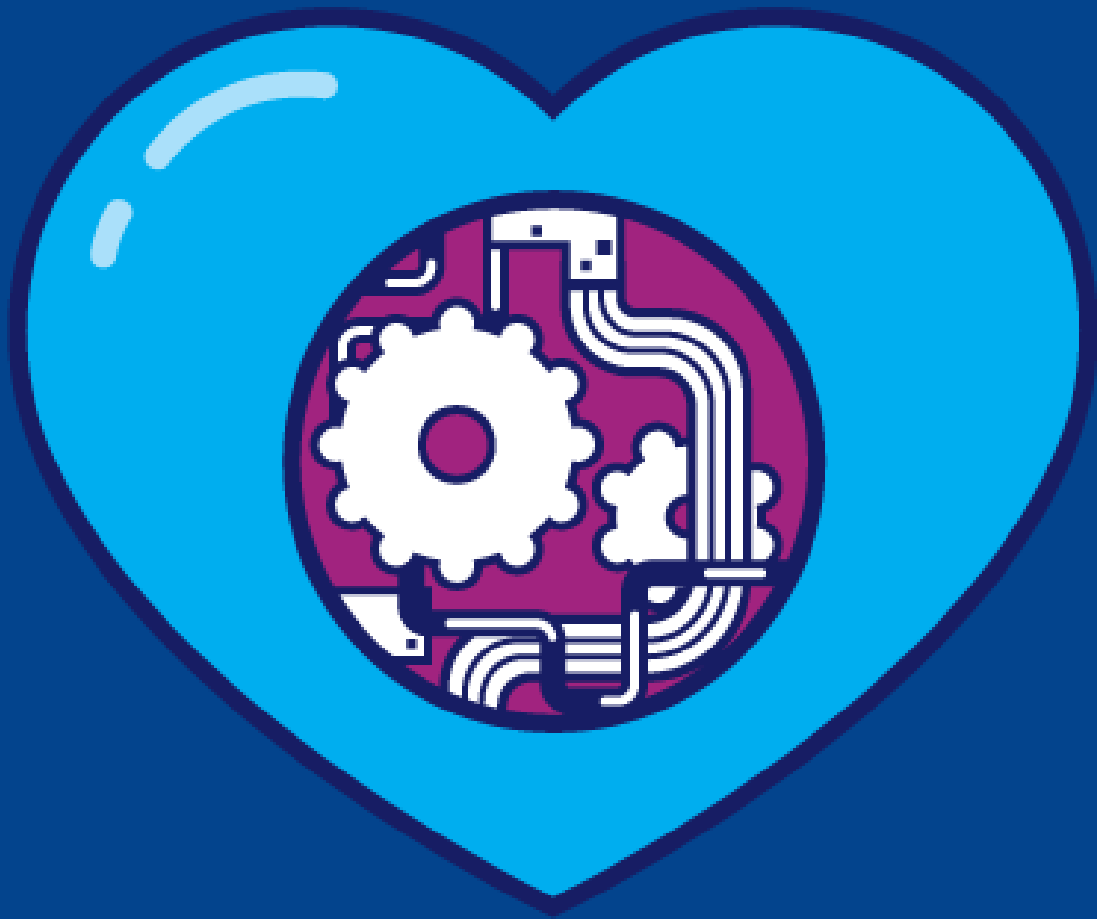


# Growing on a Girl Powered Team



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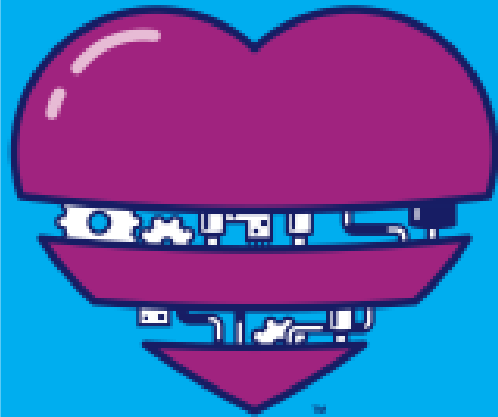
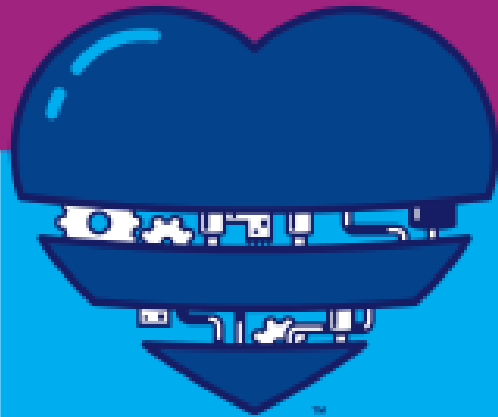
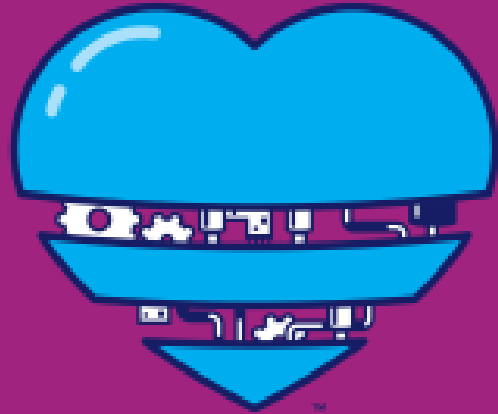
# Girl⚡Powered

