

Girl Power

By Grace Drake

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My name is Grace Drake. I am a girl on one of the robotics teams at Southwood Elementary. I have been doing robotics, in 5th and 6th grade, for 2 years.

I don't feel like I am treated any different because I am a girl on my robotics team. All of my teammates, coaches, and opposing teams all treat me with consideration. As a girl on my robotics team, I have a role as a leader. Two other girls, Colleen and Adeline are in charge of our Engineering Notebook, and are part of our coding team. I am the main coder on my team. Colleen and I have been roboting for 2 years, and we still learn new things together. This is Adeline's first year of robotics. She is very shy, but she has started to come out of her shell. She proposes great ideas all the time! I have shared tips and tricks with her about coding and driving. She is growing every day, and I hope she will be a girl leader next year when I leave to go to the middle school.



Adeline and Nika Getting ready to drive at a competition



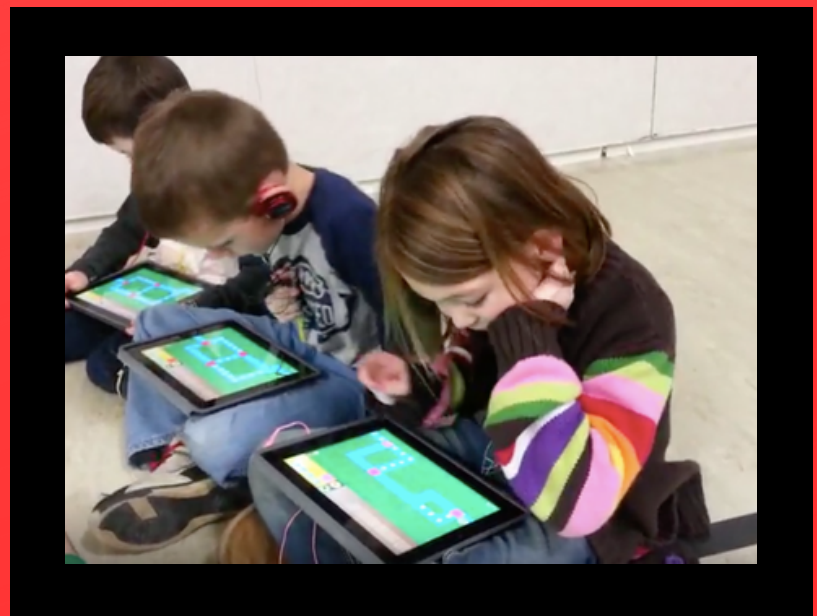
Kindgartener made a turkey out of Vex robotics with his classmates

Our school encourages many different groups of students to try new things all the time, like robotics. One way our school promotes S.T.E.M. is with a new curriculum we just purchased, Project-Lead-The-Way. It is a program where the teachers help us learn new ways to use Science, Technology, Robotics, and

Math in the real world. Mrs. Tyson, our art teacher and one of our robotics coaches, used PLTW to introduce her students from

preschool-6th grade to Vex Robotics. Third grade students are invited to try out for our team. Our students experience coding through the "Hour of Code."

Mrs. Schmidt, our technology teacher and STEM Mentor, goes into classrooms and does an hour of practicing code.



1st graders playing kodeable for the hour of code

One way our robotics team encourages many different groups of students is by having a try out in May and August. The try out in May encourages all students who are interested in joining the robotics team. We hold a special try out specifically for new students in August. One new student that was added in August was Massey! She is still on our team this year. She is an accomplished coder, builder, and driver.



Massey coding on her second year

Our whole school had a pep rally last year for our robotics teams when we went to State. We showed videos of us at practice and at our competitions. We had several girls on the team last year. I believe that a lot of the girls who joined the team this year were inspired by our success.

