

Girl Power

By Liliana Johnson

What does girl-powered mean to me? Our team has both boys and girls on it, but we definitely are a girl-powered team. I say this because girls have an equal voice, equal vote and are equally involved in every part of our robotics program. This has not always been the case.

Worldwide, girls haven't been as involved in STEM as boys have been. One of my STEM role models is Sally Ride. She is the first female American astronaut. She got to work a robotic arm as part of her flight. After Sally Ride went to space, she wrote books for children, especially girls, to encourage them to love science and math. One of my favorite quotes of hers is, "I would like to be remembered as someone who was not afraid to do what she wanted to do, and as someone who took risks along the way to achieve her goals."



Photo of Sally Ride from Nasa's website

Locally, it has also been hard to get girls involved in STEM. In past years, our robotics program has been focused on boys doing the building and driving, while girls were working on the engineering notebook and STEM research project. There was no rule about it, but that's just how it always ended up happening. That changed when we had our first girl driver...me! I was so nervous the first time that I got up to drive, but I remembered Sally Ride and wanted to be someone who was not afraid to do what I wanted to do. I wanted to be someone who took risks to achieve my goals, just like she did. It was so much fun, I wanted to encourage others to try it, just like Sally did. I reached out to my friends and told them to give it a shot. Now almost half the members of our program are girls, and we have had two new girl drivers. Girls are equally involved in building parts of our robot and sharing new ideas to our team members.



Scarlett is one of the drivers on our team. This is her first year, but we have won Tournament Champions and Excellence at both tournaments we've been to! She's off to a great start!

This year, our robotics program made a special effort to get girls involved in the building and designing process by starting the year off with an all-girls robotics camp where we built our first robot of the season. We spent one day with just the girls working in teams of two to build the Clutch. It was fun to get to build a robot from start to finish and taught us along the way. It gave us more confidence so when the regular season started, we were able to get more involved. It wasn't our final design, but it did help us get ideas and speak up when building our final robot.

On our specific team, girls do everything that boys do. We drive, program, build and write in the engineering notebook. The boys also drive, build and write in the engineering notebook. We tried to do things we liked best, but we also switched it up, so everyone got to experience everything.



This is our team. Team 55909A. We even convinced the boys to wear pink shirts!

Equal voices for both girls and boys are important in every part of the world today. We are happy to have girl role-models like Sally Ride, and to have more girls involved in our local robotics program. We look forward to getting even more girl-power on our teams in the future!

Credits:

Title- Girl Power

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