United with Robotics

Girl Powered Essay

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When talking about genders and their roles, our world had a fixed way of thinking about it for a long time. The men will work while the woman will serve, and everything after that. Males were always viewed as superior and greater since the beginning of their birth, which is mystifying, but that's how it worked.

Nowadays we have a phrase to bring back all the brightness and potential that girls and women had back then, which they weren't able to demonstrate. The phrase being "girl power", has been able to change the minds of young women around the world and has started to become every little girl who was looked down on's voice. It has lifted many up and empowered more, which is how it has become such an amazing thing. Still, the two words isn't enough to bring out the best in all of us and that's why the REC and VEX Robotics have started with the initiative of Girl Powered.

From girl power to Girl Powered, it seems as the only difference is an additional letter, but that one letter has been able to completely change the meaning of the two words. When I hear the phrase Girl Powered, I've moved on from the past and started to focus on the future. I've moved on from the stereotypical beliefs of what women are and what they do and shifted to the amazing ways boys and girls can be able to change the world. I've moved on from the vision of only supporting girls to supporting all my teammates, classmates, friends, and family. This one phrase allows the unison of all people, from all backgrounds and ethnicities. It brings everyone together and encourages others to actively embrace a more diverse culture, specifically regarding robotics.

For being a small team, I believe my robotics club's approach to robotics has been absolutely amazing. With this year being online and the restriction of not fully being able to invite and motivate other people to join robotics, all my teammates try their best to find new ways to advertise and publicize our club. By reaching out to friends and family who know others who might be interested in joining robotics, posting on our school Instagram about the club, and handing out flyers if they are learning in the hybrid manner, my team and I have been taking initiative to create a more inclusive and diverse environment. Additionally, within the club, you will never find any discrimination between anyone even though we are a pretty diverse group regarding ethnicity and race. This has been starting to attract more and more people to robotics. I believe by seeing the acceptance and kindness that is portrayed on our club, others have been able to come out of their bubble and started to try new things because they know they can feel safe and happy doing such an interesting thing.

In our club there hasn't only been diversity regarding background and race, but also with the various roles and responsibilities we've had as team members. Taking a very smart approach, my past and current teachers assigned each of us different tasks to complete and would change these tasks each month (until we were set on which role to participate in) to really allow us to dig into robotics and all of its parts. The change from designing to programming and to building really kept our brains in check and allowed us to learn all these independent skills which would be very helpful in the future. If we were to be at a competition, and something would go wrong with the robot, it was great that everyone knew/had an idea

of what to do in order to fix it, or else it would take long for only one person to do it all by themselves. I mainly built the robot and would help with programming whenever necessary, however when the time came, if I ever had to use any of the other skills I would be ready to start working and fix any problems that would come our way. By introducing ourselves to these varying tasks we were able to develop our skills on them and learn which one we liked most. Furthermore, through this experience we were able to get insight on all of the jobs that would ultimately lead to a full functioning robot and expand our minds with great new knowledge.

This grand variance in perspective and knowledge was one of the key factors to our teams successes, our robots great conditions, and all of our great chemistry. By being able to talk about all parts of the robot, we were able to swiftly address any problems, concerns, or remarks. Everyone knew what was being said and everyone had a say in what would be done next. This healthy communication allowed us to get closer and led us to respect everyone's thoughts and beliefs. The positive environment that was created as a result of the diversity in knowledge and standpoint motivated all of us to work better and made every single one of us better friends and people in general.

Apart from the bond that I had with the other team members, inspiration from my role models was also what drove me to do good in robotics and initially made me start my path towards this amazing world of machines. For the last five years (and still running) my STEM role models have been Geetha Manjunatha and Nidhi Mathur Nirami. These two insanely talented and powerful women founded a "Non-Invasive Risk Assessment with Machine Intelligence" solution, for early stages of breast cancer. Their safe, non-touch, radiation-free, and low-cost method could detect tumors five times smaller than what clinical examination is able to detect, and all women of all age groups are able to to undergo the screening without any side effects. Seeing women who were also Indian, and who struggled so much throughout their lives but where still able to add such positivity and help to our world, simply left me in awe. Their ability to incorporate technology into medicine (a field I hope to have a future career in) really just encouraged me to start my journey on changing the world with robotics, and most probably inspired hundreds of other young girls as well.

Citations

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