Not all Girls Like **Pink**

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GIRL-POWERED TEAM FROM HATTIESBURG, MS

My name is Madelyn Courtney and I am an Aquabot. This story is all about stereotypes about girls and how I don't fit the stereotype. A stereotype is defined as a mistaken idea or belief many people have about a thing or group that is based upon how they look on the outside, which may be untrue or only partly true.
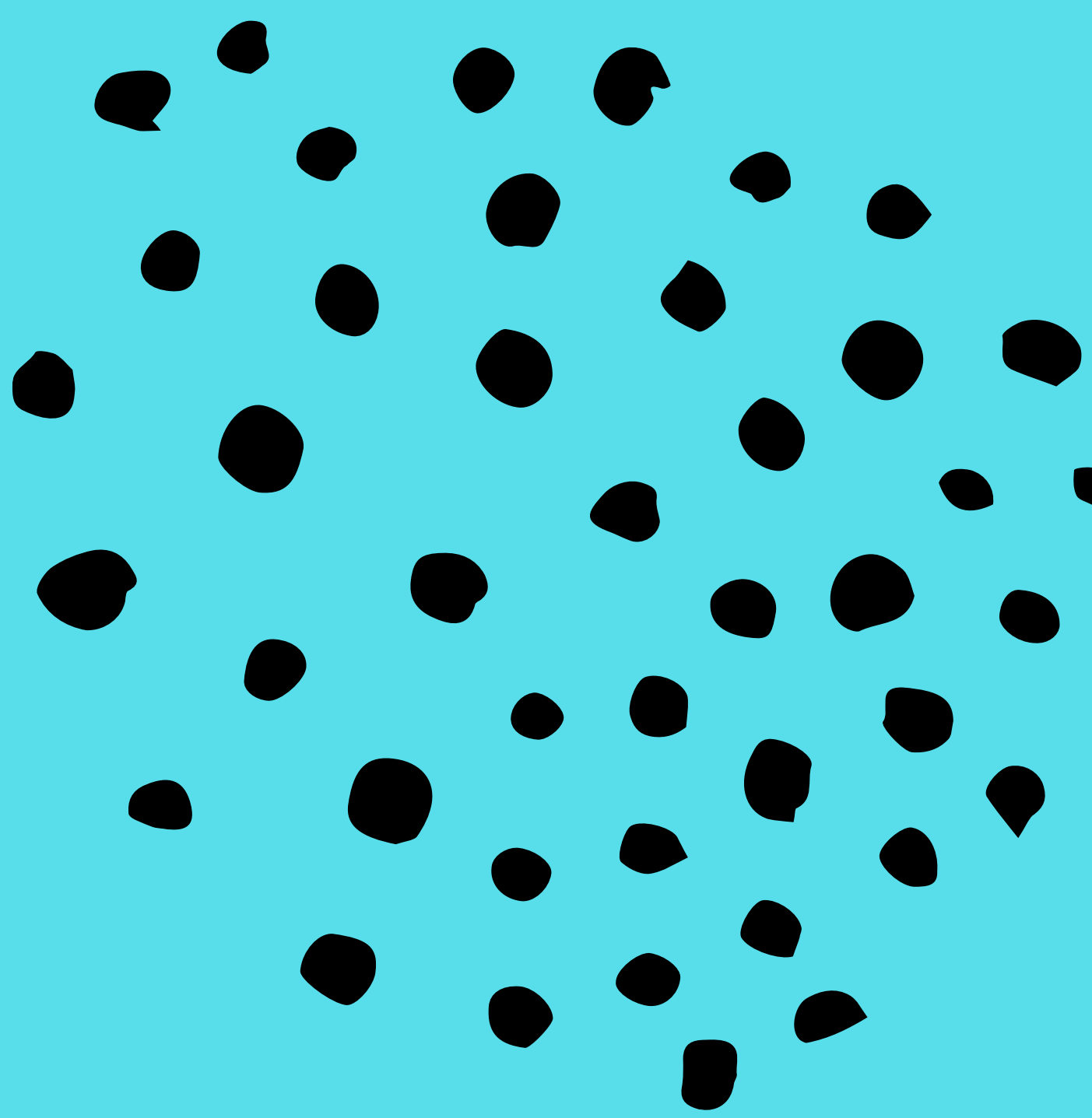
When I think of Girl Powered, I think of breaking down stereotypes set by people and proving them wrong. I don't like the color **pink** and I don't want to be a princess when I grow up. I don't want to play with dolls and I am not scared of math and science.

