

# From My Experience

A Girl Powered Essay



***“Science is not a boy’s game, it’s not a girl’s game.***

***It’s everyone’s game.***

***It’s about where we are and where we’re going.***

***There’s more exploration to come.”***

***-Nichelle Nicholsn***

# Meeting Vex



Hi! My name is Lily Burtis. I am a current Senior at Berthoud High School and a proud member of team 1069E Critical Mass. This has been my experiences with Vex as of right now. My first interaction with Vex was signing up for the class the end of seventh grade. I had just finished the Lego robotics class that year and was excited for the next step. I finished the class with a great grade and a newfound interest! In the class I was one of 4 girls in comparison to 17 boys. I chose to work by myself, none of the other girls seemed truly interested. I didn't let that stop me though. Not only did I get the highest grade in the class, I also found my future.



# Year one. Starstruck



Andrew, Julian, and Me right before a match at our home meet at Berthoud.

Blame my cousin Paul for helping me become a member of team 1069E. Paul saw that I wanted to join the club and roped me into joining his team. The team was average, never being bad but they had not been the greatest in a long time. That continued into this first year, not knowing my place on this team was hard so I just stayed quiet. Even quiet when I was coaching which, looking back on it, having me coach that first year was a mistake in the making, it wasn't my place on the team. But I did design the t-shirts!



# Year Two In the Zone



Julian Holding our original arm mechanism.



Emily using the Miter saw and using it well.

After an average year, I kept with the team, excited to just continue to learn and grow. The new year brought In the Zone, a game we initially dreaded. Cones are very intimidating upon first glance. We found that once we had a robot that was consistent with its actions, we did well. The increase in performance was also helped by the new roles the team members organized ourselves into, the main one being me as the secondary driver. The role involved a lot of precision and control, the things I excel at. I took the job seriously as I loved doing it. We also became a seven member team as two new eager freshman girls named Ellie and Emily also joined. No longer being the only girl helped give me the confidence I needed to practice as the best secondary driver this team has possible ever seen. And that helped get us to worlds.



# Year Three: Turning Point



Matthew, Julian, and I right before one of our first Worlds matches of the year.



Counting initial autonomous to see if our team won before continuing into driver control. Taken at the Colorado State competition.

Riding on the confidence gained by going to Kentucky and seeing what Worlds had to offer, we set out to repeat magic. At the first meet of the year, our home meet nonetheless, we lost, pretty hard. So, we started again, making a stronger robot that could exceed in all areas. We worked hard on our notebook and creating our presentation. It was then, by the coordination and confidence of all our team members, that we won Excellence after Excellence, Design after Design, and eventually, got to Worlds one more time.



# Year 4: Tower Takeover



This year, we are a team, a team who has achieved so much, a team with new members, and a team that lost members, but a team. Everyone can work on everything in the preparation of the robot, notebook and presentation. Everyone is able and willing to spread and give ideas out. This year already feels like no other year we've had yet, I just know it will be grand! We know we might not see Worlds again, but that thought won't stop us from trying our very best.



**Dear Any Girl Wanting to be in Vex,**

Don't be afraid or intimidated. Be proud. Find people you feel you can be yourself around, even if getting acquainted and comfortable will take some time. The best thing you can be is yourself but make sure you're always learning and improving. Use this program to learn and grow, getting to know the people you're working with. As Nicelle Nicholson said, creating and inventing and engineering is for everyone, not just boys, not just girls, just people. Even if you only have a "not good, not bad" year, you never leave Vex empty handed. Keep being you and keep being awesome, because I know that the path for girls here is still being paved, but it gets a little easier everyday.

Your Truly,

**Lily Burtis**

Graduating Senior 2020

# Credits

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