

GIRL POWERED

20



19

REINVENTING THE STATUS QUO

The Robotics club is located in a secluded corner of the campus that most people hardly know exists; the secret space of the elite nerds, where you are not welcome unless you are intelligent enough to fit in with the rest. *Or so, that's what people think.*

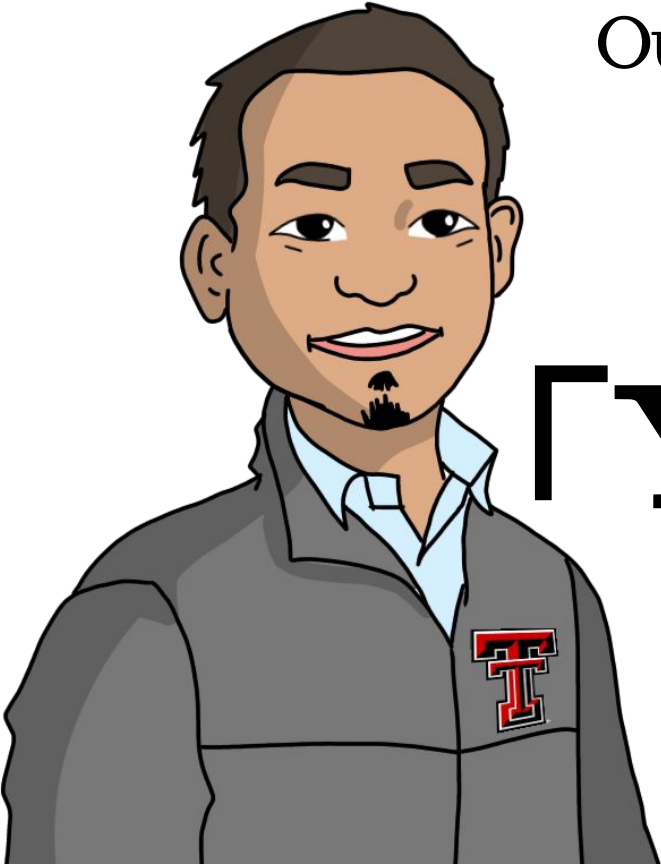
When our school first created a Robotics club four years ago, they had no basis for knowing what would become of it. Previously, the school's extracurriculars was narrowly focused on sports and music. The addition of a Robotics team brought in the academic appeal that had not been an option before. **There was just one problem with that.** While it was good that the academic appeal of Robotics was evident one might say it was almost *too* evident. Rumors started floating around that in order to join the Robotics team, you also had to have a strong academic background. More specifically, a strong sense of mathematics and science. It was these prerequisites that made joining the robotics team seem so daunting. Eventually, it would become apparent that, though those are undeniably good skills to possess, being an engineer isn't simply about making complex calculations to find the correct answer. In fact, I think we'd all agree that 80% of the process is trial and, most importantly, error. I recall my first day in Robotics, our coach said to me,

"None of us know the right answer. That's what it means to be an engineer--to try and fail and try again."

Eventually I'd learn that the most important aspect of our team was not that we were all alike in intelligence or rational thinking; but rather, that we were not. It was because of these differences, that led our school to three consecutive years of success.

OUR STEM ROLE MODEL

Our coach, teacher, and father of two.



「Yujiro Fujiwara」

A.k.a. Mr. Fu (pronounced Foo)

If you saw him for the first time, he might come off as quite intimidating. But if you get to know him better, you'll realise that he's just a super funny, but weird, loving teacher. Maybe the lack of correlation between his looks and personality might be one factor we all love Mr. Fu, but it could also be how inspirational he is.

Our team used to joke that "if we all could have a dime for every time Mr. Fu said an inspirational quote, we probably would own ten more boxes of V5s." Mr. Fu is known for his many inspirational quotes, but the one I hear most often is the phrase,

"Geniuses don't exist."