When I think of Girl Power, I think of it as a tool to help break down gender stereotypes. I am powered by my will to succeed, not because I am a girl. Girl Powered makes me think of how I can overcome gender stereotypes. Boys can have Girl Power too by not believing gender stereotypes.

My story for this online challenge is to show everyone that not all girls like the color pink. I don't follow gender stereotypes and that's okay. Here are some common stereotypes about girls:

Stereotype # 1. Girls love the color pink.

Because of robotics, I now look at the color pink as a mixture of red and white. Red represents courage and white represents purity. To be honest, I don't like the color pink. I don't like what the color stands for and how people associate the color pink with girls. Even as early as the day you were born, hospital gift shops sell pink and blue balloons and wreaths for your hospital door. What if I wanted the blue balloons or wreath instead?
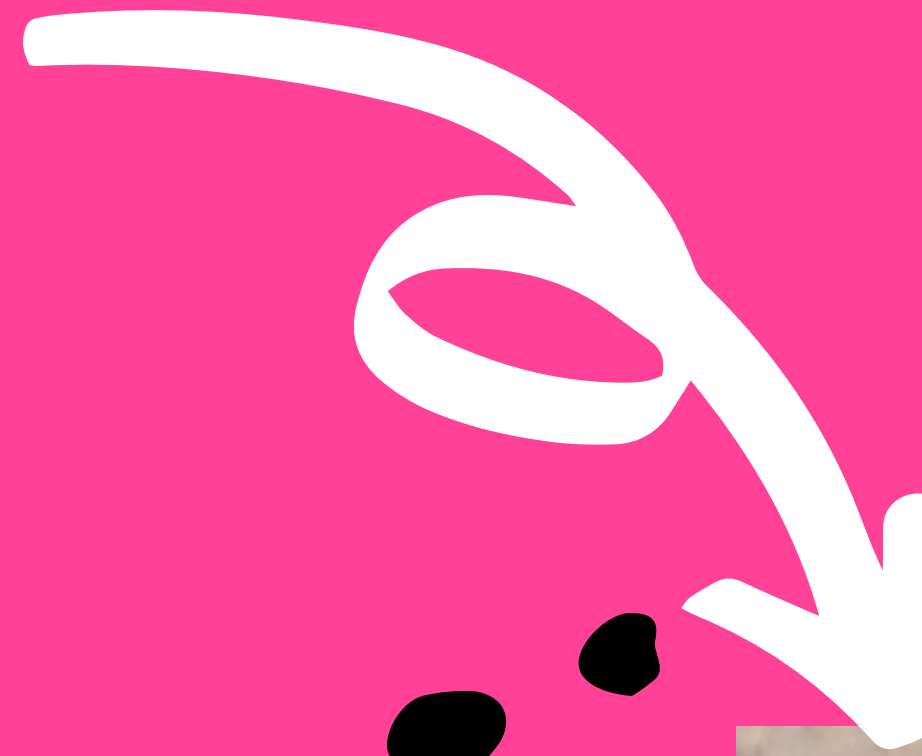
STEREOTYPE # 2. GIRLS AREN'T GOOD AT MATH. WHEN I WAS IN 3RD GRADE, I GOT A PERFECT SCORE ON THE MATH STATE STANDARDIZED TEST. WE RECEIVED A POSTER-SIZED BANNER OF OUR PICTURE AND NAME. ALONG WITH MY VEX WORLDS MEDALS FROM THE PAST 4 YEARS, THAT BANNER IS WHAT HANGS PROUDLY IN MY BEDROOM. YEARS LATER, I STILL HAVE A 100 AVERAGE IN MATH. I KNOW THAT MATH SKILLS ARE IMPORTANT AND WILL HELP ME BECOME AN ENGINEER ONE DAY.
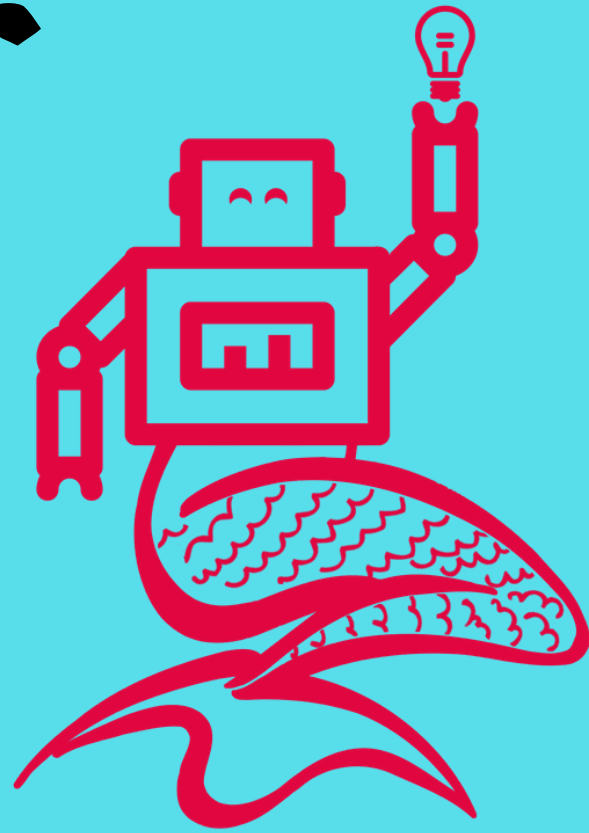
Stereotype # 3. Girls aren't good at sports. I play soccer and excel at it. I work just as hard as boys during practices and games. I practice soccer every day.

