

## The Unity of Girl Powered, Regardless of Who You Are

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” A quote said by Eleanor Roosevelt. It still rings true today. The inspiration for Girl Powered shows how to be empowered and also working on their dreams. Girl Powered can simply not be defined by what has been described in the dictionary. It is an experience and all relate to different people’s perspectives. As from the perspective of girl powered each person had their own definitions and their own ideas of what it could mean. There is no right or wrong way for what it means. The real question for what “Girl Power” is what does it mean on the robotics team. On the basis of experience, girl powered itself and who they stand up to.



These are some of the conversations that I had with teammates and hear what they had to say about their experiences on the team and what they have done to create a more diversified environment. "I know for a fact that there are multiple people who know how to program, C.A.D., build, strategies, and design. Even people like myself, who haven't had much experience in robotics, get to learn how to do a multitude of things to help the team" (Cooper Moon, Senior). To be included though not being familiar with the team gives the meaning of helping one another out regardless of where the skill level lies. "Everyone has their own ideas and thoughts that we can hear out and use or just take into consideration and use later" (Sydney Nguyen, Mentor). To be heard and be visible is a major part of the team. When people are listening to each other it ensures that people are being heard and not being left in the shadows. Being part of the team is supposed to feel like everyone belongs, on the team itself, there are so much diversity and people picking each other up when others are down. Often times when I am at robotics, I am the only sole female junior that is on the robotics team. I have never once felt like I was in the shadows or I was overpowered. Never have I once was left isolated. Whenever I am part of the team I feel as though I am being welcomed with open arms. Nobody is really trying to outdo one another. We all want to be in this together and create a great diverse environment that makes everyone feel like a family.



Over a long period of time, I have asked people what Girl Powered meant to them. “I suppose it embodies the idea that women can do just as much as men can. I guess the idea of just being proud of being a woman and not being ashamed of that” (Jack Luukkonen, Mentor). To have the embodiment of empowerment can mean so much and not only to feel as though men and women are equal to one another it gives women a surefire chance that they are able to do the same job that a man can do. No person can tell someone that they are “Not good enough for anything.” When in reality if someone is offered the opportunity to do something they, with a sheer determination, will do it. “It’s great to have other people, especially females because it brings a fresh new perspective and helps on the robotics team” (Tyson Mushatt, Senior). To be open to new perspectives that are on the teams help create diversity and also the understanding that all people have different ideas. No one is the same and as the team gathers more creative, collaborative minds. It creates a diverse team that elevates our motto of “Building

Successful Students One Robot at a Time.” We build success on our own power, work together and understand our differences and learn to overcome them. To me personally, I have always been empowered by the aspect of girl powered. When I go to schools to show off the robots or even talk about robotics to little kids, their eyes shine with so much curiosity.

Especially girls that are in elementary school are so excited to tell their parents that they want to join robotics. This is the impact of girl powered to share the love of robotics to others and create a chain reaction of a new generation of people to be in STEM. When visiting the girl scouts in St.Cloud they couldn't have been more happy to see another girl on a well known robotics team. The young empowered girl scouts caught on well to what VEX Robotics was about. Seeing their faces light up when their program worked, or even when they drove our robot. The young girls have such a bright future ahead of them. One robot at a time.

Everyone has their role models, for some, it will be someone that they really look up to. “My STEM role model is Adam Johnson, our coach, he is always there and telling us that we can do it, and we are doing the best. He always keeps a positive attitude and makes us stay positive” (Abby Klein, Mentor). To have someone constantly showing positivity and being there for everyone creates an atmosphere that someone is there to look out for us. Someone is always there to catch us when we fall. “I say personally Matt, (Mentor), because he really helps us a lot, I look at what he builds and what he has done and I kind of go off of what he builds.” (Zach Peterson, Junior). To have someone constantly mentor and help out regardless of what they are doing shows what it means to have a functioning team. Nobody is left to do things themselves, as we go on with everything we always know that someone is willing to help on our team. For me, I have always seen my grandfather as a role model. All throughout his life he has worked diligently and always trying to improve his skills when it comes to fixing cars. Never has he once given up and just quit because it was too hard. He always found a solution to what he

was trying to fix. With the sheer determination, it gives me the power and hopes that anything no matter how difficult the task may be, there will always be a solution.