

“Achieving gender equality requires the engagement of women and men, girls and boys. It is everyone’s responsibility.” ~Ban Ki-Moon

When I hear the phrase “Girl Power”, I don’t merely picture a team or group of girls surpassing expectations or “beating the boys”, I think that really means that gender is not a factor. Due to females having been an undervalued, or even oppressed, sex throughout American history, it’s only natural that the term “girl power” came into play to show that girls can do just as much as boys and more. It is not about the sex, or what someone identifies as, but the individual. This has shown in our diverse robotics team with even the all female sub-teams and our class representative or president being a female, my own group included. Despite this, these groups were never looked down on or even acknowledged as different. This is what it means to be girl powered; it matters not the gender, but the people. How people are seen in the team isn’t about their looks or their sex, but their abilities and personality. Every individual in our robotics team has needed help from others and given help to others with no exceptions. Every person has their talents and things they need help with. It reflects in the uniqueness of our robots and our approaches to challenges. All of our robots have a different aspect, build, and overall durability that can tell you who and what team designed and built it. Everyone has helped robots outside of their team and received help. Whether it be the drivers, the programmers, or the builders, everyone contributed to the robots. Personally as the programmer of my team, I’ve helped to build and even taught programming to others while still getting help myself. Other programmers have given me tips and helped to correct my programming, helping me learn more and more. Diversity has helped to influence the designs of our robots and made us work more solidly and abstractly as a whole, not only our sub-teams. We’ve all become closer than I ever expected at our number and it seems that our more welcoming and friendly atmosphere has even helped to make new people comfortable with joining and participating in our after school club. My STEM role model would have to be Ana Green, the previously mentioned representative of our class. She is kind and smart and always willing to lend a hand. She is one of the people who has been on the Robotics team since sixth grade, making her a very experienced member with good judgement and a helpful personality.

An example of all this is myself, actually. When I first joined the robotics team at just the start of this school year, I was extremely introverted and inexplicably uncomfortable with working with and communicating with the opposite sex. Just being on an all girls team was a good start for me to let other people know my skills and talents, but before I realized it, I was already comfortable with the all the other students on the team. It didn’t matter who they were, if they needed help, then I could do it, and vice versa. I was able to see and build off of other’s designs and ideas, showing me what type of person they were and their own individual skills. Even now, I could help out and teach the younger students in our after school club. Robotics has not only opened my eyes to the world of engineering, but how the diversity of the people working with you can affect your own ideas and ways of thinking.

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