Hi, I'm Reese and I'm a 7th grader on a competitive high school VRC team. When I joined the team a couple of months into this season, I had only ever met one of the members (Bethany), aside from my sister, Jenna. I was definitely nervous coming into an experienced team as a middle schooler with only VEX IQ experience. Even though I didn't have experience in VRC, the team was very welcoming.

When I hear the phrase Girl Powered, I think of girls (and guys!) uniting and working together to create something amazing. This is reflected in our team because we all get along really well as we work toward common goals. Our team is made up of four girls—me, Jenna, Bethany, and Maia—and one guy, Garrett, and has a lot of Girl Powered energy. Despite being the oldest and most experienced member of the team, Garrett listens to and respects all of our ideas.



At the beginning of each design cycle, we brainstorm together to make sure that everyone's ideas are heard. Then, we break off into groups to get everything done. Any time we're working we divvy up the tasks to make sure everyone has something to do and nobody is bored. We each have certain things that we are best at, but we make sure to branch out and get more experience with different roles. Garrett has amazing CAD skills and loves designing new components; Bethany is good at building and bringing Garrett's designs to life; Maia is the crazy inventor who comes up with out-of-the-box solutions to tricky problems; Jenna is an expert and creative programmer; and I'm beginning to learn a lot about all of these things.



There's a stereotype that girls aren't good at cooperating with one another, but being on this team has shown me that it couldn't be further from the truth. When I joined, I didn't know how to design a robot that would be sturdy and efficient for the game. I didn't know how to build, so Bethany, Maia, and Jenna often stepped aside to teach me. My team helped me with everything, and I have learned a lot about how to design, build, and test a competition-quality robot. I now know how to build a simple lift and how to design on my own. Now I have the skills to contribute no matter what we're working on. That's girl power in action!



Our team is called Something Random, and when we chose the name we didn't realize how perfect it was. No two of us are alike—we attend five different schools in three different grades, we have vastly different interests and hobbies outside of robotics, and we have diverse levels of experience.

Our team troubleshooting a problem with the robot on Halloween.



Our team is very inclusive. We are all welcoming and kind people, who work to get new members of the team into the swing of things very quickly. This helps our team recruit new members, who are always very valuable. We have a range of people and personalities. Some are experienced, and some, like me, aren't. I think this really helps because everybody has a different perspective on things, and it is always good to get different ideas, especially when you're stumped. This helps with the team's success because if one

of us can't figure out a way to solve a certain problem, another team member can jump in and have a different approach. We each come up with different ideas, which can then be tested to see which one works best. This builds team chemistry because the more experienced members can work with the less experienced and really help them learn.

When I got started in STEM, it seemed like it was mostly guys and I was intimidated. Since then, I've had some great female teachers and mentors who've helped me learn that STEM can be girl powered. My biggest STEM role model, though, is my Cybersecurity teacher, Mr. Kreider. He is my role model because he has lots of great ideas on how to creatively solve problems. He is also a very fun teacher, and so I learn from him while still having fun. Mr. Kreider inspires me to have a more inclusive team because he always makes sure that everyone in his class is heard. He is always so nice to everyone, and always helpful. If he doesn't know the answer to a good question, he looks it up and adds it to a future lesson plan so everyone can learn from it. He helps all of his students learn in a fun, engaging way and I admire him for that.

When I joined team 589X, I knew almost nothing about VRC robotics. My teammates helped me learn how to design and build a competitive V5 robot. Even though it is still early in the season and this season has been strange due to COVID-19, thanks to my team and mentors I now know quite a bit about building robots. My teammates have been wonderful throughout this journey, and they have really helped me. Even though COVID-19 is making it tough for people to see each other, we still find ways to connect and spread ideas. They have helped me grow and learn new things throughout this season, and I am still learning new things from them. I hope to continue learning from my Girl Powered team and to be a member of this team for a long time. I look forward to becoming a leader and helping future members grow in their confidence and skills.

