True Treasure

We are Team 2014P Sandpiper Pirates (Evelyn, Amishi, Alice, Shriya, and Hanlin) for VEX IQ Challenge Next Level (2018-2019).

Engaging with VEX IQ Challenge, we, the pirates, have discovered the true treasure that will encourage us to explore new area, empower us to face any challenge, and strengthen our capacity to thrive in any situation.

So, what's the true treasure?

Let's start the story how VEX IQ robotics program was started at our school.

A long time ago, a girl was wondering what kind of career would drive her passion. She wanted to dedicate her time to serve. Later, as the result, she became an educator.

Inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. "The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically... Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education.", she was thinking what kind of true education she could offer for her students.

In 2014 she came to Sandpiper School and became our principal. To the right is our principal Ms. Moore's picture taken at her school picture day.

She introduced VEX IQ program to our school. Although there was no funding from the school district or from the state to support the robotics program, she volunteered her time and energy to run VEX IQ program at the school.

Our parents were also thinking what they could do to support us and provide us opportunities to grow. Therefore, Team Sandpiper Pirates was formed.

Evelyn, a fourth grader, loves history and math. She was curious about robotics activities, and she joined Team 2014P. At the team kickoff meeting last September, we were asked by the team mentor to brainstorm our team name.

Our school and our community are surrounded by water. It triggered Evelyn's idea to name the team as Pirates. Pirates work together as a crew to get jobs done. Evelyn wanted the team to be able to communicate and work together so that we can do the best we can. Impressed by such profound meaning of the team name and her thoughtfulness, our team mentor appointed Evelyn as the captain of Team 2014P Sandpiper Pirates.

Shriya, a six grader, remembers the day she went to a Lego store and came out with a Lego Mindstorm kit. This kit had all the materials to build Lego robots. At that time Shriya didn't really have any interest in programming and robotics. But after that day she knew a new hobby came into her life.

Shriya used the Lego Mindstorm for her first Genius Hour project in sixth grade. Her Genius Hour project was to build a cardboard maze and build a robot and program the robot to go through the maze. It was successful!

Amishi, a fourth grader, likes dancing and singing. She is happy like a bird. She is always willing to help. She was curious what her big sister Shriya was doing. She joined Team 2014P along with her sister Shriya. Amishi really wanted to help her sister build the robot. But she did not know how to offer her help.

Shriya was discussing her idea to her mom. Amishi in the middle was pondering how she could help.

Amishi was very happy to see her uncle Ash come over to support our team. Ash and Hanlin were working together to resolve the broken chain issue.

Amishi was not sure if she was interested in building or driving the robot. It's not as easy as you expected.

Alice, a fifth grader, is all about doing and thinking creatively.

Alice wanted to build a robot that will help her carrying art supplies. Alice's parents ordered Alice a VEX IQ super kit, but Alice could not find some structure parts by following the instructions by herself.

When Alice brought her super kit to the team meeting, Evelyn helped Alice locate the right parts, and Amishi shared the knowledge learned from her uncle. The three girls were thrilled when working together and they realized that *learning is fun*.

Hanlin, a sixth grader, is the only one who had experience from the previous VEX IQ challenge. He went to 2018 CREATE US Open Robotics Championship and 2018 VEX IQ Robotics World Championship.
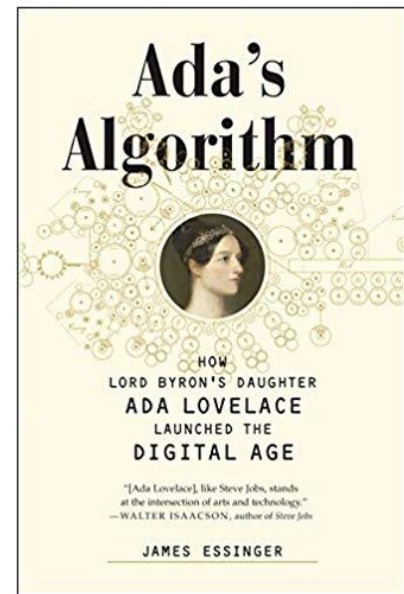
Hanlin is curious about everything and is always willing to share every bit of knowledge that he has learned. Hanlin shared with the team he learned from YouTube and other sources how to build, modify, and program his robot.

When visiting Computer History Museum in Mountain View, California, Hanlin wondered who invented the modern computer.

Hanlin was amazed to find out that it's a girl who pioneered computer science. He learned that Ada Lovelace's work two hundred years ago inspired Alan Turing's breakthrough for modern computer science.

Ada is often called the world's first programmer, and Ada programming language is named in her honor.

It was a wow moment for Hanlin!

As you read the story here, we hope you discovered the true treasure that Team 2014P Sandpiper Pirates wanted to share with you. Your ability is not judged by your gender, race, color or age. As long as you believe that *learning is fun, you can do it!*

Empowered by the treasure that we discovered, we are building confidence in our ability to face any challenges. No matter what challenges in exploring STEM research projects or participating VEX IQ tournaments, we are having more fun.

We chose the gear ratio as our STEM research project. It may be a challenging topic for some of us. With the true treasure we have, we conducted the research and presented together with our smiles.

We were nervous at the first tournament. When we realized that we have the true treasure that learning is fun, we were looking forward to the second tournament and we had more fun.

We participated two tournaments last year. We earned the Teamwork 2nd place and 3rd place. Our story will continue. We are looking forward to a fantastic and fun-filled new year!

Hanlin designed a mascot "flying doge" for VEX IQ Next Level. When you believe learning is fun, you will absorb the power of knowledge and soar to the next level like a flying doge.

Credits: "True Treasure"

Sandpiper Pirates, Team 2014P
(Evelyn Whiting, Amishi Shukla, Alice Asoyan, Shriya Shukla, and Hanlin Su)

Essinger, J., *Ada's Algorithm: How Lord Byron's Daughter Ada Lovelace Launched the Digital Age,* Kindle Ed., New York: Melville House, 2014