Stereotype # 4. Girls play with dolls. This is the biggest stereotype misconception about me. Even in the toy aisles, I always gravitated towards the boy toys, rather than the dolls. My mom tried to buy me all kinds of doll stuff when I was younger. I was more interested in taking the doll accessories apart and figuring out how the accessories were made and how to put them back together. I really hope that people didn't get alarmed when they saw my Barbie or doll accessories in pieces.

Stereotype # 5. Girls like to dress up.
I have a serious question here. Where are all of the dinosaur and robot pajamas in the girls' clothing section? Who said I wanted to wear princess tutus and tiaras? Give me a toolbelt or hardhat instead and I'll wear that as my crown.
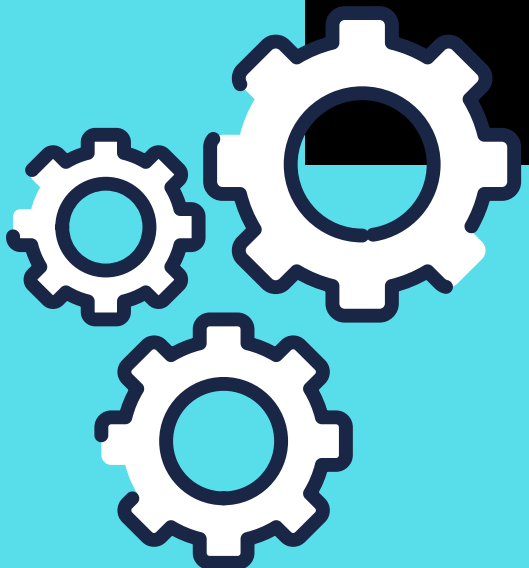
Girl Powered.

As you can see, being a girl does not define me. What defines me is my personality and whether or not I am kind to others. It's my inner appearance that counts more than my outward appearance. When people hear my name or see me, I hope that they think of Madelyn the Magnificent rather than gender stereotypes. I hope that they see me as a person, rather than just a girl. I am not a girly princess. Instead of a princess, I am a future engineer. When I go to the toy aisles at a store, you won't see me heading for the Barbies. My name is Madelyn and I am a girl who does NOT like the color pink.

