



A TIPPING POINT IN “HER”STORY

Written by Jeanelle Reyna
Limitless Robotics Team 948J
San Diego, CA

Word Count: 1325

Our Stories Matter



The world celebrates history, which is dominated by “HIS” story. Men were the framework on which we built this world. I want to celebrate “HER” story. Extraordinary women have existed from day one but their stories have been overshadowed.

We need to honor the truths and contributions of women and girls. We are phenomenal and have the potential for greatness. We are at a tipping point in “HER” story and it’s time for us to be heard.

We Are Limitless

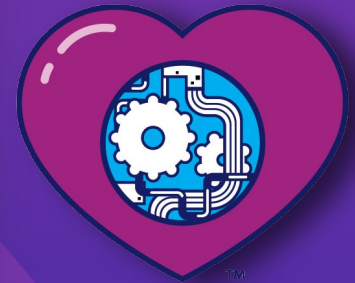
My name is Jeanelle Reyna, I am from San Diego California and I am 12 years old and in the 7th grade. I am on 948J, Limitless, a high school VRC team. My older brother, Jesse, is the other half of our team, and he is 14 and in 9th grade. This is our first time competing in VRC and we are looking forward to competing in a brand new environment.



What Girl Powered Means To Me

When I think of Girl Powered, I think of a way to empower girls and encourage them to change the world. The Girl Powered Initiative taught girls how they can change the world through STEM, and now it is up to us to show that we can break through all gender stereotypes.

We need to start helping young girls shape their own story. Girls can do anything that they put their minds to, and there have been many women in the past who have made important innovations in a male-dominated industry. I'm excited to be a part of the "Tipping Point" of the new generation.

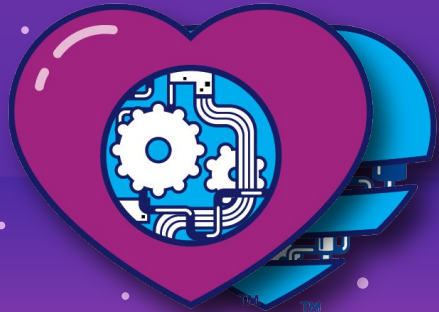
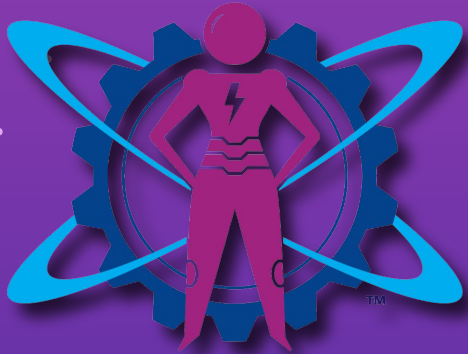


Being Who I Am



Girl Powered has impacted my approach to robotics by giving me the courage to do difficult things. Even as a 12 year old girl surrounded by high schoolers and adults, I feel comfortable advocating for myself in high stress environments like tournaments because I know that I will be treated with respect. I can be more fearless and bold in robotics because I know that the RECF values and supports me. I know that any time I walk into a robotics tournament, I will be treated with respect and kindness, no matter where I am. I will always feel safe and welcomed.

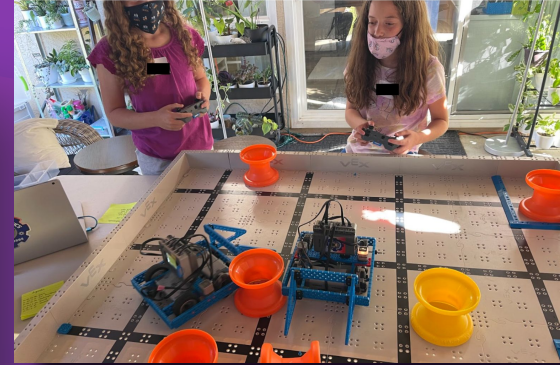
Redefining What a Roboticist Looks Like



Inclusivity is a powerful tool that we all have easy access to, and our team makes sure to use this tool to its maximum. All it takes to be inclusive is an open mind and an open heart. We strive to create equal opportunities for everyone, regardless of gender or race. We make sure to give girls a chance to develop skills and to become leaders, because we think that it is important to encourage girls to take risks and to do hard things. A girl's opinion matters to us because we value the diversity of perspective that can lead us to new discoveries. As a private team, we have always welcomed members of any gender, skill level, or race, and if anybody wants to join our team, we welcome them with open minds.

