

When I hear the phrase Girl Powered, what comes to my mind is the power that every girl has in them to achieve their dreams, be successful, and be the powerful person that they are. I am the only girl on my team of six. I might be the only girl, but that does not stop me from being involved in the team's actions. This is reflected in my team's approach to robotics because you do not have to be a girl to be successful or to achieve your dreams. Everything we do in robotics is to better our chances at being successful in the competition as well as our futures as young adults, as most of us are going into a field of engineering after high school. The 6403 S.M.A.R.T Robotics group of twenty high school students, twenty seven middle school students, and forty plus elementary students is an immensely diverse group of kids. My team makes the environment we work in inclusive by helping others no matter the situation in any way we can. There are no differences between us because we all have the same goal, to be successful and be the best we can be.

Each member of my team has attempted the various roles and we all have found a place that we excel at. I find myself helping with the building and notebook writing the most. I work proficiently in those areas and I enjoy what they contribute to the team. The work that goes into the engineering notebook often goes unappreciated, when in reality the notebook is a key element in understanding our design process and ideas. This is important for anyone who is unfamiliar with our methods, or even the way VEX robotics works to comprehend how everything is put together in a way that makes a successful robot, program, or even time management. The notebook is often a blueprint that shows trial and error to the building and design process. Building might seem to be of the utmost importance in the competition, however being able to share the thought process and trial and error is equally important. What I learned in this experience is that females are often looked at as unskilled or not useful when it comes to building, however that has been proven wrong in multiple cases. In the world of VEX, there are many successful all girl or girl dominant teams. They came together and used their girl power to achieve their goals in something they enjoy and excel in. I learned this in my own way by looking at the girls in S.M.A.R.T. Robotics with me. As young as the elementary age to the girls in my class and above, that show what being girl powered means. All of us play key roles in the

success of our team and motivate each other, not just us girls but the guys as well, to be the best we can be and how to improve our teams.

The diversity of perspective changes our robot design because it allows us to have more than one way to look at the function and efficiency of each planned design. This also gives the chance for people to give input on the design and share their ideas. Being able to express your ideas and designs also reduces the robots that are cloned or copied with little variation. Something on our robot currently, that plans to stay for a while, is a mobile goal lift that is made with the design of a small four bar lift that extends outward more than upward. This is a design I had part in building as well as putting into our notebook. This simple design is something that is successful in getting the mobile goal into the twenty point zone, and rarely seen on any other robot we have been in competition with. Diversity is important in any situation in life. As young adults, making friendships and bonds with others is a necessity. I've generally known everyone in high school level robotics from other school activities. The exact people I'm working with as my team has been together for only a matter of months, but in that time we have all bonded and became a tiny family inside a bigger family of all the Brookside S.M.A.R.T. Robotics students and parents. My team's chemistry with each other was rough at first because we all barely knew each other. Through get togethers, conversations outside of robotics, and communication as being part of a team has made us become closer, and none of us are complaining about it. We are all good friends now, and this has increased the diversity in my life as well as others because of the colorful backgrounds we have. Diversity is prosperous in all ways of life, and we are all successful for being who we are and embracing it.

My STEM role model is my own robotics advisor, Mr. Kevin Landis. He has always been someone I have looked up to because he is an overall quality person. He is involved in multiple things at Brookside, not just robotics. Mr. Landis is the head Cross Country coach and a Track & Field coach as well. He is always making me and other kids laugh and enjoy what they are doing during the school day and on the track. I relate to him because I love making my friends, and anyone, smile and laugh, because you never know what kind of day they are having and why not make it better in a simple way. Mr. Landis makes robotics and sports inclusive by making sure everyone has a job and is happy with what they are doing. No one is ever left out from anything

when he is involved. There is no entry exam for anything he is part of because he expresses our school motto “Belief + Hardwork = Success” which means no matter who you are, as long as you believe in yourself and work hard, you can be successful with anything in life. That’s what our school is about and Mr. Landis is the human embodiment of that mantra.