

**THE FUTURE IS GIRL  
POWERED**

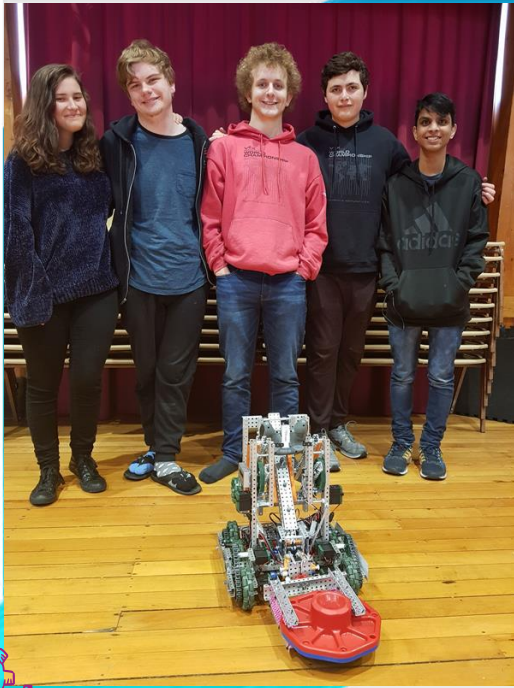


## FIRST INTRODUCTIONS

VEX and I were introduced to each other at the beginning of 2017. I first came to scrimmages as a spectator and found everything going on extremely overwhelming. People were using words that I'd never heard before and I barely understood how the game even worked. After spending time at scrimmages, I certainly noticed how male-dominated the community was. I felt out of place being one of the few females attending.



## BECOMING A PART OF THE TEAM



It was only a couple months ago that I finally gained enough confidence and became an official part of the team! Being brand new to VEX was definitely daunting but I quickly found my strengths and my place in 240p.

If we're being honest a robotics weekend to us is comprised mostly of midnight pasta binges and sleep deprivation. As fantastic as my team are they can often lack direction and organization. I quickly became the team captain making sure that everyone knows what they are doing and when. My presence at scrimmages became vital, as otherwise power expanders weren't plugged in and matches were lost due to incorrect license plates.

My team were and still are extremely gracious in taking time out of building sessions to explain different elements of robotics and building to me. I have never felt ostracized by my team because of my gender or lack of specific VEX experience. Each one of us brings new skills, ideas, strengths, and perspectives, to me that is the most important thing about diversity in a team.

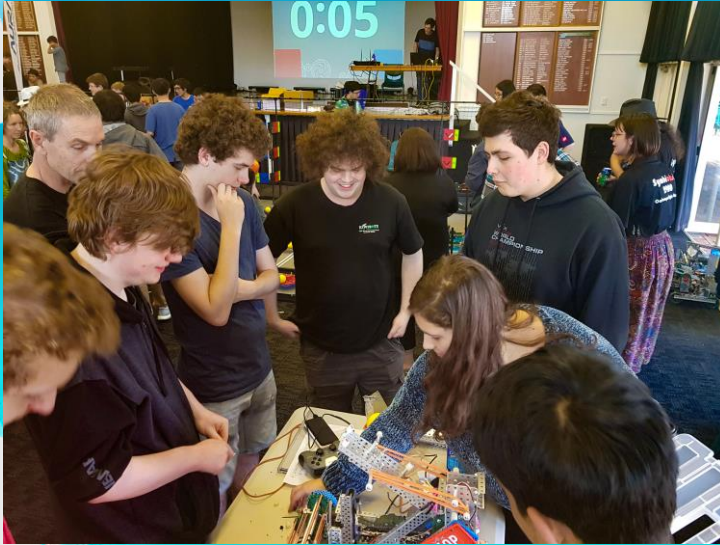


## A STEM HERO

Contrary to what most would believe, females have been involved with and vital in STEM since the very beginning. Even the acronym STEM was coined by a woman, Judith Ramaley an American biologist. Katherine Johnson, an African American mathematician who worked for NASA for 35 years. She was a pioneer in her field pushing through all barriers placed on her because of her gender and race. In her time, she had to work separately from her white peers and wasn't allowed to sign her name on reports because of her gender. She has become an icon of STEM and determination for her work and refusal to be held down by discrimination. In fact, she became the first woman to sign her name on a NASA report and John Glenn, an astronaut, refused to take off unless the computer's calculations had been personally verified by Johnson.



# OUT NUMBERED BUT NOT OUTDONE



Male dominance in the STEM field is certainly not something that I only noticed once joining VEX. I took the very small number of females in my DGT and Calc classes as simply a fact of life and that nothing could be done to change it. I now see that these inequalities in gender participation are a result of girls being raised into a society that tells them that they are not as capable as boys in STEM fields and should instead stick to traditional motherly roles. This incorrect presumption around females' inability to survive in a STEM environment has ultimately resulted in stigma against girls in VEX and STEM alike.

I hope that one day we will reach a point where girls being in STEM and VEX are unanimously accepted as being normal and that everyone becomes indifferent to female participation just as they are with boys. I believe that one-day programs like Girl Powered won't have to run anymore, as stigma around girls in VEX and STEM alike will have been completely eradicated.



