

Girl Powered: Our Journey Towards Excellence

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Anika, Ellie, and Zoey proudly hold the awards after returning from competition.

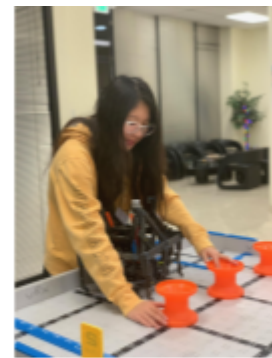
We are Team GMR, 10700B. To us, Girl Powered means equal opportunities for everyone on the team, regardless of gender. Equal opportunity is extremely important to us, and we strive to ensure that this is the case on our team. When we first began meeting as a team, we made sure that girls are accepted, and made sure everyone has a basic understanding of the competition. Everyone



Zoey, Lorenzo, and Michael practice driving together

is involved in all elements of the team, from building to programming and driving, and there are equal chances to take the lead on projects, regardless of gender. We have created a more inclusive environment by making sure that no one is restricted to minor tasks, and instead have a chance to decide what they wish to work on. One of our major struggles was presenting. At the beginning of the season we were quiet and stuttered frequently.

However, we overcame the challenge through hardships and practice, and now we are confident and proud! Our group is comprised of diverse and strong members who all accept each other for who they are on the inside. Our team makes sure everyone is included to all aspects of the team no matter their appearance. If someone feels more suited for building then they'll build but we also make sure that person learns how to code. The same goes for a coder, this way everyone experiences all aspects of being on a robotics team, and all of us walk away with valuable skills for the future.



Ellie prepares the field to run her Autonomous Code

Diversity on our team has played a major role. Without the girls on our team, our robot design might've been completely different. Zoey, for example, put a lot of work into the chassis of our robots and other aspects of our

robots. She uses her imagination to bring the ideas to life, Without her we wouldn't have won nearly as many awards as we did, and her ability to translate our design ideas into an actual robot has proved invaluable. Ellie has contributed a lot to our Autonomous code, and put in significant time and effort, even working on it outside of meeting. Without her, our Autonomous wouldn't have scored as much. Ellie is extremely capable, and is able to assist with both programming and building, and she is a major asset to our team. Anika mainly works on the design aspect of the robot, she also puts in a large amount of effort in the engineering notebook. She also uses her great imagination and problem solving skills to come up with amazing robot ideas and strategies.



Anika works on developing a strategy

The week of our competition was extremely nerve wracking. We were all stressed, wondering “What if our hard work didn't pay off!? What if we got no awards?! What if we mess up on the presentation!? Or what if our Autonomous messes up?!” All these thoughts were going around and around in our heads, and then, all too soon, it was competition day. When we went to our first competition, the SOCES Qualifier, it was a new experience for some of us. Our presentation seemed quite good, but nonetheless, we were nervous about the awards. Then they called everyone for the awards, as we went there we discussed who we thought would win. As they began announcing awards, the Judges Award did not go to our team, which didn't help our confidence. Then, they announced that we had won not only Design Award, but Skills and Teamwork as well. All that remained was Excellence. Nervous, yet hopeful, we awaited the announcement. The Judge stepped up, and said, “Now for the final moment.. the Excellence award for this competition goes to... Team 10700B!” We were flooded with pride and happiness, all our hard work had paid off in the end. We

were amazed - our team had won 4 awards, including Excellence. We felt so proud, since without equal contribution, none of this would have been possible.

Our STEM role model is Katherine Johnson, who worked at NASA to help send the first American into space. She was a brilliant mathematician who attended high school at the age of ten, and her vast knowledge proved a valuable asset to NASA. We admire her ability to face challenges



such as race and gender divides while remaining unfazed. She didn't let discrimination against her for being an African-American female stop her. Katherine Johnson was assertive, and made sure she was credited for her work. She is someone we all look up to, and she inspires us to be unafraid of being girls in STEM.

As a team, we all fully support diversity and Girl Power, and we strive to an even more inclusive environment.