

8871B Girl Power

My name is Ana Green; I'm 14 years old; this is my third year in robotics, and I am a girl. I'm in robotics and I'm a girl. I know, it's weird right? It shouldn't have to be weird, it shouldn't have to be celebrated either. What this world is working towards is gender equality and for people to treat girls differently just because of who they are, it's not right. In the 2018-2019 year this world has grown into a place where both genders are celebrated but they aren't exactly celebrated equally yet. I understand that it takes a while for people to get used to different things, but this should've already been normal. What if we could go back to a time where woman broke so many barriers to get us where we girls are now, but were forgotten or not mentioned because they were not the main gender the world considered smart. How about we go back to 1791-1871. This was during the time Charles Babbage progressively started to invent the computer. He did manage to invent the computer but that wouldn't have happened without a woman who is mildly forgotten sometimes. Her name is Ada Lovelace, she is known to be the first woman programmer. Her math machine algorithms presented a type of computing machine that didn't exist yet, but since it was the 1800's woman weren't treated as equally as men, so she never got her credit. That is why she is one of my role models in STEM; she invented something that we use daily today and not many people give her the credit for that or even know about her contributions to life. Even though Lovelace wasn't considered the dominant gender she still believed what she created was going to help people, and no matter what anyone said she still believed that she was as smart as her male counterpart. She is one of the main reasons I went and joined the robotics team. Now, let's go back to 2016-2019. When I first started robotics I had no idea what I was getting myself into, but after joining it was one of the best decisions of my life. Since 6th grade (I'm now an 8th grader), I have always been a part of an all-girls team. This has taught me so much in the past years. Working with girls has been an amazing experience. On the teams I have been on, we have been quite successful and I think one of the main reasons is because we take into account of what others say and not just go with what we say individually. We aren't trying to outshine anyone on our team because we know that we have both our strengths and weaknesses. That's why we base our jobs on things that we are comfortable doing, and other jobs on what others are better at. I'm an example of that, I can build; I love building but, I'm not comfortable with programming, so I would have someone else help me with that aspect of robotics. We always account for everyone's different perspectives and I think that's why we have been very successful, especially in the past year. 8871B has won two excellence awards this year and has made it to the quarter finals twice. There are so many strategies we think about when it comes to making decisions about our robot and what we are going to do at competition. The one strategy that we go by the most is that happy accidents can occur, and that's okay. The reason why that's our main strategy this year is because our team name is 'Bob "Happy Accidents" Ross'. When it comes to the robotics team I want everything to be perfect, and if it's not then I get really disappointed in myself. This year the team decided to use a name that would perfectly embody that making mistakes is okay, and how we will always be able to learn and improve no matter what problem we face. Although team 8871B is the inclusive team I'm on, our robotics program as a whole is amazing. Yes, I am on an all girls' team but I also share ideas with the boys on other teams as well. They are always willing to help us and us with them. They treat us equally and this robotics program is a very amazingly built program because of the diversity between the genders and the perspectives the team is being seen. In doing this, we bring a lot of students to the robotics team considering we are like a family. On this team, everyone has somewhere to fit in, and in middle school I feel like that's very important. We are still

trying to find who we are and to be able to know we have a safe place where we won't be judged is an amazing feeling to have. This proves that not only women have to be girl-powered, boys can be as well. I believe that girl-power is, it's about staying together during the difficult challenges not only that we face in robotics, but what we as the future face in society today. Sure, we have our ups and downs but eventually we all know that we do share a mutual respect for one another and we understand that this time in our life is going to shape our future as a world.