If there is one thing to know about Mr. Fu, it is that he is a strong advocate for the idea that the only way to become successful is through working hard. No one is born a genius. Everyone starts at the same place. It doesn't matter what your gender is or what kind of family you are born into. There is no way to avoid the mistakes and hardships we all have to go through. In the end, those are the things that teach us the most. Because in the end mistakes aren't something to be afraid of. In fact, trial and error is something we should all ponder and learn from. It is from this mentality that he has effectively cultivated an environment in which his students are, not simply motivated, but geared towards success. He has taken what he has learned from his own life experiences and teaches us the same skills. To us, Mr. Fu isn't simply a teacher or a coach, but he is the kind of person we aspire to be.

*What Does “Girl Powered”
Mean To You?*

Creating an environment where
individuals, regardless of gender or
age, aren't afraid to do what they love.

Meg Shinagawa

—99484C | Captain/CAD—



MEET MY TEAM



CHRIS 99484C



What Does “Girl Powered” Mean To You?

That girls strive to make an environment where everyone is treated as equals, an environment where everyone’s talents and passion are free to be shared and pursued despite their professions and gender.

Futaba Otsuji

-99484B | Driver/Builder-

MEET MY TEAM



*What Does “Girl Powered”
Mean To You?*

Females should not only *feel*
empowered to pursue, but *be*
empowered to pursue any passion
they may have, regardless of their
gender.

Ayumi Fong

99484A | Builder





What Does “Girl Powered” Mean To You?

Striving to create an environment where women don't feel inferior to men in a predominantly male dominated society. This means if I want to do something, I am not held back because I am a girl.

Krista Suzuki

99484A | Builder

SURE, REALLY

99484A

Ayumi



Futaba



Krista



Asher



Elijah

MEET OUR TEAM



When we asked our coach what he believed to be the value of having girls in Robotics, he told us, “We cannot say that we have a whole understanding of things if we don’t have the perspective of girls. Guys bring one perspective, and girls bring the other.” He explained the the female presence in the team was how things got done. While boys generally have a tendency to want to jump into straight into things, girls usually try to take more precautions. In this way, the two genders blend together to create a strategic, yet innovative assembly; both of which are crucial to an effective team. The other male teammates said that they felt that the girls were the ones who maintained order and kept the rest of them in check. The “Mother” role, as they affectionately nicknamed it.

I think it goes without saying, that girls and boys do not think the same way. The value of this within our team (and any team at all, really) cannot be stressed enough. People seem to have latched onto this idea that STEM is no place for the “motherly” feminine nature, hence the current lack of female representation. But the truth is, I have never felt that way in our Robotics team. The CAJ robotics team has hosted a team of the most intelligent and ambitious females I’ve ever met. While there are phenomenal engineers, who seem to have an innate understanding of how everything works; we also have artists, the outside-the-box thinkers and innovators. Most importantly, though, is that we have girls who do not feel the need to conceal parts of their femininity to be valued as a part of the team. Who really has the right to dictate what characteristics “belong” to which gender? I take large amounts of pride in the fact that we continue to break those stereotypes every year.

We are captains. We are the team moms. We are whoever we desire to be. We are Girl Powered.



"I learned quickly that it really didn't matter that I was a girl; it was what I had to offer as an individual. I didn't understand everything at first, but neither did the other new boys.

As the season progressed it became more obvious: we were a team, regardless of our gender. The evident gap in the girl to guy ratio, not just in robotics but in any STEM field, has set forth a movement to empower girls in the community, which is great. But I don't want that to take away from the fact that the emphasis is on empowering individuals to do what they love, not on whether they're a girl or boy. Because at the end of the day — girls and boys — we're all working together to accomplish something: To do what we love."

Meg Shinagawa

Created By
Ayumi Fong & Futaba Otsuji

Special Thanks
Megumi Shinagawa
Krista Suzuki

Photographs By
Hannah Yozawa
Megumi Nakazawa