

Improving Together As One

When our team hears the phrase “Girl Powered”, we think of our robotics team, friends, moms, and successful businesswomen. These people are important because they are all girls that support us and they are all able to do great things. We also think of how our robotics team is run by girls and how our team is successful. That makes us feel confident and it gives us a boost, so we are able to do better in robotics.

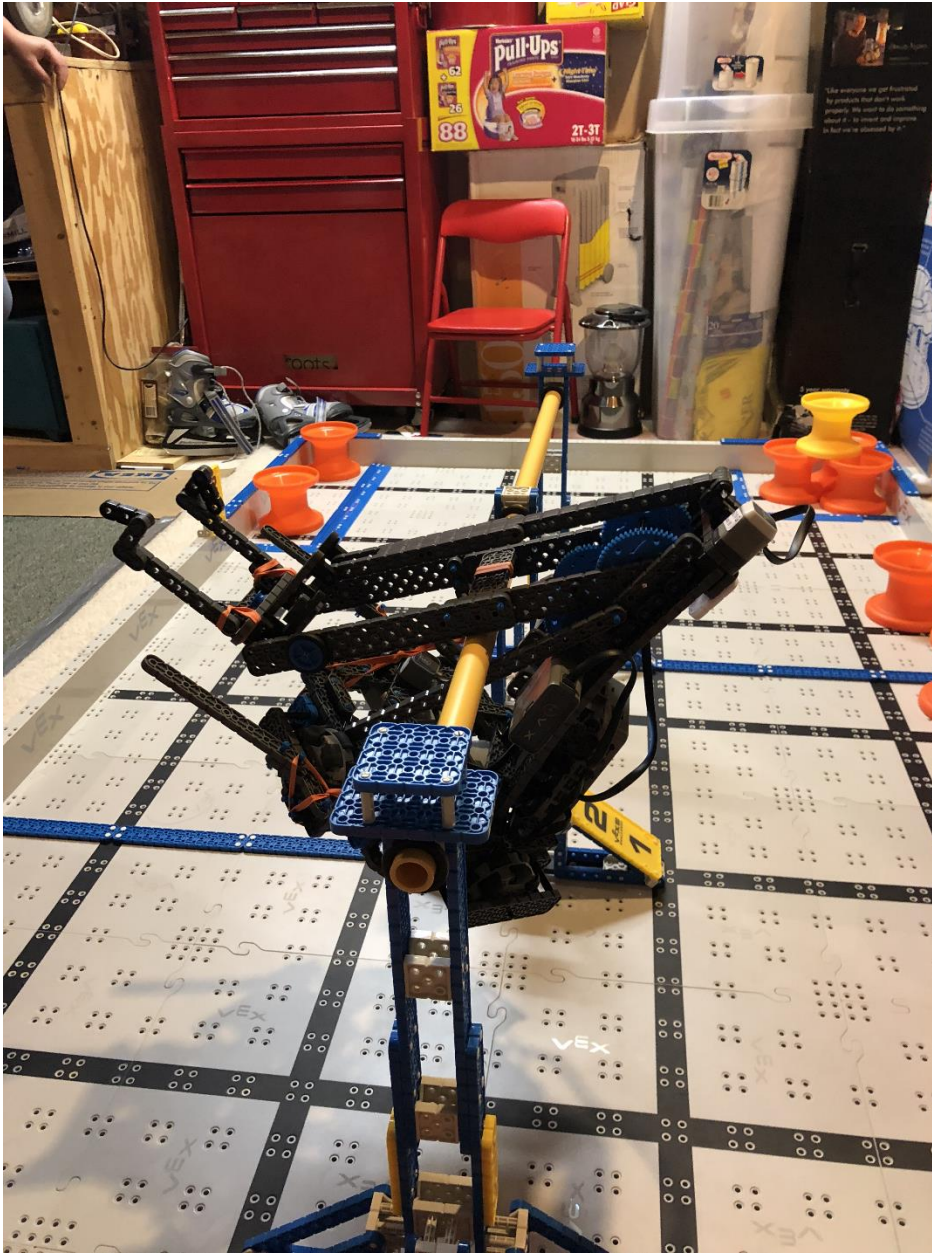
In addition to making our team confident, we have helped more girls get into STEM programs because of an event at the community center in our city. Teams from elementary school, middle school, high school and university gave presentations in front of about 50 guests to convince them to get interested in robotics. We also had a workshop afterwards where girls could come and try actually driving and programming our robot. All of the guests looked excited to join robotics. This event was a great learning experience for us on how to work together to make this workshop as fun as possible.



A role model we met at the community center is a woman working in the US army. She worked on programming and told a great story. She also presented a great video about her job. In the end she said that she hoped her words would inspire us to work hard on robotics and she hoped new people will join STEM programs.



In order to keep our team organized, what we do to let everyone contribute is we switch tasks every week and have different jobs for each task. For example, once when we were building our first robot, the flex robot, we split up into pairs, and each group would build a different part. Then we put it all together. We learned from this method all sorts of building and programming techniques, but also how to work together. We learned a lot about each other and how we think. This method helped us solve problems when something goes wrong.



Since we all have different ways of interpreting problems, we can give good suggestions. Our prior and new knowledge is always different from each other. This sometimes causes arguments, but when we solve the problem it is a great learning opportunity.

So this is what we did to improve at the practices, but the real improvement was at the competitions. The first competition, we were rookies at the VEX IQ competition. We still worked really hard, but we were stressed about things like “Where should we do inspection?”

“Where is the skills leaderboard?” Sometimes we were also arguing with each other, and we messed up a lot while driving. Although we still ended up taking home a 4th place, our team definitely had the potential to get at least 2nd.



The second competition was the improvement. Our team felt ready and confident. What we did before every teamwork challenge was, we discussed with our alliance team about our robot and what we are capable of doing. Depending on that, we made a plan of path and we practice the path. After we finished all of our teamwork challenges, we were in 5th place. So we moved on into the finals. In the finals we got 26 points with our alliance team, but another team also got 26 points. The judges decided on continuing to double finals. The rules were that if we tied again, whichever team put their controllers down first would win. We ended up getting 26 points again. But the other team only got 24 points. So we won!



This was a real learning experience for our team because now we know how to be a good team and have a good attitude. We have also learned a lot about building and programming. But the real learning? That is the fact that we have improved as people.

This article is submitted for VEX IQ Challenge Girl Powered Online Challenge.

Entrants: Anna Wang, Rae Yu, Karen Zeng

Team: 96219G Bemis Lighting Bears

Title: Improving Together As One