Our school has had a robotics program for three years. The numbers of young women we have had have grown significantly. Our first year we only had one girl, our second we had five, and now we currently have nine. Women have been dealing with inequality for all of history.  We have slowly but surely made progress. Women used to be solely for making kids. Since that time we have been given the right to work, to vote, to be educated, the right to own property, and the right to create. This did not happen at once, and even now, while we have all these rights, women don't have all the rights we deserve. We are nowhere near equal to men even nowadays.

For a long time women working in STEM fields have been frowned upon. You used to be considered a witch if you were smart or even slightly educated. Even now, there are plenty of men that think women should be working in the home, making dinner and taking care of the children. But women have evolved, we have opened our minds to new ideas. Women have taken roles in STEM jobs. Look at Katherine Johnson, Augusta Ada King, Radia Perlman, Rebecca Cole, Susan Kare, Rear Admiral Grace Hopper, and Florence Nightingale. These are just a few powerful STEM women. So when I think of the words "Girl Power" I think of all these things that women have overcome. All the rights we have gotten. All the rights we will continue to fight for. And all those women who took a job in STEM, that were full of toxic masculinity and discrimination, and made something revolutionary.

We attend a very different school than most. We all attend a Montessori school, which was founded by a woman; a woman by the name of Maria Montessori. She created Montessori schools across the globe. At our school we learn at a very young age how to treat and respect all people, regardless of race, sex, religion, sexuality-- all of it. We have also been learning all about women's rights since we were kids. We have learned about amazing women figures in all fields, not just STEM. Knowing this helps us incorporate young women into our teams, and help us realize that women can do the exact same thing as men. Our team gives the option to drive, code, build, write, do everything that our male team members can do. Our team members are inclusive, and they help us when we need it and they listen to us when they need it.

Our initiative is to just create the most inclusive program we can. We want everyone to have fun, enjoy themselves, and make the most of this opportunity. We tolerate no discrimination whatsoever, and when we have disagreesments we respectfully work them out. We make sure everyone is included and that everyone has the role they want. We wanted to attract more girls to the team, because we knew that would benefit us

in many ways, and we had a lot of girls that really wanted to join. We have created an amazing opportunity for people of all races and genders, and every single person who has participated in our school's robotics team has loved it. Our team is very inclusive, they originally had an all boys team when it was formed over the summer, and they asked me if I would join and help them out. I said yes, and since we have created a much more diverse team. We have made a lot of progress getting girls to join our team, right now, and we hope to continue that growth in the future. Our team has created a very safe environment for any and all people that want to join.

We want all team members to try everything to see what they are best at and see what they need to learn. We take the people that are good at something and if they enjoy it then that becomes their primary role. However, they also have to learn the basics of how to do other core aspects of robotics so they can experience a variety of what robotics has to offer. Even if people come into robotics and don't really know how to do much of anything, we take extra time and effort into teaching them and helping them find what they are interested in. It's a great system we have all gotten to try new things this year, along with focusing on one main thing. This has also helped create a team people want to join, and an intellectual sport people want to participate in. We have all learned so much throughout this process, and this gives us many opportunities for future endeavors.

I think having a diverse team changes our perspective because we get opinions from different people, and we aren't afraid to argue our opinions and compromise. This helps us come up with designs, codes, and strategies which is a very important thing. Having this diverse team has led us to place very well in the competitions that we have participated in and I don't think we would have done as well as we have without having the diverse team that we do.

Mae C. Jameson is my STEM role model. She was the first African American female astronaut ever in space. In the year 1992 she flew into space aboard the Endeavour. She made history. In 1987 she became the first African American woman to be admitted into NASAs astronaut training program. She is not only an important figure in African American history, but also in women's history. She made so much history, and after consulting many people from other robotics teams, I have learned not many people know about her. Now I don't know if that was just some simple thing they haven't learned, or if it's because she was a black woman. You hear all these stories about what men did, particularly whire men, and you wonder how women were involved, or were they even allowed to be involved at all? She is such an important figure, and she inspires
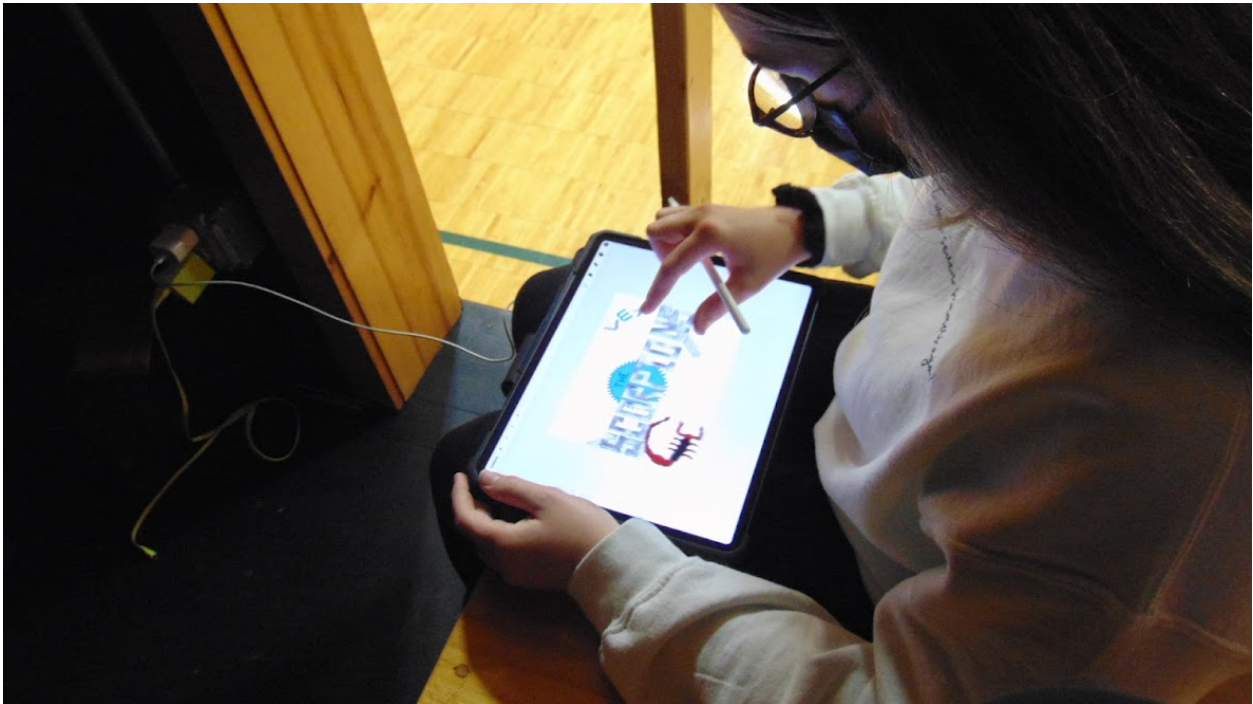
me so much. Learning about her makes me want to pursue robotics into my future. I think it could be something I want to make into a career. So we look at all that she has done. And we think about how that could be one of us someday. Women can make even more history in the STEM field and that is our ultimate goal as a team.

