What it means to be Gifted and girl-powered

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When I hear “Girl Powered” I think of women being thought of as equal to men and knowing that they can do everything a man can do. I think of men asking women for help just as much as women would ask men for help. When I think of “Girl Powered” I think of inclusivity and equality.

My team and I have shown this for the entirety of the time we have been together this year. We have helped many teams with a variety of things whether it be programming, building, designing, or strategy. We help whoever needs it no matter who they are. Many people from other teams come to our team for help if our coach is busy, even if they are an all-boys team.

My team has always tried to be helpful and inviting towards everyone. We always lend parts and almost always drop what we’re doing to help someone who is having programming or design issues. I did not come into the team when Rachel, Ila, and Miley did and joined much later, but I have always felt welcomed by the team and I found my place easily.

All of my team members have at least two different roles on the team. I am the main programmer, but I also help build and help the drivers come up with some of the strategies. Miley is the main builder and designer, but she also helps with programming, especially strategy for our programs. Miley helps with driving strategy as well. Ila and Rachel are the two drivers and main driving strategists. Rachel helps with building and Ila helps with Robot design.

My team has many differing perspectives on many different aspects of this year’s robotics challenge. This can cause some disagreements between members, and many of these have been about the design

of the robot. However, we can usually work out these disagreements easily and come to a consensus. Every time this happens, we make sure to look at what would be best for our robot in the long run.

In our first competition in Galveston called Battle at the Beach, me and Miley had realized that our ring intake did not help us and did not actually pick up rings no matter how many times we tweaked or remodeled it. We had come to the decision that since it was weighing us down and our robot would be better without it, to take it off. We told Rachel and Ila first, however, to make sure they agreed. When they did not agree, we made sure to think about what would happen in both scenarios. While they could have been right that if we kept working on the ring intake, we might get it to work, we eventually agreed that after we took it off, we could replace it with a claw that Miley had been working on and could get more points with that than the ring intake ever would. This turned out to be a good decision as we came out as tournament finalists in that competition, and we were able to climb now that we did not have the ring intake weighing us down and getting in the way of the goals.

I think it is good to have different perspectives in the team so that we can have multiples ways of solving a problem and so we can see if there is a better solution than what one person has already come up with. This has helped us succeed in times where one person would have failed if not for a certain idea from someone else.

Edith Clarke was an amazing electrical engineer and an even more inspiring STEM role model. She was the first professionally employed female electrical engineer and first full-time female professor of electrical engineering in the U.S. She used math to improve our understanding of power transmission. She started her career as practically a human calculator to help engineers working to build the first transcontinental phone line and went on to make her most famous contribution, the “Clarke Calculator” in 1921. It is a graphical device that simplified the equations electrical engineers used to understand power lines. Clarke is an amazing electrical engineer that did not let the struggles of prejudice slow her down. She has inspired our team to make sure that no matter the setbacks we may face, we should never give up and we will continue put our best into not only our robot now, but any future STEM projects or career paths we might be interested in.

Bibliography

Five fast facts about engineer Edith Clarke. Energy.gov. (2015, March 19). Retrieved January 14, 2022, from https://www.energy.gov/articles/five-fast-facts-about-engineer-edith-clarke