

Girls in Robotics, our Testimony

Being a girl in robotics is a very challenging yet rewarding experience for me. In an industry mostly dominated by boys, I feel girls are outnumbered and sometimes feel inferior.



I think that there are plenty of stereotypes saying that boys should be working, while girls do house chores, such as cleaning and caring for children. My team and I are pressured to feel as if girls cannot accomplish what boys do. Stereotypes say that girls supposedly cannot do hands-on or rough activities (football /engineering /architecture). By

having an all-girls team, my team and I want to inspire younger girls and let them know that they can do anything if they set their mind on it. The hardest thing for me to witness is going to competitions and realizing that more than 75% of the competitors there are boys, while a small amount are girls. I think this happens since girls are scared to face the reality of not being taken seriously, and I am concerned that not many girls will step up to the challenge.

Being in robotics means a lot of commitment. We are together almost all day working on our robot. Getting our team together is sometimes a hard task. Naturally, we will argue with each other while trying to express our ideas. Despite all this I feel that we are like a family.

There are several positive things about being a girl in robotics for me. One being having the opportunity to influence younger girls to go for their goals. Also, we can change the stereotype of young girls not being strong enough for onerous jobs. If we get more girls to get into robotics or architectural jobs, I think it will be a change for the better.



~Mia

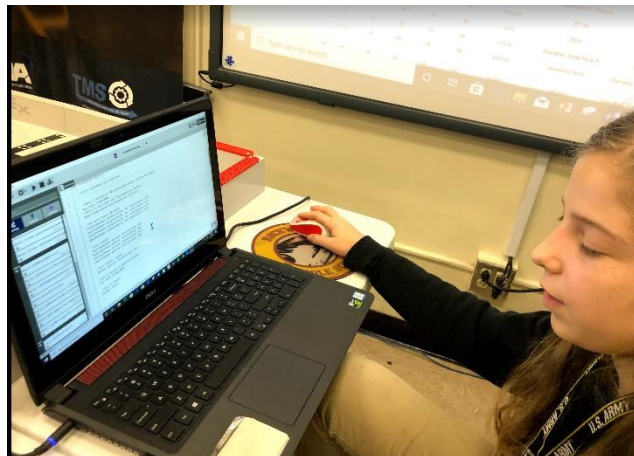
Being a girl in robotics is a sometimes irksome but helpful, fun, and a rewarding experience for me. It can be frustrating because it feels as though there is a lot of pressure on me and the rest of my team. We are not only a middle school VEX team, but also an “all girls” team. It feels as though people are always watching us and expecting us to do well, as though we better prove that we deserve to be here. Because of this it can be very stressful. Even though I don’t believe in stereotypes, I still know that sometimes I have trouble understanding what other boys and sometimes other girls think, and sometimes I



feel discombobulated and alone when I am the only girl and as though I’m drowning in a dark void where no one will even bother listening to what I have to say. In my school robotics magnet, there are only a handful of girls in 6th grade and even less in 7th and 8th. I have some issues with stress and that makes

being a girl even harder. I have met many boys that have stereotypes like we are too weak to be able to handle pressure, or that we should only work on the notebook because we have pretty handwriting. On our team, we try to be all inclusive and let everyone work on everything. Sometimes I feel like we have missed opportunities because we are girls. I think more girls should get into not only robotics but engineering and many other fields. Sometimes it’s beneficial to have another point of view and girls have that and many other things to offer to robotics. I think that gender has absolutely no effect on ability to work. We live in Miami, a pretty traditional

environment where these ideas and concepts are prevalent in day-to-day life. In my family I have always been encouraged to do things because I like them or am good at them, not because I am a girl. Sadly, in my community many activities are encouraged based on gender stereotypes, breeding these ideas.



~ Eva

Being a girl in robotics is tough for me by itself, but it is especially difficult because I have Attention Deficiency Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD). Due to the fact that I have ADHD it is very difficult to concentrate and stay calm. But being a girl in robotics can make it twice as difficult to communicate with others. In my opinion, there are a lot less girls than boys in robotics, and it makes me feel frustrated. I joined robotics to make a difference in the percentage of girls that are in robotics. Most people tend to doubt me as well as my team and jump to conclusions because of prevalent stereotypes and the fact that we are girls.



Because of that other teams don't choose us for alliance selection because they might think that we are not smart enough. Not only do the stereotypes and constant negativity bring me down but so does the fact that people often judge me and my team because I am hyper and a girl. Most people also doubt us because girls have always been

discriminated and judged historically. Also, being a girl in robotics is hard for me because in my experience, boys want to only want to help and acknowledge other boys. But being in a girls team improves my robotics experience because we get to make a difference and we all feel less alone. Also, robotics calms me down and I feel like people don't give me a chance to do what helps me feel better and more grounded.



~ Jackie



Being a girl in robotics is hard for me and I feel lot of pressure because I know that some people don't think girls are good enough to be in robotics just because they have it instilled in them that girls are weak or that they don't have enough experience however, I know that I and other girls are capable of exactly the same things as boys are if people would just hear us out and give us a chance.



Boys tend to condescend and dismiss my ideas and act very demeaning to other girls on my team. I know this because in my robotics class I am one of the few girls and feel as though I am forced to excel, never make a mistake, and fight to have other team members even listen to my ideas. There are only two other girls in my robotics and engineering class and sometimes I feel alone and

have trouble communicating. It can be very hard, but my team is always there to support me and even though it's hard, it is one of the funnest and most rewarding things I have ever done.

~ Maya

Being a girl in robotics makes me feel empowered and as though I am making a difference. Because there is a very small community of girls in the fields of engineering and robotics, being one is very special because you get to create and solve problems in unique ways, and you can inspire other people. I haven't personally had many problems with being a girl in robotics but during competitions, when we are allied



with boys it feels awkward to talk to them because they do better than us, but I know that this isn't a reason to give up. When we are competing against many boys, I feel as though they dismiss us as worthy opponents. Because many boys move quickly and do better than our team, it makes me feel like we are slow, but I know that no matter what, I have to persevere and keep going. I also strongly believe that girls are also capable of anything and that boys aren't the only people who can successfully do robotics or engineering.



~ Emily



On January 11, 2019, Rockway Middle School, our school, hosted a VEX IQ competition for the elementary school students. We along with former 9393G members and Rockway alumni did our best to empower and inspire the girls attending the competition. This involved a special meeting, photographs, light-up crowns, and short interviews about their thoughts on girls in robotics. Our main goal

was to inspire young girls to get interested in STEM. The Rock-G-Bots alumni shared what inspired them to continue robotics. Then, we went around the room and had all the girls share their name and what they wanted to be when they grew up. We think that sharing our stories helped inspire them to keep going and persevering through their problems.

Our all-girl robotics team 9393G, both with alumnae, former 9393G (currently in High School, encouraging elementary counterparts to pursue STEAM careers during the Elementary Qualifier hosted by our Middle School, Jan.11, 2020.



Credits

Students: Emily Tamayo, Eva Rotberg, Jacqueline Casares, Maya Prieto, Mia Campbell

Team: 9393G

Title: Girls in Robotics, our Testimony