Empowering a Future Generation

We are making it our goal to encourage girls in STEM to reach the “Tipping Point” of gender equality. Earlier this season, we held a Girl Powered event because we wanted girls to have hands-on experience with robotics. We taught them about the engineering design process, and they used their knowledge to design, build, program, and drive their robots in competition.



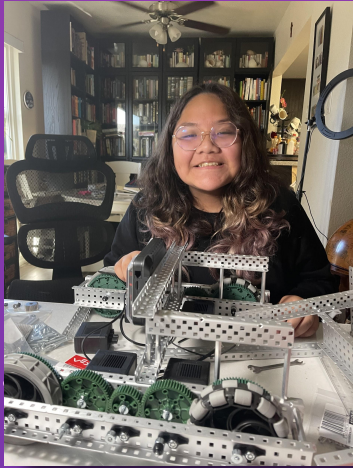
Born A Leader

I loved how different everyone was. Some girls really enjoyed building the robots, some enjoyed driving, and some learned that programming was their favorite. By including different activities, you could see the diverse interests of the girls manifest, which creates a more cohesive team. They all have their own unique story to tell. We made sure to provide all girls with the opportunity to learn more about STEM and made them feel included.

I connected strongly with one girl who wanted to do the event because she was sad that her brother was the only one with STEM activities, and she wanted to try it out as well. I was that girl once. I wanted to do so much more and there wasn't anything available to me until we found VEX Robotics and started our own team. She seemed like a natural leader and left me feeling hopeful for our future.



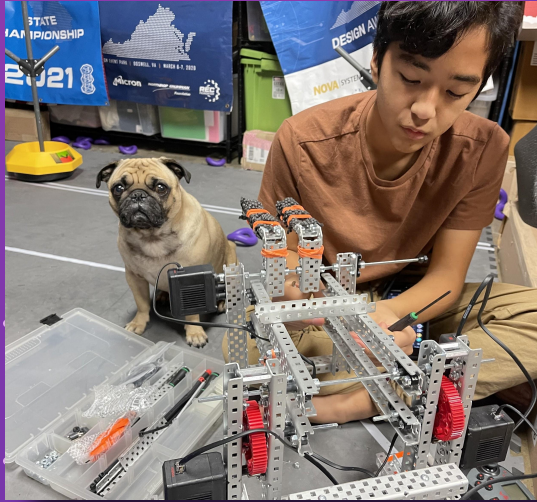
Tipping Into Our Roles



On our team, we started off rotating our roles so that we get an equal opportunity to try different skills and jobs. Over time, we developed preferences and learned our strengths and weaknesses for each role. We are given the freedom to decide what we want to do based on our interests, rather than being confined to stereotyped gender roles.

Sometimes the roles we try don't work out for us, and that's okay. We learn by failing, and we become a stronger competitor when we acknowledge that we don't have to be good at everything. For example, last season I tried programming, but I wasn't able to thrive in the role. This is where our teammates come in; if there is something that we are struggling with, they can support us with their diversity of perspective.

Our Specific Jobs



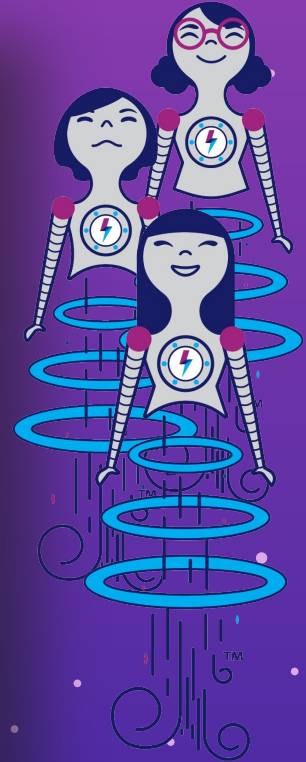
Jesse and I both build, but Jesse is the drivetrain and object manipulator specialist, whereas I specialize in lifts, structure, towers, and intakes. Jesse is the primary driver, game strategist, and programmer, and I am the project manager, lead notebooker, and scout. Developing a supportive, diverse, and well rounded team is crucial for long term success.

