

Team 7983T

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Girl Powered

The STEM field is a highly admired and sought after career path, and for as long as it has been around, the field has been predominantly males. There are many different opportunities in the field, but they are heavily reliant on math and science, the M and S in STEM, and because women were seen as less educated and lacking knowledge compared to males, women did not join the field till much later. Still today, we see a small amount of female STEM workers, or females involved in STEM at all. That is why I believe it is so important to take initiative and create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for women wanting to join STEM and hopefully progress as a society to a point where women in STEM fields is a common occurrence.

This is why I believe that the Girl Powered program is so vital in today's society. I remember in middle school, I attended my soon to be high school's Girl Powered event that was run through their robotics program that my brother was involved in. He knew I was interested in STEM so he encouraged me to attend. Going to this event was an amazing experience, because I got to work with other females in building small robots, and hearing other women speak about their experience with STEM, and it was truly inspiring. Looking back on it now and to answer the question, I believe that the phrase "Girl Powered" means that something is powered by women, in that these powerful and admiring women take these difficult tasks, and overcome them with their own sheer power. This is heavily reflected in my robotics team, because whenever me and my team try to figure out solutions to our problems, my team members always make sure to ask me what my take on the situation is, and if I have any ideas as to what can be done to solve the issue. Getting these different points of views is very important to my team

because with so many outlooks, you are sure to find the best solution. Our program as a whole is very welcoming and inclusive. We have a club on campus called SWE Next, which stands for Society of Women Engineers Next. This program focuses on women's involvement in STEM and empowers women that aren't involved in STEM to come and take a look at what we have to offer to see if anything strikes their interests. This is a major step in the right direction as a younger generation, encouraging women's involvement in programs such as robotics or Biomedical Sciences that our school has to offer.

I have been involved in my school's robotics program for the past 2 years and I have never felt out of place or less heard because of my gender. Last year was a very different experience with online school, but this year I have tried to branch out into different roles in my team. Whenever our teacher gives programming lessons, my team lets me sit in on those as our team representative, so I can get a better understanding of the concept of programming and with this I have sat with my team's programmers and talked with them about our robot's programming. I have always been a builder and planner, and I have still been actively involved in that role. On top of that I am the head of the notebook and make sure all of the stuff that goes on in our group gets documented and our thought process is scribed, but everyone contributes to the notebook. I am the only girl on my team, but they never make me feel discriminated against and make sure that my ideas are always heard. When I go up for the drive team, I believe I have a different perspective on the game than the other males on my team, and when talking to the driver on our team, I am a lot more calm and rational than some others which can be a good thing in times of chaos.

My STEM role model would have to be Zaha Hadid. In the future I want to pursue Civil Engineering and become an architect, so I have always looked up to Zaha Hadid. Zaha was born

in Iraq, and being a woman in STEM was even more looked down upon there than it was in the US, so she had to undergo a lot of discrimination to get to where she was. Her creations are incredible with the Heydar Aliyev Center and the Dongdaemun Design Plaza. Each very unique and personal to her style. To see a woman in her surroundings become one of the most well-known architects in the world is truly inspiring and what I hope to accomplish some day. My overall involvement in STE has been such an amazing experience and I hope that through programs such as Girl Powered and SWE Next, more women can experience STEM and all the great things it has to offer.