

The CSMS Girl
Power
team is
GIRL POWERED!



Girl Power

Girl Powered. Two words, yet so much meaning. What does girl power mean to us? Now, we could go on and on about what girl power means but in one word, girl power means “together”. Everyone on our team working together. Having fun, together. Putting our differences aside, to come together to work for a bigger cause.



(The team eating pizza and having fun at a competition)

To any other person February 14th sounds like Valentine’s day. However, for South Florida, February 14th immediately reminds us of the tragedy we experienced. On that day, seventeen innocent people with full lives ahead of them were stripped of their hopes and dreams as they were shot at a place where they are supposed to be safe. Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, which is just one mile from our school, ended up becoming a shooting range for a deranged killer. This event was not only damaging to MSD but to our community. Our team, CSMS Girl Power, almost didn’t end up going to the States Competition because of how vulnerable we still were from what took place. Although we wanted to take our time and mourn, we decided to take power and rise above. We knew, that no matter how much this impacted us we needed to use our girl power

to get through this. Although February 14th was the worst day of our lives it gave us the strength to get the Worlds competition.



[\(Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School memorial for the 17 victims\)](#)

Additionally, someone who has inspired us throughout our robotics journey is Dorothy Vaughan. Robotics has created amazing friendships for our team, so when our team is together and not working on robotics, we are usually doing something else. One time, we decided to watch the movie “Hidden figures”. Once we finished the movie, our team felt so empowered. In Hidden Figures, Dorothy Vaughan served as the one of the brains behind one of the greatest operations in history: the launch of astronaut John Glenn into orbit. In the movie we saw that she is as strong and courageous as any man. Girl power isn’t only about women coming together. Girl power, like feminism, is not to say that women are better than men but that women can be just as good as men. That everyone can achieve the same things with dedication and hard work and that something, like gender and race shouldn’t put you at a disadvantage. Dorothy Vaughan bridged the divide between male and female worlds. She displayed the ability to survive in a world seemingly dictated by men. Just like her VEX provides us with an amazing opportunity to spread our wings and prove ourselves in these male dominated lines of work and hobby. Dorothy Vaughan inspires our team to not give up and to persevere no matter what comes in our way!



(Dorothy Vaughan in real life shown next to Octavia Spencer, actress who had played her in “Hidden Figures”)

Our team has created an inclusive environment that attracts a more diverse group of students. Last year, when the CSMS Girl Power Team qualified for Worlds, we merged our team with that of Stallion Pride, because they had a phenomenal STEM Research project. Their project was a robot that can go into fires and complete tasks that firefighters are not able to. With Stallion Pride’s excellent project, and our robot skills, we made an outstanding team. Not only did we have the best time at worlds as one team, but we also made such strong friendships, spending hours together, something we wouldn’t have made if it weren’t for VEX. This year we wanted to show new people how fun robotics can be, so we decided to add 2 new people to our team. The people we added were hesitant to join first, but now they love robotics. Also, since we believe girl power does not only mean for girls, one of the people that we added to our team, was in fact a boy!



[\(Our team photo for our notebook\)](#)

Before robotics, we were all acquaintances. Just the people you saw in the halls, maybe had a few classes with. Our personalities ranged from being the loud kid to the quiet kid in the back of class. If you knew all of us individually, you would have never guessed we were a team. We are all tremendously stubborn, fought over petty things and wouldn't change our minds even if it was for the benefit of the team. However, because our team is so inclusive and therefore diverse, we are bound to have some sort of difference in perspective. In fact, diversity of our perspectives is what makes our group so strong. Now in the beginning, we ourselves will admit, our team did not get along because of our head strong opinions. But slowly we realized, that we could use all our differences to our advantage. For example, we rebuilt our robot 3 times because no one could agree on a design, everyone had too many different ideas. Each time we rebuilt our robot it was not successful. But, over time, it clicked that our team must compromise to function well. Our robot is now stronger than ever. We figured out a way to combine all our ideas so that nobody was left unsatisfied with it. We learned that whatever criticism we got, was the truth. Since all of us are so different, we recognize each other's weaknesses and help to enhance each other in everything we do. We all have our flaws but together, we're a beacon of strength.



(Aisha, Pooja, and Zhane at the first competition cheering for our team)

The way we decide who gets what role on our team, is very effective. We first see where everyone's interests lie. For example, someone on our team has a love for video games. Since they love video games, we decided to make them a driver. Like this, someone on our team loves coding, so they are a programmer. Someone has a love for creating new things, therefore they are a builder. Like this, all 8 people on our team do something they love, making it an overall balanced use of our capabilities but more so a fun experience. However, although most people on our team's job correlates with their interest, everyone first tries everything, just in case they find something new they might enjoy. For instance, someone on our team prior to robotics, did not know they would be so good at programming, but because they tried it, they now excel in it. From doing this we learned that not everyone is good at everything and that everyone needs to find their specialty to do well.



(Aaliyah, Hannah, and Cassidy adjusting the rubber bands that secures the claw)

In the end, girl power is what makes us a team. Girl power is about being together, and that's what our team does. Our team works together, strives together and has fun together. Inspirations like Dorothy Vaughan teach us that we can do anything, regardless of gender or race, if we just put our minds to it. With time, we learned to work together for our team to be successful and that horrible tragedies should not bring us down, but in fact make us rise and unite as one to achieve something bigger than ourselves.

Dedication:

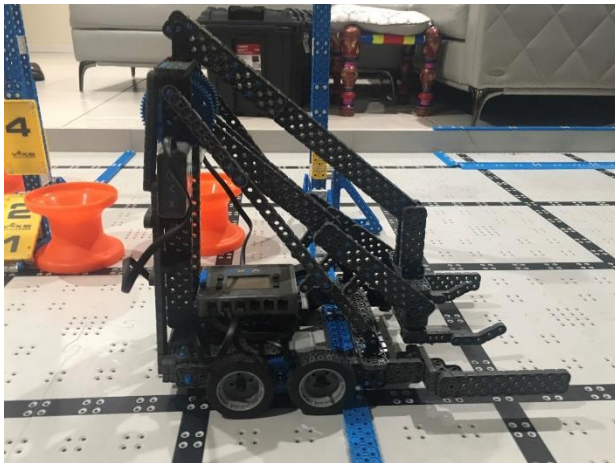
Our robotics team would like to dedicate our essay to Mrs. Roberts for nurturing our program for nearly a year and helping it grow to the size it is today. We would also like to thank VEX IQ for giving us this outlet for all our creativity. To our parent volunteers and coaches and judges we thank them for making any of this possible. And lastly on behalf of all the robotics teams worldwide we would like to thank Google for providing us this platform to share our story.

Credits:

Entrants: Pooja Gudoor, Aaliyah Smikle and rest of the team members.

Team Number: 50674A

Title: Girl Power



(Our robot)