason why I joined was to get a fresh start and set myself on the pathway to college. I was a hopeless nerd anyways, so why not add robotics to the list of reasons why I would forever be one.



(This is me realizing my robot is more of a model than me, but still posing anyways.)

In our robotics club, the leaders strategically separated the members into teams. As my immature self, the only thing I cared about was being with my friends. I thought that being with them was all I needed to be the most content. But when we were all fatefully torn away from each other, I got tremendously disappointed that I wouldn't have my friends to make my witty and sarcastic comments to. It took me awhile to get comfortable with everyone on my new team considering they are mostly all guys. I wanted to help my team, but I don't know how to do anything. I hated sitting on the sidelines in a daze. I wanted to learn how build or program, but I was too timid to ask for anyone's help. I felt like a tiny voice trying to be heard in a tsunami of yelling. For a long time, I didn't have a purpose. But one fateful event pushed me right out of my comfort zone. We were about to have our first robotics competition, and none of my teammates

could go except me. I felt like they all threw me under the bus. But it turns out, this experience was a blessing in a really good disguise. Once I found out that all the responsibilities of the team unquestionably fell upon me, I realized I needed to learn how to rely on myself. No one was holding my hand this time. I had to muster up a truck load of confidence to believe that I could do this by myself. This was my first robotics competition ever, and I had to do it alone. Driving was never a job I asked for, but I surely got handed it very quickly. Surprisingly, I did decent at my first competition.

(I'm the short one.)



My teammates quickly complimented me on my driving skills and promoted me to be the driver. Of course I immediately refused this offer saying I wasn't good enough, but then my team captain told me a simple yet powerful phrase. He said that he believed in me. This seemingly insignificant compliment motivated me to be my best self. Finally, I felt like I had a purpose on my team. I didn't feel useless or replaceable. I actually could make an impact.

Through the next two months of participating in Vex, I continued to absorb information about aspects of engineering through quietly watching my teammates meticulously work. I felt like a whole new part of my brain had been turned on. Slowly, I started to open up to my teammates that I thought were scary and intimidating at the beginning. It turns out that they are just a bunch of lovable guys that can make you laugh until you start crying. I have never met such genuinely smart and kind people in my life. I've had the opportunity to create strong friendships with my teammates. They might be absolutely annoying and childish at times, but I love them to death. If I hadn't have joined robotics, I never would've met some of the most influential friends of my life currently.

After deep consideration, I decided to learn how to program. My team was in desperate need of a programmer. Out of the four teams in our club, there were only two programmers. Wanting to be more than just a driver, I set out on this new endeavor. Let's just say the road to this destination was not the smoothest. I constantly forgot how to do basic things like make a motor stop, and I made foolish mistakes of forgetting semi-colons. But I eventually learned basic programming and fell in love with this ruthless, yet beautifully logical concept. Thankfully, I had some great student teachers that led me through this wild journey of many pitfalls and coarse terrain.

