

Girl Powered

Overcoming Stereotypes



A Year of Struggle

Each girl in our team has been interested in becoming a part of robotics and technology for years, but many of us have had a rough start. Some were told they were too young, and others were told that robotics wasn't a girl thing. Despite what others said, we still strived to become a part in robotics. Last year, the eighth graders of our team were seventh graders. Because a girls team wouldn't work with our schedules, in the end, we were all separated into boys teams. That year, many of us struggled to find a place amongst the boys, finding that they gave us simplistic jobs and weren't teaching us about the aspects of robotics we had come to learn. We were disappointed and unmotivated.



One Girl's Story

When I was put on a team in which I was the only girl, I was disappointed because I wasn't given many chances to learn more about robotics. I had signed up to be an active part in building and coding under the mentorship of more experienced team members, but as the year progressed, they never accepted me as a truly beneficial team member. Since the boys saw that I wasn't very experienced, I ended up working on trivial matters like organizing, screwing parts, and writing a little in the engineering notebook. Whenever I tried to help design or be involved more, the boys wouldn't explain much to me or let me pitch into the design process. When we went to competitions, I thought I could be a great driver until the boys took over and told me I wasn't good enough. I almost gave up because it seemed to me like I didn't matter to the team. The one thing that kept me going was the hope of a better year this year, where girls could have a better chance.



Bumps in the Road

As our newly formed girl's team started to work, we soon realized that the year was going to be hard. There were many times in which we struggled to be a strong team. Relationships between team members, designing a whole robot, stress from many areas of our lives, and pressure from some of the boys started to fray our courage. When our school set up a design competition for the teams, there were a few times when some of us felt like we couldn't continue, but other teammates were always there to support each other. In this way, we soon realized that each one of us was essential to the strength of our team, no matter how new we were to working together. Our relationships slowly but surely started to improve. While we are by no means a perfect team, we are trying our hardest to support each other and improve our relationships every day.



Finding a Way

After the disappointment of last year, our captains formed a new mindset. No one would be left out or struggle to find a place amongst everyone else. We would all have a part and would find our places on the team. All of us would work together to learn and grow in our skills and talents in robotics. After the lost opportunities of last year, we would all find a new path to take together towards success. With the help of our two empowering female instructors, we can all do things that in the past were not possible. At the beginning of the year, we felt confident that this year would be a year of improvement. No matter how well we do in the competitions, no matter how difficult it will be to achieve progress, we will show the world what us girls can do. We will show them that we have found our way. We will prove to the world that robotics can be for girls as much as it is for boys and inspire other girls along the way.



Working Together

Our team has done many activities outside of robotics to try and get to know each other better, as this improves how we work together. We took time to go to an escape room to test our teamwork abilities. Sadly, we didn't get out, which showed us that we still had a long way to go with our group skills. We have also done many games that improve our thinking skills like D&D, which makes us think outside the box and strategize. Over time, our team has really gotten better at working together as a team. We also have met many times outside of school to work on designs and the robot, which has helped us become much more productive and efficient.



Where We Are Now

On an all girls team, each of us is striving to be the best we can be. We have learned to cooperate together and be an independent team. Though we have 6 members instead of 7 as the boy teams do, we are proud of everything we have come to accomplish and know we will continue to work hard and succeed together. We meet on many Saturdays at the library and work on our robot at each others' houses. We also do many team building activities to get to know each other and strengthen our bond as a team. After we've struggled together, learned together, worked together, and succeeded together, we know that we have made a difference in the world of robotics no matter how small the change. This is why we want to share our story with other girls who need a little inspiration to be themselves and make a difference.



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