

Why Diversity and Girl Power is Important to Me

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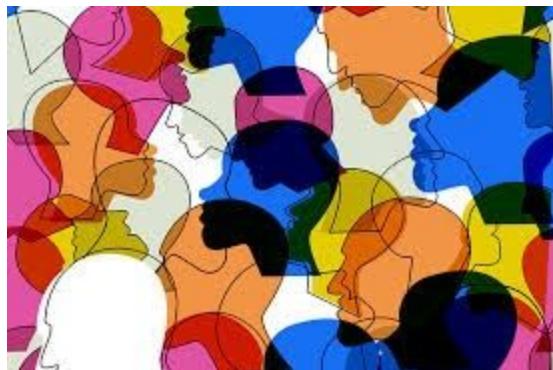


The votes were tied 1 vs 1, we needed one more vote to determine our robot claw design. I drew this elaborate design in a simplified version for my teammates showing that I have what it takes to be a part of the team. “We just don’t like it,” “It’s not what we’re looking for.” These are the things my teammates said before I took this matter into my own hands. I decided that no was not an answer, that they need to see how good of an idea this is. So, I started building, and building, and building, until it was finished. This robot’s claw was the best thing that has ever accomplished the VEX game goals. We were able to pick up the hubs, lift them up, stack them if needed. Anything was accomplished using my claw. Finally, my teammates took notice and then, therefore, claimed my claw and attached it to our pet bot. This claw was so good that our other teams in our school acquired this idea as well. It didn’t matter, what mattered was that I stood out and was able to show myself worthy of the team.

Girl Powered, what does it mean? Well to me it stands as an icon to all girls around the nation and even the world. Girl Powered is a movement within the nation that proves that young ladies can accomplish anything and do whatever a man or young boy can do. For centuries girls have been pushed underneath men and have been considered lower than others, but not in today’s time. Today Girl Power shows that women aren’t stupid and they can do anything guys can do. This movement gives little girls the power to stand up and do what they want, and not be afraid to be turned down because it is a “guys” thing.

Since my design of the claw from a few years ago, my team today is still composed of members from past teams, so they know I’m ready for it. My team has embraced me and now we have become a kind of family that can’t be found anywhere else. Steps that my team has taken to create a more inclusive place that attracts a diverse group would have to be letting everyone vote, submit designs, state and explain opinions, and everyone has a chance to try all roles of the team. I have been able to try every role that a team in VEX has. I have been the note taker all of my

years in VEX, but I have also been the builder, coder, and driver during different points in my VEX career.



Going off what I said about numerous roles that I have tried throughout my years, my teammates have also tried different roles. As an example, my old teammate Juan was mainly a builder, but we all agreed that the team should share roles so that when someone is unable to come to practice we can still practice and function as normal. So, Juan took on the roles of a coder, builder, and note taker. Throughout his training I showed him the ropes of how to document things and how to word things right, showing extra detail in the work. Needless to say, he was able to acquire these skills and he had very excellent writing skills that led our masterpiece to win the state championship excellence award. Through teaching him these skills I learned that everyone is capable of learning something new if they just push themselves and actually try. I learned new teaching techniques and learning how to interact with others when it comes to sharing something new with them.



Diversity is the practice of using different people from different backgrounds and such and being able to support each other and interact through it. Through this, I have mentioned a diverse situation I was in between genders in my team. I suggested using my design for the claw and they discarded it like it was nothing until I proved them wrong. Diversity changes the

makeup of our team chemistry and our ability to succeed. I gave an example of this from my design of the claw. After that our team grew into a family instead of being a group of people divided by gender. It is important to have a diverse group for different ideas, an example of why this is important is for genetic variation. If we were all the same genetic makeup then we wouldn't be different and we wouldn't know who is who. It is important to compare ideas from others because it makes the team think differently and when you try different ideas you can figure what works best for your team overall. Not every person thinks the same, therefore, they won't create the same ideas to carry out.

My STEM model is Mrs. Armstrong, my former VEX IQ coach, but still my mentor and second mom. She is my role model because she is the one that compelled me to join VEX and has been with me every step of the way. I have gone through thick and thin with her and she has treated me as one of her own. She does inspire me to be more inclusive in my team and program because we have very different backgrounds within my team and it shows. She tells me that I need to show the boys how it's done and take into account that they may not be used to what I am doing in my skills. Mrs. Armstrong shows me how to teach others so that it's easier for everyone to learn and understand everyone. We take into account people's backgrounds so that we won't be offensive and that we can use diversity to our advantage. We do this in deciding the designs for our robot and also when deciding team roles. We take votes and talk about diversity and how we should include everyone into the team. Diversity can tear teams apart because they don't understand each other, but we aren't the average team, diversity brings us together as a family.

As you can see, diversity is something that our team revolves around. I have gone through everything with my VEX teammates and mentors and they lead me to join this and believe that I have the power to do great things. I learned that diversity is something that can be a great tool, but also a weakness of other teams. I know that Girl Powered is a symbol of power for girls across the world and it shows that I can do anything. I have gone through bias between genders and diversity in my team. We have taken this diverse situation and used it to our advantage and I have been able to teach other team members better by bonding with them when we know our background. Mrs. Armstrong is my VEX anchor and overall a little life coach and I appreciate her being with me every step of the way. Diversity is what we strive for when making these teams and it strives through them when making decisions.



Credits:

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