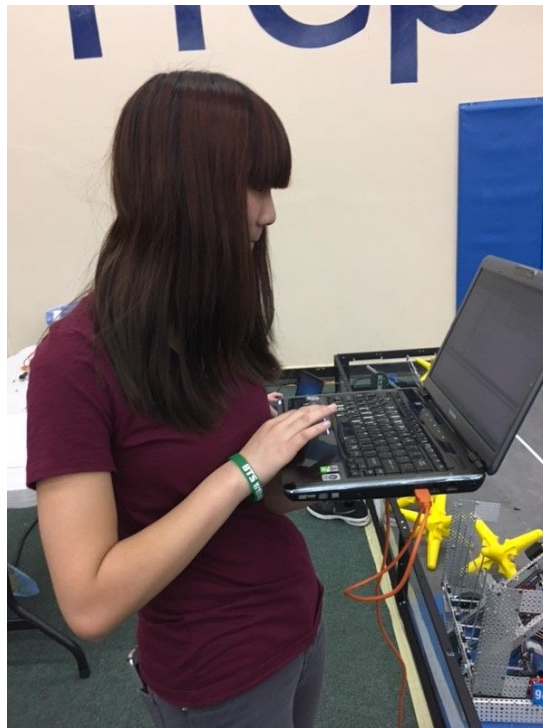
```
localStartVEX.htm Vex_Compensation_c Program 2 Remotes.c | Autonomos cube.c | AutonomosP1.1
112 task usercontrol()
113 {
114     while(1 == 1)
115     {
116         //Driving Motor Control with Remote Control 1
117         motor[WheelRight] = vexRT[Ch2] / 2;
118         motor[WheelLeft] = vexRT[Ch3] / 2;
119
120         //Arm Control with Remote Control 2
121         if (vexRT[Btn6DXmtr2] == 1)
122         {
123             motor [ArmRight] = -127;
124             motor [ArmLeft] = -127;
125             motor [ArmRight2] = -127;
126             motor [ArmLeft2] = -127;
127         }
128         else if(vexRT[Btn6DXmtr2] == 1)
129         {
130             motor [ArmRight] = 127;
131             motor [ArmRight2] = 127;
132             motor [ArmLeft] = 127;
133             motor [ArmLeft2] = 127;
134         }
135         else
136         {
137             motor [ArmRight] = 0;
138             motor [ArmRight2] = 0;
139             motor [ArmLeft] = 0;
140             motor [ArmLeft2] = 0;
141         }
142         if(vexRT[Btn5UXmtr2] == 1)
143         {
144             motor [BasketRight] = -127;
145             motor [BasketLeft] = -127;
146         }
147         else if(vexRT[Btn5DXmtr2] == 1)
148         {
```

```
localStartVEX.htm Vex_Compensation_c Program 2 Remotes.c | Autonomos cube.c | AutonomosP1.1
63 {
64     while (true)
65     {
66         motor (WheelRight) = 127;
67         motor (WheelLeft) = -127;
68         wait1Msec (400);
69         motor (WheelRight) = -127;
70         motor (WheelLeft) = -127;
71         wait1Msec (3000); //push cube to fence
72         motor (WheelRight) = 127;
73         motor (WheelLeft) = 127;
74         wait1Msec (1000); //back to center of the field
75         motor (WheelLeft) = 127;
76         motor (WheelRight) = -127;
77         wait1Msec (500); //turns slightly
78         motor (WheelRight) = -127;
79         motor (WheelLeft) = -127;
80         wait1Msec (1300); //back up against fence
81         motor (WheelRight) = 0; //stop motor
82         motor (WheelLeft) = 0; //stop motor
83         motor (BasketRight) = 127;
84         motor (BasketLeft) = 127;
85         wait1Msec (900); //basket goes down to lie on ground
86         motor (BasketRight) = 0; //stop
87         motor (BasketLeft) = 0; //stop
88         motor (ArmRight) = -127;
89         motor (ArmRight2) = -127;
90         motor (ArmLeft) = -127;
91         motor (ArmLeft2) = -127;
92         wait1Msec (1000); //arm lifts star over fence
93         motor (ArmRight) = 0; //stop
94         motor (ArmRight2) = 0; //stop
95         motor (ArmLeft) = 0; //stop
96         motor (ArmLeft2) = 0; //stop
97         wait1Msec (4000);
98     }
99 }
```

(My beautiful code ;)

Today, I'm the official programmer for my team. It was tough, but through hours and hours of practice, I have increased my ability. I'm undoubtedly still a beginner, but I find an unusual amount of joy from programming. During one of our competitions, I had the opportunity of teaching someone from another school how to program their robot. This girl was completely flustered on what to do, so I got the privilege of guiding her. Not only did I find confidence by learning to program, but I also got to benefit others and help them. I'm so thankful that I get to contribute my skills to the team. I feel fulfilled knowing that I'm respected and valued on my team even though I'm the least experienced and youngest. To this day, I still go through many trials of not feeling adequate enough. A recent example was during one of our competitions. My

