

When I hear the phrase, "Girl Powered" my mind is instantly drawn to the gender ratio that we are facing in the STEM fields. Males dominate the STEM field. My team is conscious of this issue.

This year our team consists of three females and two males. The girls being Emily, Amy, and I. The boys: Shuo and Miki. We are lucky enough to have an exchange student from Spain, Miki.

Miki is the Co-Driver along with Emily (they are also builders), Amy is the programmer, Shuo is a builder, and I build. This year we have expanded our comfort zone by trying out new things. Emily used a Dremel for the first time. I learned how to program from Amy, And Miki drove a robot in front of an audience of robotics students for the first time. Also, it's Shuo's first year in VEX EDR. Shuo has previously been in VEX IQ. I have personally wanted to learn how to program for a while but never seem to understand how. It just seemed so complex that I further myself from learning. But I asked Amy to explain how the functions worked. She was happy to teach me the functions of programming

We acknowledge that our team has a strong bond. In robotics, you are deemed to form a deep bond with your team since you go through such a long process together. Our team chemistry has evolved over time, we learn about each other. We formed a family, reassuring each other during times of panic. We believe different perspectives help influence a design because of the member's different backgrounds which have an impact on how a person thinks. I solely believe that if you have members from different backgrounds and genders it will change your ability to succeed in a positive way because you are open to more ideas. Our team has qualified for the state competition through the league.

My STEM role model is Debbie Sterling, I heard her TED talk about inspiring the next generation. I was able to relate to her story. She talked about the gender ratio being a cultural thing, I agree with Debbie. She also states "But the problem was I felt kind of alone. I was always one of a handful of girls in my classes, and I did not fit in."(Debbie Sterling) I was able to relate to this because of my current class, Intro to Drafting where I am the only girl. I was intimidated at first but became more serene as time passed. Debbie influenced me by sticking to my class regardless if I was afraid. I have become a better team member because I understand not everyone was raised in a culture that persuaded for girls to be engineers or programmers. I have mentored 4th graders at Columbia Elementary and see the girls getting distant from math. I hope by sticking to VEX, I can encourage them to seek into the STEM field.

When I hear the phrase "Girl Powered" in the years to come I hope to think girls are not a minority in the STEM fields. My team is currently contradicting the gender ratio.

Credits:

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Contradicting the Gender Ratio

Works Cited

"Spotlight TEDx Talk: Inspiring the next Generation of Female Engineers." *TEDx Innovations Blog*, 28 May 2015, tedxinovations.ted.com/2015/05/28/spotlight-tedx-talk-inspiring-the-next-generation-of-female-engineers/.

