

Girl Powered: Not Another Hundred Years

By Hewitt Robotics Team 11442N



Isabelle and Lynn holding their robot and award

At the time of our country's founding in 1776, Abigail Adams urged her husband John to “Remember the Ladies” while he was creating laws for our newly formed country. She also warned him of the consequences if he did not, that women would “format a Rebellion.” It took almost 150 years for all American women to earn the constitutional right to vote. After another 100 years, where are we? Women are still fighting for equality. This is very true in science and engineering, where women are very underrepresented. Programs like Girl Powered are critical to involving young girls in STEM.

In school, we are currently learning about the Women’s Suffrage Movement and



A female mechanic in WWI

how World War I was a turning point. Since men were drafted and sent overseas, women took over jobs that had traditionally been held by men. For example, women became frontline nurses overseas, ambulance drivers, mechanics and Yeoman in the navy

(where they were paid the same as the men). During the midst of this crisis, women stepped up and took on roles that most people had thought women were incapable of performing. This helped persuade the country that women should be entitled the right to vote.

A century later, women are still having to prove that they are equal to men, including in science and engineering jobs. As of 2015 women represent 28% of Science and

Engineering occupations according to the National Science Board. Even in VEX, girls make up only 24% of the total amount of participants!

As a team composed of two strong and independent-minded young women, we feel driven towards STEM even though it has been dominated by men. We find it stimulating, challenging, and fun. We also love competing against other teams. We see being an all-girl team not as a weakness but rather a strength. Our friendship and trust in one in other's ability allow us to perform well in times of immense pressure which is crucial to competing. Through robotics, we are able to meet many different kids from a wide variety of backgrounds. In the teamwork challenge, we are able to not only compete against but compete with different teams with very different styles. In the competitions, it doesn't matter whether that we are a girls team, we are equals on the field. And when we triumph we triumph together. We are also role models for the younger students at our all-girls school and at the competitions. We think that being a role model means having a level of humility and generosity towards other competitors no matter your rank or age.

Let's hope that we don't have to wait another hundred years for women to be equal to men in STEM and all areas of life and that Team 11442N can contribute to the future of women in STEM, as well as inspire other girls to become scientist and engineers.