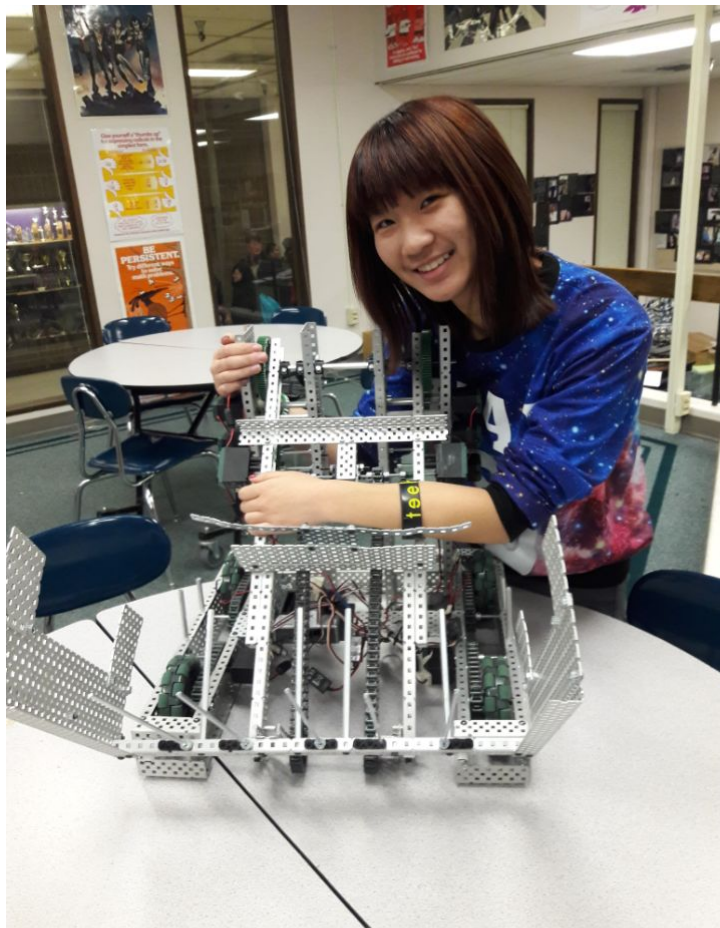
autonomous code got our robot disabled from the match and it also tipped our robot over in the semi-finals of the competition. I was completely ashamed. I felt like I ruined our one good chance of qualifying for State. I spent so much time self pitying myself, that I drove myself insane. This was undeniably not the solution to my problem. Of course I still beat myself up over this experience, but it helped me learn not to focus on the past, but how I can improve in the future. We just need to brush ourselves off and keep marching. Even though my autonomous code failed a couple times, we won most of the autonomous periods in our matches and we were picked by the first seed alliance because of the code. My autonomous code was able to push the cube forward and throw stars over the fence.



(Me programming my autonomous code at the Vex competition)

Being in robotics has expanded my love and interest in programming. From being in Vex, I thought about possibly pursuing computer science in college. Being a girl on a team filled

with guys can be very intimidating, but it has been such a blessing. I have unlocked a part of me that I never knew I had. I have been able to stand up not only for me, but for women as a whole. Never underestimate a girl, because she can climb to unimaginable heights. I underestimated my potential thinking I wasn't capable enough to make a difference, but now I'm showing myself and the world that I can do it. Who knew that telling someone that you believed in them could make such a big impact in their life? I'm infinitely grateful for my supportive team that continue to carry me through the wild world of robotics. Through our teamwork, we can accomplish anything.



(Me hugging my baby that I love so much)

Entrant Name: Amy Techavimol

Team number: 98807D

Name of Storybook: My Vex Story

