

VRC Girl Powered Essay:

Oh Yes She Did

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A wise woman once said, “Don’t let anyone rob you of your imagination, your creativity, your curiosity. It’s your place in the world; it’s your life. Go on and do all you can with it, and make it the life



you want to live.” This woman was Mae Jemison, the first African American woman in space. I am also a woman in STEM, at Berthoud High school, maybe not an astronaut yet, but I strongly believe in the saying that “every person counts” in the movement to create inclusion for women in STEM. In my journey I have had other supporting women, inspirations, and I have changed how my team approaches some aspects of robotics. Girl powered means; the power that women possess to enter a field of activity despite the thought of if they “belong” or not, using confidence, support from others, and perseverance to succeed in that field.

Mae Jemison, Katherine Johnson, Marie Curie, and Tu YouYou, are all incredible inspiration for myself, and women around the world. Sexism is present everywhere for us, and while the oppressive hand of the patriarchy tries to hold us down, these women show us how to push back. It wasn’t always like this,



nowadays women in STEM are celebrated by others and learned about in schools. They aren’t punished for doing what they love, or as harshly discouraged as they would have been in the past. I am someone who loves an adventure, when I joined robotics it was definitely not something I was expected to do by anyone, even myself. But the teamwork, creation, and learning opportunity struck a fire of curiosity in my head. The extra push I needed was these female role models. This inspiration

didn’t stop there, I have met many women in robotics that have pushed me to do even better. My team once did a practice with a few other teams to see what competitions would be like, and this was great for me to meet the other teams and socialize. I met a girl who programmed for her team, and her work really impressed me. I had a conversation with her and learned that she had been practicing coding since she was 11. Though she was so modest, her hard work made such a big difference in proving a point that women belong in STEM, and in inspiring me to work harder and follow her path. Another example would be a girl that I met at a tournament, who basically ran her team. She was so unapologetically herself, and made it known to everyone that she belonged there, and that she was just as good as everyone else there. She was funny and she had such a big personality, no gender gap could ever get in her way. Finally, someone who I even knew before robotics. This woman was good at everything she tried, because she

worked so hard. She did so many things on her team, notebook, coding, coaching, and building. She also walked around with pride and presence. She was there and she was there to stay. Win or lose she was going to work hard and try to be the best teammate out there. I could never be the woman in STEM that I am today without these peers. I am so grateful for all women in STEM, and the part that they take in helping others, even if it is unintentional.

Similarly, to the type of woman in STEM that I am, my personality and my perspective have changed how the team has functioned. I did this with my girl power. While someone on the team may only value driving and coding, I like to see and use our projects from the notebook to improve. This trait has earned us a design award and a fantastic notebook. I also like the aspect of strategizing with teammates and making bonds. During competitions, my goal is to be almost like a salesman, and sell the

idea of being partners with our ranked, I like to talk to the compatibility, and what is contradictory to my depend on ranking. I think that the ideas I have to offer and our ranking or holding it up. I that I can learn something new competition. I observe and getting down in the dumps



team. No matter how we are everyone and let them know our robot can do. This method teammates who almost solely some teams may take liking to change their mind, opposing provide a drive to my work, so every time we go to a overcome issues instead of about not being good enough

or not performing well. I take every moment as an opportunity to learn, and I try to rub that positivity off on everyone that I am working with. I believe that all those things have changed how our team functions. And I wouldn't say that this is necessarily because I am a woman, and all women do these things.

However I think that growing up as a woman in this world has taught me to not be quiet. In this, I try to be positive and work hard. Those traits apply to my personality and work. I also contributed to regular things like coding, building, and notebook. These are all things that my team taught me how to do, or that I learned how to do through observation. We use encouragement to make sure everyone tries everything to create inclusion, and a strong team. This is all something that I worked up to and learned but I didn't do it all alone.

I didn't join robotics until a friend in cross country invited me. This was my first encounter with the support system that I would later learn more about in robotics between women. A group that helped me through experiencing the sexism that I would encounter, and didn't judge me in the way that I wasn't the typical mold of someone in robotics. We danced together, laughed together, and rolled our eyes at the



boys who stared in disbelief at seeing a girl at a robotics tournament. These girls were from all different teams, and we gave support even though we weren't always together. I was lucky enough to have one more girl on my team last year as well. We could talk about our experiences and stand up for each other. We would sometimes be telling other teams the plan for the match, and they would respond by asking where the boys on our team were. We also would talk to our team together back each other up with ideas with things like teaming up at competitions. This year is different, some of those girls graduated, lost interest in robotics, and moved away that were in our little

group. I am now the only girl on my team. But I have the experience from last year, and the confidence to



keep being myself, a woman in STEM. Now I feel the responsibility to give this loving and supportive environment to the new girls who joined robotics and to spread STEM to other girls who have the same curiosity as I did. One of my goals is to recruit more girls to the team eventually, but I only hope I can make a difference and make all of those girls feel welcome.

Being a woman in Stem is not the same experience for everyone, but it is something that is unique and has to grow and change. Our team makes sure to accept everyone and consider

the women in our lives for recruitment of our team. We encourage all kinds of people to join robotics, and try to teach as much as we can to improve the knowledge of our team and recruits overall. I am so thankful for all the support I have been given, and am proud of my accomplishments, in this time. I am also so happy to see the numbers of women in STEM grow by the minute. STEM is for everyone, and we are here to prove it.