

Being Girl Powered

By: Arielle Ward



Hi, I am a member of Lakeside Robotics, and my question is: What actually is Girl Powered? To me, Girl Powered is a global initiative that is meant to make a woman's role in STEM careers more accessible and to boost confidence in young women around the world. When I think of the phrase, Girl Powered, I think of the power that women are capable of. Throughout history, people have discouraged women from doing important things, but once they made their mark, they took a stand in the world. Women have proved that they can stand through hard work and dedication and the Girl Powered global initiative is keeping that alive.

Because I am the only girl on my VEX Robotics team, I sometimes feel less than the guys. They'll be having their guy conversations and I feel left out. I felt this way for a while before I realized something; I *am* the only girl on this team full of boys. So, of course, I took advantage of that and made MY mark on Lakeside Robotics. I made our notebook better than they ever could in my very first year. Those boys will admit it too! They can't believe I did it, but I did and I did my best. And now, I'm even better and will continue to get better as the one and only Girl Powered member of my amazing team. Without my help, our team never would've made it to States last year. With my notebook, our team won the

Engineering Award at our first tournament last year and the Excellence Award multiple times.

Since becoming a part of the VEX program I have been able to grow substantially as a young woman. Some of the things that I have proved are my organization skills, my attention to detail, and my ability to create calmness. Some people may think that note taking is cliché or unimportant, but the note taking is actually the most important part of the process. If our robot somehow broke we would be able to rebuild it exactly the same because of the detail and direct explanations I put in my notebook. If someone joined our team, they wouldn't be lost one bit on what's been happening because everything is in the notebook. When I write, I write everything plain and clear, step by step, how and why. I could, without a doubt, rebuild my team's robot just by the instructions I have. Documenting this notebook is like creating a manual for what to do in VEX, how to do it, and why. I am also a tech girl. I made a video for a different online challenge and I have faith that we will triumph in winning.



My team attracts a variety of students because we all have our own styles and ways of doing things. For instance, I am the more calm type but absolutely none of my teammates are. One is a bit on the wild side and the

other is more of a political type person who thinks carefully about everything. But, with all of us together, we attract different types of people. And with me being the only girl on the team, I inspire other girls to join Robotics and become comfortable doing it because there is no doubt that I stand out.

Every member of the team has tried multiple roles. Although some have succeeded at multitasking, it is quite difficult for others. I, Arielle, am the notebooker and I am not very good at doing many other things, though I've tried driving multiple times. Harrison is our main builder, programmer, and driver. He is very talented at what he does and is succumbing at tournaments and competitions. Jeremy is our main strategist, researcher, and builder. Jeremy is dextrous and will not go down without a fight. He always finishes what he starts and does it skillfully with a smile on his face. Trying multiple roles has made me realize how incredible my teammates are to do so many different things at once. And the way they can stay calm is incredible and beyond me. I suppose being able to do so many things at once is a key principle at competition and astounding to me because I could never.

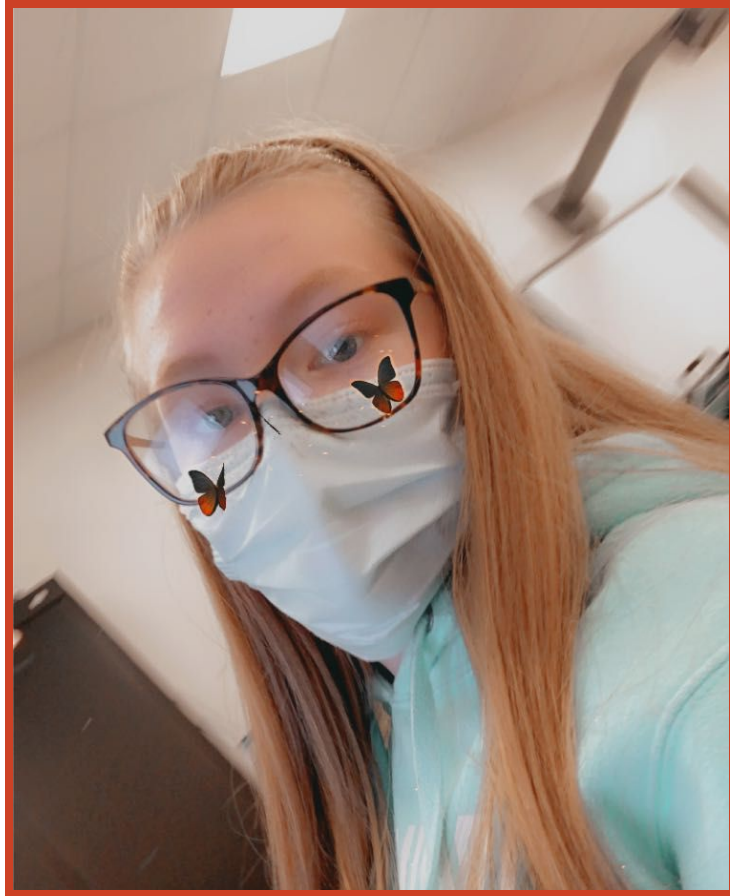


Diversity of perspective changes our robot design because we find some way to put different designs together into one design. The new design is always better than the previous one having new advantages and strengths. My STEM role model is not any one famous or prominent, but she is simply a good person who won't let anyone fall down if she can help it. And when she can, she does everything in her power to help them get back up and on their way. Mrs. Armstrong is an astonishing person and has a staggering reputation of being a helper and a second mother to some. When she is feeling disappointed or downhearted, she doesn't take it out on anyone. She "takes it off the field" which is her motto for competitions. Mrs. Armstrong is my VEX IQ coach from middle school and I had the best time with her, but we are moving forward. I am going to take the dedication and hard work Mrs. Armstrong has taught me and put it to use in the world of VRC with my new coach, Mrs. Christina Davenport. Mrs. DP was my favorite teacher in 7th grade and is now my EAST teacher. I am excited to spend this year and the years to come with Mrs. Davenport and my VEX Robotics team.



Being in VEX Robotics has changed me. It has brought me out of my shell and shown me that the world isn't such a bad place when you spend it with the right people. My team is my family. We may disagree sometimes, we may go through hardships, and we may not, but we do it together and together we thrive. We thrive and we grow vigorously into people we never thought we could be. But we did it

and we did it loud and proud; proud of who we are and who we're going to be. I am no longer the shy and reserved girl I was a few years ago, I am someone who handles what I can and pushes forward powerfully and stands for who I am.



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