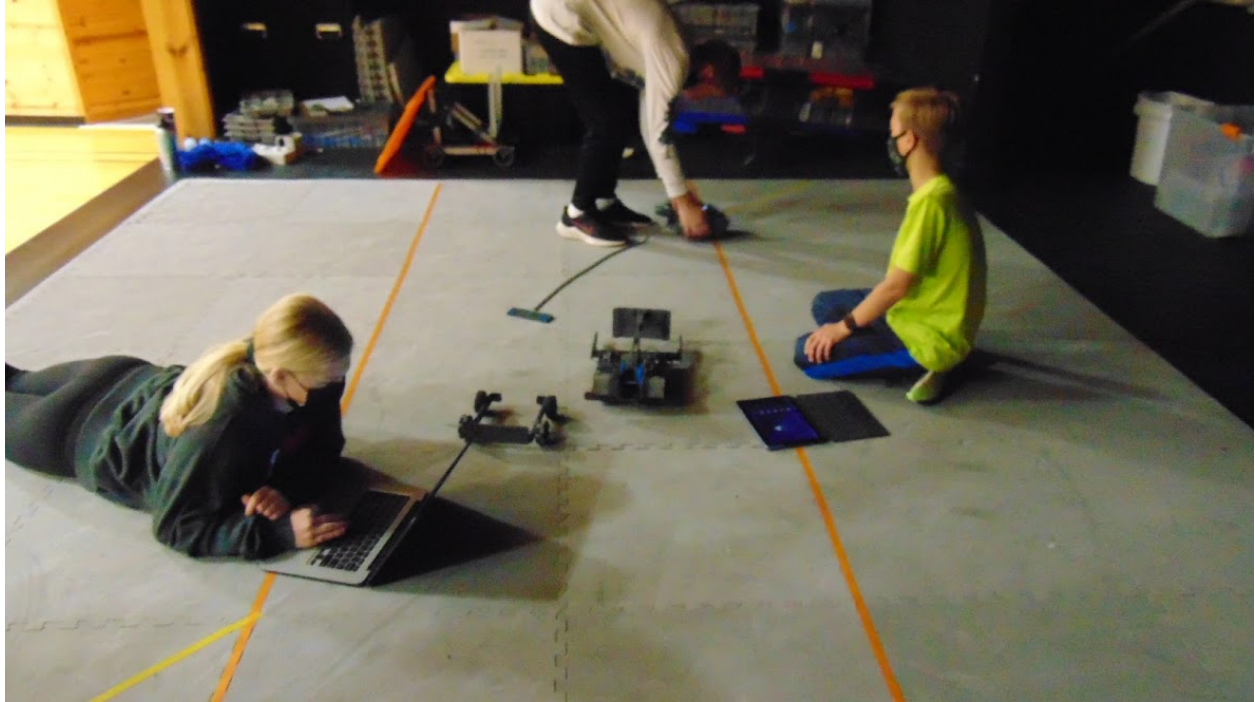Lilah (driver/writer) - adding to the engineering notebook

Lilah/Tyler (Drivers) - Taking a photo at our first competition


Abbey (Helper) - Making our poster design for the online challenges

Lilah, Tyler, Kade (Driver/Writer), (Driver/Builder), (Programer) - testing our robot



Emma (Helper) - learning how to program through robotify

Xoa (programmer) - Teaching younger children how robotics works, and getting them interested



Xoa (Programmer) - Writing out a code for an upcoming competition