Team Members: **Team #: 77038J**
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Women In STEM; Girl Power

When you rewind a couple of decades, women were considered ‘to be weak’ and to ‘only have a role in the household’. These housewives' jobs were solely focused on feeding and attending to their family, while also taking care of the chores. They weren’t even allowed to work until 1920, which was only a little more than a century ago! In this generation, even knowing this can frustrate anyone, but even today, women are still underlooked and mimicked. Over time though, there has been this phrase; “Girl Power”. This phrase can mean many different things depending on the way you look at it, but as a full girls robotics team, we’ll tell you our ongoing story.

The Beginning

When we rewind to the first month of school, we knew that this was going to be a new experience for us because of online school the year before. There were many people whom we were unfamiliar with. Later on, the school held a club fair. There was a stand for robotics, so we decided to go check it out. There sat the robotics teacher and a girl named Vanessa. We asked them to give us a brief summary of what it was going to be like in robotics, and what we’d expect. Then the robotics teacher mentioned something about an All Girls’ team. This caught our attention, so we continued to listen. Vanessa then explained how she also wants to start this, mostly because she thought women weren’t normalized in work fields such as these, and she wanted to change that. We didn’t know it yet, but we wanted the same thing.

Growth

Fast forward to our first meeting, and Mr. Valentin had us introduce ourselves and explain why we wanted to join robotics. When we did, you could notice one thing all the girls said in common; we all wanted to learn something new and show society that we, as women, are strong and independent.

Once teams were finalized, you could see that there was only 1 all girls team, while there were 2 boys teams, but we didn't let that stop us from continuing, instead, it motivated us. Getting to know each other, you could visibly notice how we all had vividly different personalities, but the same reason for our approach towards robotics: "Girl Power." "Girl Power" in our eyes was a phrase that we love and hate. In our eyes, "Girl Power" demonstrates how females can be powerful and accomplish anything despite everything that can bring them down. But we also hate the phrase "Girl Power" for this exact reason. The way that this phrase can be used can show how rare it is for women to exhibit power. There is no reason for females to be so looked down upon to need to have a quote to uplift them. In a STEM community, it can be filled with mimicry of females truly helping each other advance forward. Being a strong and independent girls' team in the STEM community helps our approach to robotics to be more optimistic, stronger, more open, and limitless.

Now that we were finally getting somewhere with building, we were able to establish specific roles in our team. We are a group who loves to be as efficient and productive as possible, so we tend to stick to our strengths. But for this same reason, we try to switch up things sometimes. We try to encourage each other to try out new roles because we would be able to expand our knowledge, opinions, and perspective for our probability of success to increase. In one case scenario, all of us came together to collectively discuss our robot design to see which one would best suit the tipping point. From this discussion, we were able to make necessary changes because we gave our honest opinions. Because of all of our different perspectives on our design, we were able to display a form of growth by trial and error, and by taking initiative.

Although we were very different with our perspectives on our bot, we still get along pretty well. Everytime we stay after school, we always make sure to get the work done, but at the same time make sure our team chemistry is growing. We would do this by asking each other about our personal lives' and how school was going. We'd make sure everybody was taking part to prevent any disagreements, and we would just enjoy each others' company by telling stories and working. Because of this, we were able to create a more welcoming environment where anyone can feel inspired and welcomed to join our team, as long as they were committed.

Fast forward, we then arrive at our first competition. This is the first time we'd be together as a team to test how much we grew. It was much different than we'd anticipated, but we got through it together. We displayed a sense of independence by communicating with our allies and each other to discuss a strategy against our opposing teams, fixing anything that was wrong with the bot, practicing when we could, and having a sense of time. Of course, there were many opportunities we saw as growth, but overall, it was an experience that we all enjoyed and learned from.

As a team who hasn't even been together for a long time, we grew a lot in many various ways. Our team chemistry allowed us to accomplish this, as well as our experiences and obstacles together. Although the things we've experienced all haven't been ideal ones, that is what makes them so good to learn from. We may not have a STEM role model, but we agree on one thing; when we are together, we grow with new experiences and lessons. Through this, we are able to inspire each other.