When you hear the phrase, "Girl powered" what do you think of? When I think of Girl Power, I think of it as a tool to help break down gender stereotypes. I am powered by my will to succeed, not because I am a girl. Girl Powered makes me think of how I can overcome gender stereotypes. Boys can have Girl Power too by not believing gender stereotypes.
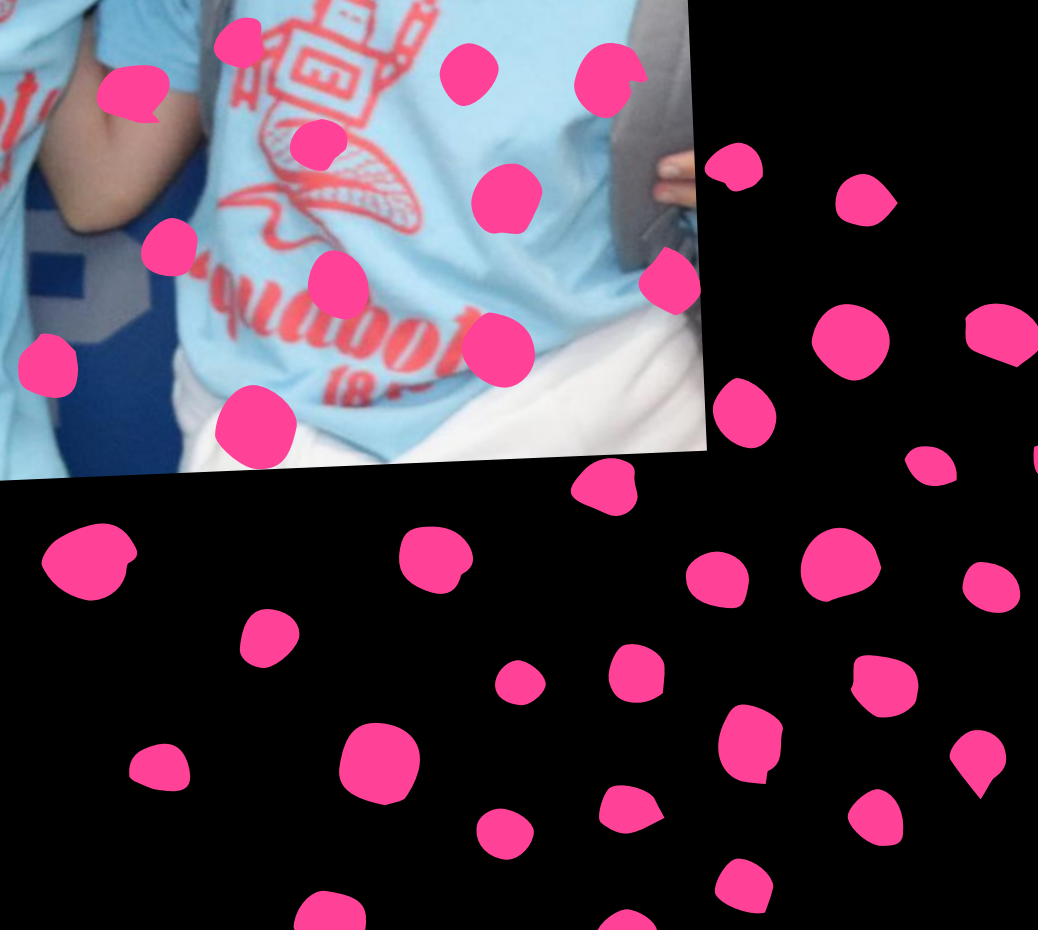
Who is your STEAM role model and why? My STEM role models are Shaleen Smith and Makenzie Greunig. Both women have worked for Hexbug and VEX. Shalene, an engineer, gave my team advice on how to improve our former STEM project: enrichment toys for dolphins. Shalene told us what it was like to be a female engineer. She inspired me by encouraging me to be more inclusive in all aspects of my life and to not allow gender stereotypes to be an obstacle.

How do you think diversity supports success? Diversity helps someone become successful and to break down gender stereotypes. Diversity means to accept that girls don't have to necessarily like the color pink. And if they do, that's okay too. It is important to include everyone and to not exclude them by their outward appearance. It's what inside that counts the most. My team has promoted diversity by spreading random acts of kindness in our community. We helped a team from a special needs school in their first robotics tournament. Sometimes success doesn't mean making an A on a test or making a lot of money one day. It's the journey to success that counts the most.

The programmer for our team is Ella Grace. I am the back-up programmer and I am in charge of online challenges. Our head notebook editor is Ella Parish. Elliot is our main driver. We have tried switching roles, but learned quickly what their strengths and weaknesses were. We sometimes switch roles each year so that we can learn a new skill. We also sometimes have different ideas on a robot design. When this happens, we sometimes have disagreements about our robot designs, but we always find a way to work as a team in order to be successful. We have to come to an agreement and realize that without diversity and our own perspectives, we wouldn't be a successful team. We are a successful team, (even though Ella Grace does like pink).

Credits:

Not all Girls Like Pink

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**Pictures by VEX, RECFoundation,
and parents of AquaBots 1845A**