

Female Integration in STEM

Gender stereotypes have always separated people, whether in a workplace, at home, or in society. However, the STEM field has always been dominated by males, with only 24% of women in the STEM workforce. To combat these stereotypes, organizations such as Girl Powered were established. When I hear the phrase, “girl-powered”, I think of women having power in society. Girl powered gives young girls motivation to do their best in a male-dominated field and encourage them to want to make an impact on people.

When I first joined 16099A, I worked on the CAD for our robot. Afterward, they encouraged me to work on the engineering notebook and become secretary because I needed to improve my presentation skills. Becoming a secretary allowed me to better understand how to communicate with people and become more outgoing. My team members would make me speak more in front of the judges and talk to other teams during the competitions allowing me to become more confident in meeting new people and starting a conversation with them. The reason my teammates made me do this was that I had stage fright and I didn't like talking to people I just met. When I first joined the team, I was shy and scared of my



teammates. I wouldn't want to talk to them and work with them on the robot. Instead, I would work on the CAD for our robot which didn't need a lot of interactions with the team in order for it to be completed. This affected how well we worked together and achieved our goal of wanting to win at the competitions. In order to improve our team's chemistry, my teammates started

talking to me and I gained some confidence and started a conversation with them so we could better understand each other.

Girl-powered is prevalent in my team for we do not consider gender when assigning roles to one another. For instance, my team encouraged me to build our robot with them and practice my building skills. They also let us try coding, CAD designing and driving. Being allowed to try these things on the team makes me feel like an important person on the team. It makes me feel appreciated by my teammates because of the amount of trust and equality they are giving me. Instead of not letting us help with the robot and making me do useless things, they are willing to cooperate with me to make our robot better. They believe that women have potential in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields.



Diversity of gender changed our team's bonding by allowing us to better understand each other when working together, accomplishing our goal or just hanging out and talking. The guys on the team wouldn't exclude the girls from their conversations and would ask us to hang out with them when they go play sports like paintball and basketball. When we are working together to improve our robot's ability to obtain cubes, we make sure everyone is involved in the process and everyone has something to do. We all have the same goal and that is to make it to the World Championship which motivates us to work as a team. In the picture on the left, the entire team is working on the robot to fix the problems that occurred when we were

practicing our autonomous codes. The girls on the team aren't being excluded from the process of fixing the robot and the boys are letting us work on it.

Our STEM role model is the first woman to get a Nobel Prize named Marie Curie. She is an important historical woman that had many accomplishments throughout her life. She discovered radioisotopes radium and polonium and created the mobile x-ray during World War I. She also received two Nobel Prize for her accomplishments and discoveries. She encouraged me to want to do something beneficial for people. I want to be able to do is to find a cure for cancer and possibly save millions of lives a year. Joining 16099A was the first step I took to get myself involved with STEM. Being in a STEM program allowed me to better understand science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Understanding these topics allows me to have more confidence when I work with men. This is because these are male-dominated fields and females are always looked down upon.