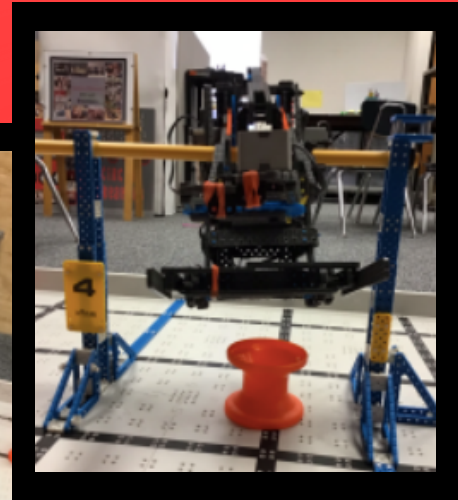


I believe that having students that come from different backgrounds and different ways of life makes our team stronger. On our team, we have 8 students. I am very detail oriented, organized, and professional.

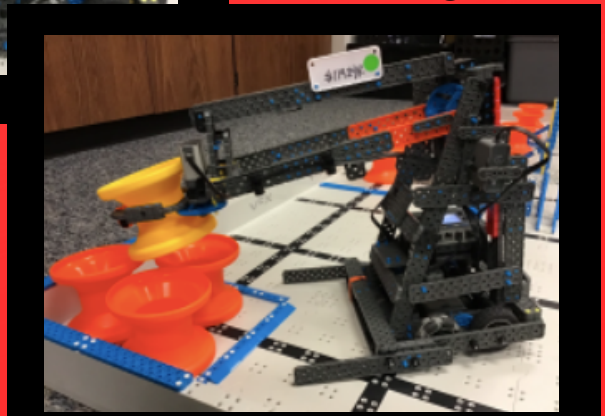
Nika and I with our robot While another team member, Nika, is a very creative thinker. When she and I meet in the middle, we can accomplish many things. What if we were all the same? Our robot would be boring and we

wouldn't have different ideas. When we were first building our robot I wanted to build it one way and Logan wanted to build it a different way.

We compromised! Now, we have an amazing robot that can 4-point hang, grab hubs, push hubs, and grab high hubs.



our robot grabbing hubs, hanging, and stacking hubs



At the beginning of the year our team all worked together on each section of robotics. We were all builders, coders, and drivers. Now we all have chosen jobs and have 3 girls on the coding team.



Everyone drives and helps fix the robot. When we went to our 2nd competition at Flora Elementary we got 1st place in coding. Adeline, Colleen, and I worked very hard to get our code to score 9 points. The day before

Colleen, Adeline, Mrs. Schmidt (our STEM mentor) and I with our 1st place coding award competition the code crashed and ran terribly. We all had to work very hard to get it up to the 9 point goal we set for ourselves. The 3 of us learned a very important lesson of never giving up even when it seems impossible!

On my team, we all treat each other equally. No one is treated any different than another person. When I hear the phrase “girl power” I think of how lucky I am to live



in a place that encourages girls to do anything they want to. I am taught to dream big, and shown that you can do anything you put your mind to. I realize that I have grown up with many people by my side encouraging me. I also realize that other girls may have grown up feeling like they are unimportant and told that boys are superior to



girls. I feel very disappointed that it is 2019 and we still have girls that believe that someone else is better than them just because they are different.



I am very proud to say our robotics team was started in 2016 by 2 girls, Mrs. Tyson and Mrs. Hyden. They are very dedicated and encouraging to our team. Our first year with a robotics team we had only one girl. Our second year we had 5 girls and 8 boys. Our second year was the year that I started robotics. We went

Mrs. Tyson and Mrs. Hyden with their new robotics shirts

to state, put together videos, and encouraged students to

accompany us on our journey. Now, on our third year, we have 9 girls and 7 boys. As

I talked about before, we have a coding team of all girls, a driving team with 9 girls, and a building team with 9 girls. I am very proud to be on a team of hard working, dedicated, cheerful girls. Avery is new to robotics and she is continually getting better at driving and building. We continue to work hard to encourage each girl to dream big and work hard!



Avery and Adeline driving

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