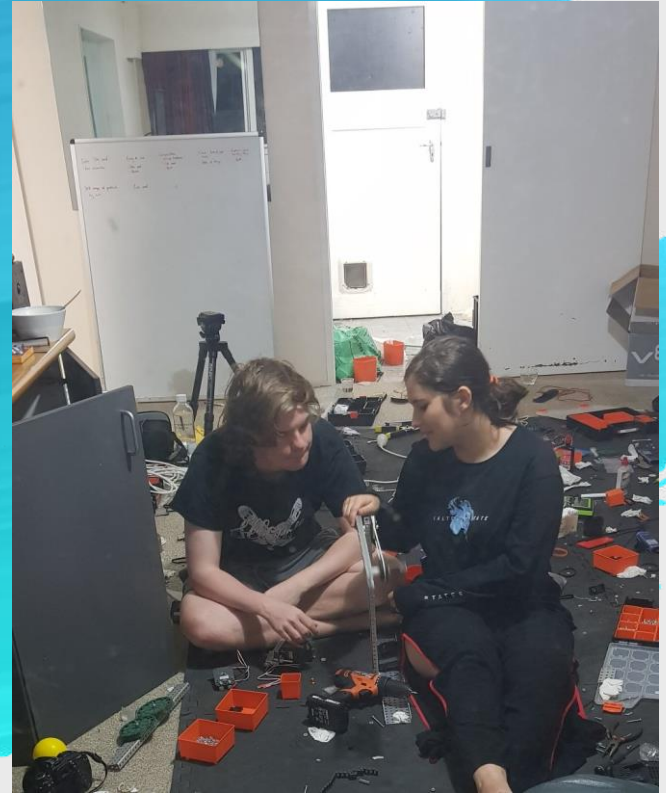
# PUTTING THE POWER BEHIND GIRL POWERED



While Resolution Robotics is independent, my school carries out a VEX IQ program that a handful of students participate in. When the teacher running this program was asked what he was doing to encourage girls to compete in VEX he replied, “well we have a Girl Powered poster up.” I hope to put the message behind Girl Powered into practice, doing far more than just putting up a poster. I hope that me being a female in VEX can set a good example for younger girls at my school, ultimately encouraging them to compete too.

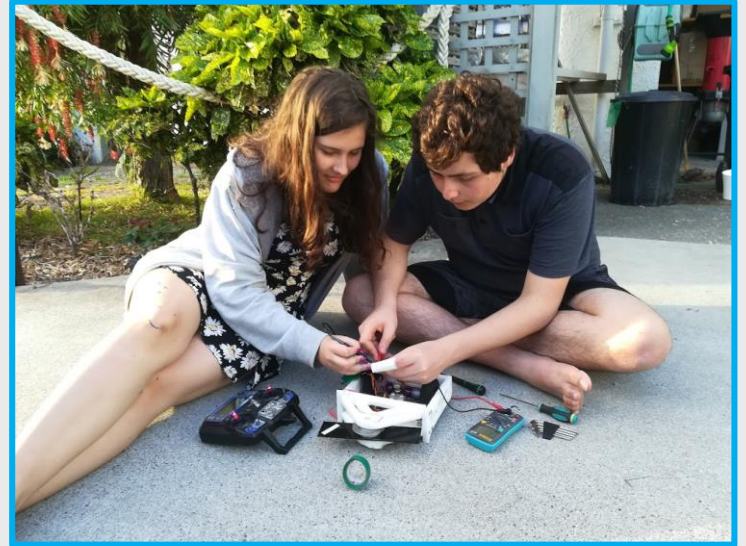
I completely understand how daunting all the terminology and male domination, technical knowledge, mathematics, physics, rules, mechanical systems, linkages can be while just starting out. I especially understand how difficult it can be starting out as a female in a male-dominated space while feeling like your voice isn't as valuable as theirs. I know exactly what it feels like to believe that you are not valuable in a team because you are a girl and "surely they are no skills I can bring to the table" is something I told myself for a while leading up to joining 240p.

I look forward to mentoring and encouraging future empowered girls to compete with confidence that they are important and valued members. I want all girls to know that there is a role for them in VEX no matter who they are. Whether they are interested in programming, building, mathematics, physics, engineering, drawing, computers, or even people, there is a place for them and they deserve to be recognized as a valuable and essential part of any team.



# A TURNING POINT

Thanks to programs like Girl Powered, girls are being encouraged and brought up with a love for tech and other STEM subjects alike. This is creating a positive trend in the workforce with the percentage of women in core STEM occupations raising from 21% in 2016 to 23% in 2017. Though this percentage may seem statistically insignificant, I believe that it shows promise not only in the way society is viewing women in STEM but also in the way women are viewing themselves and their abilities.





# MY GIRL POWERED FUTURE

Through competing in VEX I gained knowledge not only in various types of joints and launcher designs but also in myself and where my strengths lie within a team. With the help of Girl Powered, I have learnt to not let myself be held back by the discrimination put onto me because of my gender and instead learn to excel and prove that gender equality in STEM is valuable and ultimately vital.





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**Girl⚡Powered.**

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Robotics 240P**