

95 Ma'am: The STEM Sisters

“Putting STEM sisters before STEM misters since 2018”



(95 M above in reindeer face paint at their home competition spreading holiday cheer and supporting Girl Powered)

“Girl power!” is a phrase starting to be used more and more by STEM related fields and us (95 M). We love it, considering we are the first **all girl** VEX Robotics team at our school (the Central Educational Center in Newnan, Georgia). Whenever we hear the phrase, we look around at our fellow **sisters**, because we are here today due to the hard work of those who came before us, and in turn we want to help pave the path and inspire the next generation of **girls** to pursue their dreams.

Our team consists of our team leader, Janie Edgar (left standing), a 12th grader who recently got accepted into Georgia Tech and helps design along with program the robot, Chloe Tomlinson (right standing), an 11th grader who is apart of the German Apprenticeship program and helps design the robot. Cassandra Martinez (left crouching), a 10th grader who is the driver and writes the journal for the team, and last but not least, Victoria

Kaercher (right crouching), an 8th grader who aids in building and also has an interest in programming and driving.

When picking fellow team members for the 2018-2019 season, Janie Edgar and Chloe Tomlinson decided to take a different approach than usual. They kept in mind the abilities of all those wishing to be a part of the team, but they mainly focused how everyone would interact together to ensure that the team would have a great season and be more like a family than a team. Through this process, they created an all girl team, because when they sat down to discuss options they knew almost immediately Victoria Kaercher and Cassandra Martinez would be perfect for the team and the team's sisterhood.



(Pictured above: 95 M winning the Design award at the West Forsyth Competition)

One of **95 M's** biggest goals is to promote communication within their team. Having girls of all age groups, there are many beautiful combinations of ideas that can arise but with them also conflict. By placing communication as the most important goal, everyone on the team is able to give their input and feel comfortable among each other.

“We look out for each other and admire each other’s weaknesses and strengths. I’ve been on a team where I never felt like my opinion mattered, and I’m proud to say that being apart of **95 M** feels completely different,” says Cassandra Martinez when asked about the teams communication skills.

Being apart of **95 M** is truly like being apart of a **sisterhood**. We all look up to our other sisters and try to make eachother proud. A concept we wish to spread to all girls in VEX robotics.

Other Contributions to **Girl Powered**



(Above: Janie Edgar and volunteers with students at CEC **Girl Powered** event)

In October of 2018, the CEC TriBots hosted their first ever Girl Powered Event which was lead by the event's Chairwoman, Janie Edgar (our team leader), with support from CEC's Engineering teachers, Pam and Scott Brown.

"We wanted to truly open up the world of STEM to middle school aged girls," explained Janie Edgar when asked about the event. "We brought together interested girls from all across the county, and spent the day leading them in fun, hands-on activities related to STEM so that they could experience it in a welcoming environment before they are potentially driven away from it and into other fields of study. Often times, girls do not even consider STEM careers and activities, because they are not fully exposed to it and consequently believe it would not be a place where they would belong. That was our motivating factor for hosting the STEM Event, because we want every girl to know she can do whatever she puts her mind to even if it is something new."

Looking back on the season we had, we remember how our team started out with familiar and unfamiliar faces, but through all of the after school practices, early Saturday mornings, and building the robots we became sisters and a family, instead of a team. We are looking forward to competing in our State VEX Competition and hopefully the World competition as well, but we are even more grateful for the opportunity to impact each other's lives and the lives of young girls in our community. We could not have made it through out the season without the inspiration from all of the women working in STEM fields or our mentors Pam Brown, Scott Brown, and Raymond Hiller. Our mentors provide us with unending support and always help us grow. They also encourage us to always reach out to

potential students who have interest in STEM but feel like they may not belong due to their gender or race. Without them, we would have never been inspired to become **95 Ma'am: The STEM Sisters**.



(Above: The CEC TriBots with their mentors Pam Brown, Scott Brown, and Raymond Hiller)

Credits

Entrants: Janie Edgar and Cassandra Martinez

Team: **95 M**

Title: **95 Ma'am: The STEM Sisters**