

**Name of Entrants** - Reese Atkins and Isabela Delgado

**Team Number** – 36719A

## Girl Power

What is girl powered? Well, to our middle school robotics team which consists of an all-girl membership it means work that is done from our perspectives, our ability to learn from our mistakes, and the calculated risks we take to get to the next level. Our team embodies every aspect of the word girl powered. Beyond being a single gender team, we also work hard to collaborate and learn from the diversity of voices on our team. All members of the team come with a different perspective. Some girls are natural coders and others work hard at learning how to code; where ever one is on the continuum there is a place for you on our team.

There are so many women that encourage young girls to do their best but for our team there are three specific female engineers that we model ourselves after. They are Ivy Barley, Japleen Pasricha, and Zahra Shah. These three women provide our team inspiration with their words and actions. Ivy Barley is one of the Co-founders and Developers of Vogue. Japleen Pasricha is the Founder and Editor-in-Chief of Feminism In India. Finally, Zahra Shah is a Programme manager at Re: Coded in India and Pakistan

Ivy's motto is "Whatever your passion is, you definitely need a lot of diligence and determination." This inspires our team to keep trying and not give up in the face of adversity. "Speak up. Take care of yourself before others. And always, always speak up", is Japleen's motto. This is important to our team because while we work with other teams at competitions and together in the classroom, we feel free to speak up and share our ideas. Even if our ideas or solutions to a problem is not right, we learn and try to help one another get to the next step. While we like to win, as team we realize our success is more of a marathon than a sprint. Lastly, Zahra's quote is, "Technology provides women with a lot of flexibility, no matter what lifestyle they choose." To us, this means that any woman, no matter her position in life, can embrace the use of technology beyond the everyday, ordinary uses of technology. This belief that technology is open to all is another reason why our team is as diverse as it is.

Why are diverse perspectives important? Well, having different perspectives helps the team find innovative solutions to fix errors in the robot and code, but it also helps the team communicate better with each other by sharing our views in an open and respectful environment. If everyone had the same opinion about everything, there would not be a need for much communication or new ideas. Communication is very important on our team, for it is a part of teamwork, and diverse perspectives help with communication and teamwork. For example, if the team has the same solution for something, it may not work as a solution, or there may be a faster and easier one. However, if a team has multiple solutions, they can test all of them, finding which ones are easier and which ones do not work. This is why it is important to have diverse perspectives on a team. Every student at our school is welcomed to join the VEX team, as long as they can commit to the days of practice after school, participate in team building, and have a desire to learn while having fun. By allowing inclusive participation, it helps attract diverse groups in our school. This is important because girl power is about lifting all girls up, not just specific females. Not only is our VEX team inclusive, but it also allows everyone to try various roles on the team. The team allows everyone to help build and code the robot, design and work on banners and posters, write and produce material for documentary and presentations for competitions. This is helpful since it lets everyone decide what they want to keep on doing for the team, rather than them being stuck in the same role. Overall, our VEX team's formula for success has been our reliance on one another and our ability to celebrate our individual as well as collective voices.

On our team, we are not only inspired by other successful women, but we are inspired by each other. We help each other rise to the top and help each other become the best we can possibly be. The concept of girl powered is much more than an idea to our team. Girl powered conjures up of images of strength, self-determination, and a clear voice that is aligned with the future of all things technological.

## YWPA Robotic Teams

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