

“We Rise by Lifting Others”

Space Cookies 1868A

The name of our team, Space Cookies is taken from our two main sponsors, NASA and Girl Scouts hence “Space” for NASA and “Cookies” for Girl Scouts. We are an all-girls team with three other sister teams, four teams in total. Our team is always willing to lend a helping hand to any team that needs it. At this year’s Sacred Heart Middle School Competition, we noticed that another fellow Girl Scout troop of younger girls was having trouble fitting into the 18 in. by 18 in. by 18 in. size restrictions during inspections. Our team made sure to offer any help or advice that we could give that would be of use. We recommended various solutions and offered to help them change their design. Even though they were not able to compete for the first couple of matches, we encouraged them to stay. They fixed their problems, allowing them to compete for the rest of the competition. We also advised them to size check their robot before future competitions. Using our experience with robotics to help younger girl scouts during the stress of competition was a moment that reminded us of how rewarding it can feel to assist someone even with a relatively small task.

Girl power is a phrase used to remind girls they have the power to accomplish anything they want by supporting each other and make our voices known. It reminds women all over the world to pursue their dreams despite the obstacles that are faced with. Our robotics team pushes girls to speak up, contribute, and participate so they can become future leaders and innovators. In Space Cookies, we do our best to make sure that every girl gets an equal and fair opportunity to contribute to their team. One of our main focuses as a troop is outreach, and we participate in several outreach events to attract girls of all ages, such as the When I Grow Up Event on October 6th. This event was held by Girl Scouts in the San Carlos’ Hiller Aviation Museum for young girls to explore their interests and encounter possible career paths. Our troop demonstrates many robots built by teams in our troop from past seasons that we competed with over the years and we provided stations with square bots where young girls can drive the bots around to enable them to have an opportunity and experience some of the aspects of robotics. In these events, girls are exposed to STEM and a spark of curiosity is introduced.

In order to foster this spark of curiosity, one looks up to a person who went through similar challenges and problems throughout their lives as a role model, such as struggling to face the prejudice against women. One of our most important role models is Wendy Holforthy, our NASA supervisor. Wendy founded our Robotics troop “Space Cookies” and continues to lead the way for girl empowerment in the STEM fields. Wendy is a mission commander for unmanned aerial vehicle projects and a former police officer. She believes that an all-girl team benefits as it gives girls the chance to speak up and take charge. Wendy encourages many young girls to join, as she says everyone should see if they’re interested in STEM. Joining a robotics team will further that interest so they can feel more comfortable in joining a male-dominated field. She promotes girl power by inspiring girls to pursue their passions in STEM and empowering young women to be independent and confident. Space Cookies represents Girl

Powered through empowering girls of all ages with opportunities to explore different fields in STEM. The girls also have the chance to play a particular part in the team after discovering their talents.

Each member of our team plays a different role: team captain, hardware lead, software lead, budgeting captain, scouting captain, and engineering notebook. These roles are determined based on our interests and abilities, and throughout the season with our team roles, we learn even more skills from these jobs. Team roles allow us to maintain organization by focusing on our respective positions in the team and efficiency by getting the most work done as possible in the team. However, each girl is not limited to their role, and we get the opportunity to help out with other responsibilities. Our troop is primarily girl-led. We do this by having our own girl leadership for the troop, also with its own roles. Contrary to some other teams, we recruit a large number of new girls every season with little to no experience, and we form new teams where new girls are able to be taught and guided by more experienced girls. We also teach the new girls who come into our troop by leading workshops to teach basics fundamentals of robotics such as mechanical design, programming, and more.



Our sister teams supporting one of our Space Cookie teams during Alliance Selection

A prominent part of our team is the support and love that we have for each other, which is apparent by our loud cheers during our sister teams' matches and our constant support in alliance selections. In just half a year we have grown from acquaintances, to friends, to sisters. There have been many instances where things haven't gone as planned, such as the Pleasanton Competition, where we had multiple problems while updating our brain, and our sister teams prioritized supporting us and fixing the issue before going to the practice field or taking care of other responsibilities.

Girl Powered has played a huge part in our existence as a robotics team, and the experiences mentioned are only a few of the moments when we felt the true impact of the girl-powered movement. Seeing the girls in our team grow more and more confident in themselves and in their abilities as the season progressed showed how much of an impact it can make in a girl's life to give them the opportunity to be involved in such a rewarding program. It has instilled hope for future generations of women to grow up in a world where women are equally respected and just as capable and present as men in STEM fields. All of this change simply requires that we provide opportunities and educate people who otherwise may not have access to resources or may not be able to realize their potential. Our team, Space Cookies 1868A, utilizes the platform of VEX robotics to introduce girls into STEM, which provides girls with the experience and proficiency they need to potentially find their career, changing the world's perception of women starting with our generation.