Diversifying The Conversation

Having a diverse perspective can help bring our thinking outside of the box. Our team chemistry works so well because our voices are different, which leads to a challenging and productive conversation. Working with your sibling can be difficult, but it creates a stronger bond and our robot design benefits from this.

Our design approach is to have a simple, clean, and elegant robot without overcomplicating the engineering design process. Having an open mindset to communication creates an environment where nobody is afraid to speak their mind, which leads us to more design opportunities.

We do game analysis together, then independently brainstorm and research before sharing our ideas as a team. This approach has helped us be successful in the past seasons, and we hope that this will continue helping us navigate our first season in VRC.



The Beginning Of A New Era



As a mixed race Filipino, Mexican, and Indigenous girl that wants to become a surgeon, I don't see many people like me in traditional history books, because they focus on "HIS" story, rather than "HER" story. I want to tell the world about an extraordinary woman named Fe del Mundo who made "HER" story.

Fe del Mundo, a Filipina pediatrician, was the first woman to ever be admitted to Harvard University. When Harvard originally accepted her in 1936, they didn't know that she was a woman, but her marks were so outstanding and her record was so impressive, she was still allowed to attend the university.

Fighting For What Is Right

She was so good that despite being a female, an international student, and a minority, they couldn't deny her excellence. Her career spanned well into her 90's, during which she founded her own Children's Medical Center, did medical research into dengue fever, wrote groundbreaking medical texts, and cared for thousands of children.

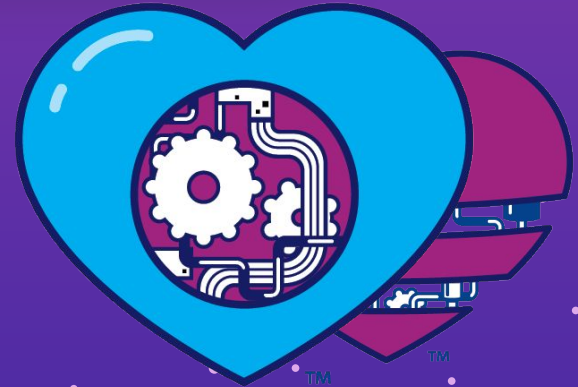
Despite her old age, she continued to fight for the safety and health of children and families all over the Philippines, and I think she is an example of a true STEM hero and everyone should know her story. This inspires me because she transcended stereotypes, and created an opportunity for girls like me that didn't exist before her.



Dr. Fe Del Mundo was the first of many. She inspired more and more girls to reach past the “Tipping Point” of history, and showed every girl how to tell “HER”story. She paved the way for the future generations, and I hope to one day do the same.



Girl  Powered®



A TIPPING POINT IN “HER”STORY

Author: Jeanelle Reyna

Team: 948J, Limitless Robotics

Presentation Template: Slidesgo & Storyset

Girl Powered Assets:

Foundation, REC. (n.d.). *Girl Powered Downloads*. Retrieved January 12, 2022, from <https://www.roboticseducation.org/girlpowered/girl-powered-blog/girl-powered-downloads/>.

Fe del Mundo Bibliography Resources:

S. Kiona. (November 27, 2018). *Tuesday's Google Doodle Honors Pediatrician Fe del Mundo*. Retrieved January 2, 2022, from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kionasmith/2018/11/27/tuesdays-google-doodle-honors-pediatrician-fe-del-mundo/?sh=6c1167544120>.

L. Allen. (2018). *Tuesday's Google Doodle Honors Pediatrician Fe del Mundo*. Retrieved January 2, 2022, from <https://moneyinc.com/how-fe-del-mundo-changed-pediatrics-forever/>.

HWS. (n.d). *Fe del Mundo*. Retrieved January 2, 2022, from https://www.hws.edu/about/blackwell/del_mundo.aspx

