

# Girl Powered.

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Gender Equality in STEM:  
7316B

# Origin Story

In 2011, The Firestone Robotics Club started. With the goal to utilize what was being taught the PLTW engineering classes in a fun and educational way. With members being able to join from the small pool of Engineering students at Firestone. The goal of the Firestone Engineering program to create more future engineers, regardless of gender.

In the beginning with only about 6 members, within that only 1 being female (1:5). They continued on with a club nearly doubling every year until the 2013-2014 season, where Firestone made it to the Vex Worlds Championship for the first time.

Now in the 2019-2020 season, our club has grown to 36 current members with 16 of that being female (4:5).



# What is Girl Powered to us?

The focus at Firestone to me, has never been on the gender of the person joining, it has been **to encourage students to join engineering fields regardless of your gender.**

I have never felt demeaned for my gender in club. In my four years in robotics, we have had 2 female club presidents and a majority female body of club officers for 3 years. With nearly 50% membership of both males and females. Which in the male dominated field of Engineering and Robotics is rare. Club being a very inclusive space.

My Freshman year, I was on the only all girls team that has been at Firestone, Team 7316F in the 2016-2017 Season. With the other girls all being Sophomores. All of us new to our jobs and learning. Club supported us and taught us what to do to make it to States.

Now, I don't feel like it's a bad thing we haven't had another All-Girls-Team, but the female influence is strong in our club with at least 2 female members on all 6 current teams at Firestone.



# Meet the Team

**Aine Bolton:** 5th year, The Engineering Notebook, Building, Designing, Driving, Programming, Coaching, and Scouting

**Helen Hohlefelder:** 4th year, Coaching, Building, and Designing

**Hannah VerSluys:** 4th year, Scouting, The Engineering Notebook, Programming, Building, Designing, and Driving

**Nathan Ryan:** 3rd year, Building, Designing, CAD, Driving, Coach, and Scouting

**Andrew Stallsmith:** 3rd year, Building, Designing, and Scouting

**Catherine Greer:** 1st year, Programming, Building and Designing

**James Boykins:** 1st year, Programming, Building and Designing



# Learning & Teamwork

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Club encourages members to learn different skills. Everyone is to learn some basic programming and to teach others what you know. The upperclassmen with experience teaching the underclassmen. It is a space of competition but also growing. I believe that the more you explore the different jobs in club, the more you grow as a person. Bettering not just yourself but your team through your experience. The more diversity and you have on a team, th

Our roles on the team are always essentially interchangeable, but we tend to stick to what we excel at. As we try to help each other with each role or if we don't know the answer, to help find someone in club that can.

# The Problem

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As great as our club is for gender equality, we are a minority. You can see this in competition where you have entire clubs with only 1 female. Clubs that have pushed all their females members to just a singular team. Or just keep the girls as loggers in charge of the engineering notebook with little say in the build and design process.

As I scout and talk to other teams, some refuse to talk to girls and you need to send a male scout for them to talk to. Sometimes they hit on you and ignore you, treating you different than a male. This isn't everybody but it has been a consistent in competition that hopefully though continued support towards gender equality in STEM, where it is normalized for girls to be in robotics and to be treated the same. Where gender doesn't matter.

# Our Goal

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To create an environment that gender isn't important. To be an example for girls to look at, to inspire them to join a STEM field themselves. Which before seeing girls be in robotics, the idea may have never crossed their minds. To expose girls to science, math, and engineering and make them believe they can do it too.



# Girl Powered: Gender Equality in STEM

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Helen Hohlefelder, Aine Bolton, Catherine Greer, and  
James Boykins