Team 7035E

Girl Power: Embracing Diversity

We are Kailyn Whang and Lillian Imley and we are the girls powering our VEX robotics team, 7035E. When we hear the phrase "Girl Powered" the word empowerment instantly comes to our minds. It also means rising up in a society where men and women aren't treated equally. Girl Power means sticking together with other girls, in the male-dominated field of engineering. Our team has the motive of cooperation no matter the gender, race, or sexual orientation. At Miraleste Intermediate School, girls are encouraged to join the robotics program. In the eyes of our school, every student is considered equal.

Everyone on our team has different roles to help our robot succeed. Our project manager is Samuel Moore. He keeps the team organized, helps build, coaches at competitions, and helps with the wiring. Lucas Damasco is our main mechanical engineer. He has helped our team with the building, writing entries in the engineering notebook, and driving. Michael Chin is our second mechanical engineer. He has helped with constructing the lift, base, and wiring. Lillian Imley is the computer engineer. She is also the assistant project manager. Her main jobs are coding, building, driving, and writing in the engineering notebook, and any task that may be left behind. Kailyn Whang is our electrical engineer and base driver. She works on building, designing, wiring, and driving. When all the members of our team come together, we are able to cooperate and produce a finished robot that works because we communicate with each other.

A diverse group of students helps to unify our team, it gives five people from different parts of the community a chance to bond and become friends through learning. Every time our team meets, we sit down and discuss what we need to accomplish by the end of the day. We each share our perspectives and point out the flaws in each other's ideas. This strategy helps us ensure that we don't miss obvious mistakes in our own ideas, and gives us a chance to incorporate others ideas into our own. Since our team members have many differences, disagreeing with each other is a reoccurring issue, but by finding common ground, we are able to maintain a strong relationship with our team members. Success occurs on our team because of our different inputs and ideas that come with our differences. Since there is an effort made to treat girls and boys equally on our team, we are able to work together as a team, regardless of gender. Our differences build us stronger and make us a team that has many different perspectives on the vast world of robotics.

Our role model in robotics is our coach and our school's STEM teacher, Mr. Nimick. He inspires us to push ourselves to do our best even when we feel like the situation couldn't possibly get worse. His effort to help us learn is clearly seen by all of his students when he goes out of his way to order special parts, or stay late after school to give us extra time to work before a competition. His teaching style stimulates the "real world", by letting us try to find our own answers rather than the teacher doing our work for us. Every day he reminds us that winning isn't nearly as important as learning. He teaches us to get back up again and work harder when we fall but also gives us the opportunity to learn how to fall, which you don't get a lot as a student. While most teachers would rather hold your hand than let you fail and learn, Mr. Nimick is more than happy to let us learn that it is okay to make mistakes, as long as you learn from them. While this sounds like a painful teaching tactic, it helps us develop and learn more to the point where we don't need the reminder to stand back up when we fail. Something that all of Mr. Nimick's students like about him, is that he acknowledges people's differences, but treats us the same regardless of gender. (photo with Mr. Nimick)

Being the only two girls on our team, we learn to reach out to the girls on other teams at our school and stick together. We developed a unique bond with each other, knowing that we will have to work harder than our male counterparts to get the same job, especially in the engineering field. If we see another teammate, that has fallen and is struggling to stand, we will always be there to help them up. When another teammate succeeds we are happy for them, when they fail, we help them to learn from

it. Together, we form a bond, similar to a shield, where we protect each other from all the stigmas about female engineers rising up in this generation. Hand in hand we work together, with a common goal to extinguish the social normality of males dominating the social hierarchy. We believe that women and men should be considered equal to each other, on all fronts, but especially in the engineering field."Feminism isn't about making women stronger. Women are already strong. It's about changing the way the world perceives that strength" said G.D Anderson. Girl Power isn't only about being a strong female in the community, it's also about sticking together with other girls to create a society where people see women as a working, productive group in our society. Girls are strong creatures, who can fight all the stupidity the world throws at us.

When our team hears the phrase girl-powered, we think of empowerment, progress, and sticking together. Through Vex Robotics we learn that men and women working together can create something better than a team of only men because you get varied inputs and ideas that positively affect the construction of your robot. Throughout our VEX experience, we realized the importance of having different roles and how different ideas can come from our different backgrounds. With a diverse team, we create a strong design because of the many unique inputs that were used to

create it. We learned the girls can do just as well and sometimes even better than many guys. That is how 7035E is girl-powered!