

Women Aren't the Exception

Bancroft Robodogs Team 2442A

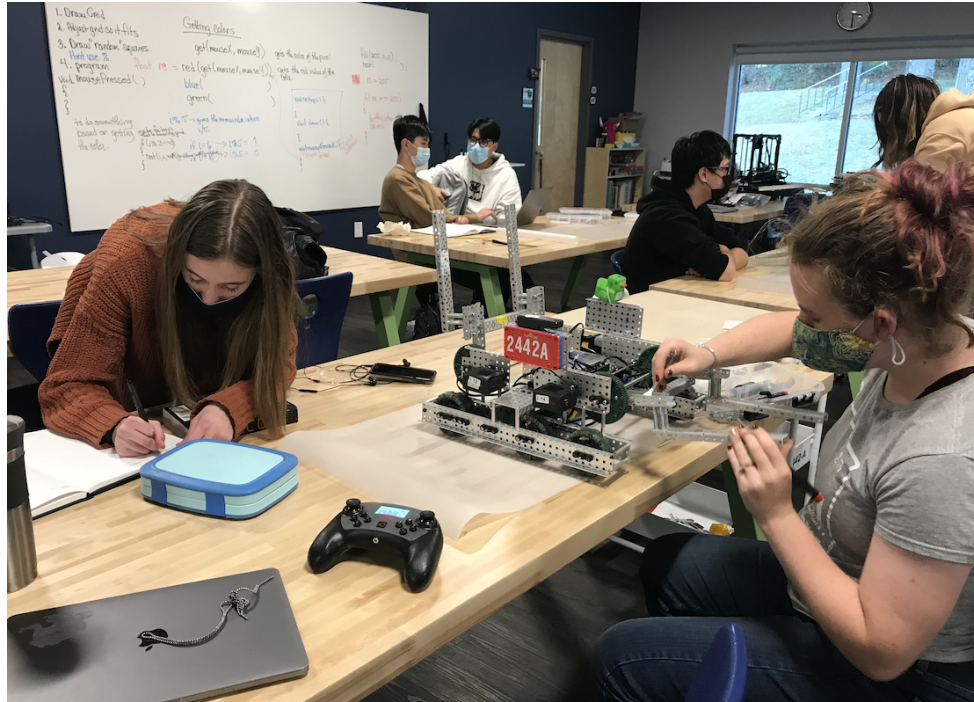
Sophia, Annika, Elyse, Maeve, Kenerson

Bancroft School, Worcester, MA



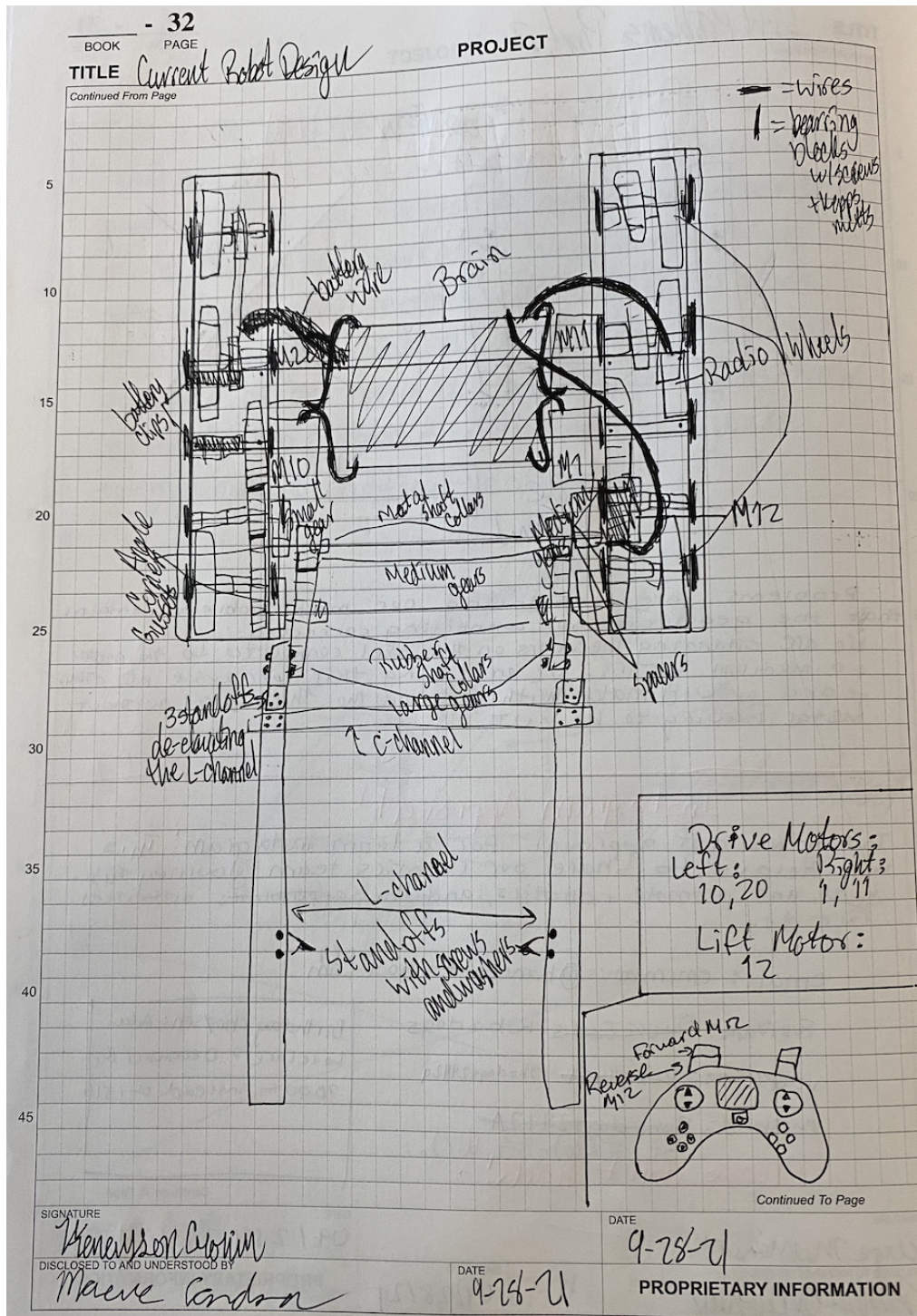
(Left to Right: Elyse, Annika, Kenerson, Sophia, Maeve)

Bancroft School, Team 2442A. Elyse McManus, Kenerson Cronin, Maeve Condron, Annika Savla, and Sophia Gendron. Together, we create one energetic and amazing company. Leading us is Kenerson Cronin. Our versatile and responsible team captain is able to do any job, whether it be designing, building, programming or driving. If you need any help whatsoever, she's your girl. Up next we have our main programmer, Elyse McManus. She can program autonomous and drive in a day, and perfect it in a week. Not only does she program, but she designs and builds as well. Everyday she brings her best effort and attitude, no matter what. Then we have Maeve Condron. She builds, and drives like she's been playing the game for weeks, when it came out the prior day. She knows the rules like the back of her hand. Up and coming Annika Savla is the control center for the team. She promotes and communicates, managing everything like no other. One day, no one knows our team, the next we have a social media account and posters about us around our school. Lastly, is Sophia Gendron, who is a little bit of everything. She is our amazing match driver, and has gotten us to finals at every competition she's driven in. She also builds and repairs the robot for optimum efficiency. Each of us participate in robotics to learn, whether it be to learn programming, learn building, or designing. But we're also here to learn teamwork and problem solving. Everyday, the robotics lab is full of different teams, collaborating but also competing together. We are one of the teams who will play in competition, then complement and discuss the intricate designs after. Our robotics team is not perfect, but it's full of respect and creativity. Our ultimate goal is that our robotics team will also be known for what we do, not who we are.



At first glance, our team is like every other. You'd see diligent workers, productive cooperation, and organization. But a deeper look will allow you to see that our team is anything but, and that only makes us more unique. One of the things we pride ourselves in is our humorous team dynamic. We love to laugh, and are always cracking jokes, but it never distracts us from the task at hand. Oftentimes, Team 2442A is in the lab during free periods and after school, working on building, driving, or programming the robot.





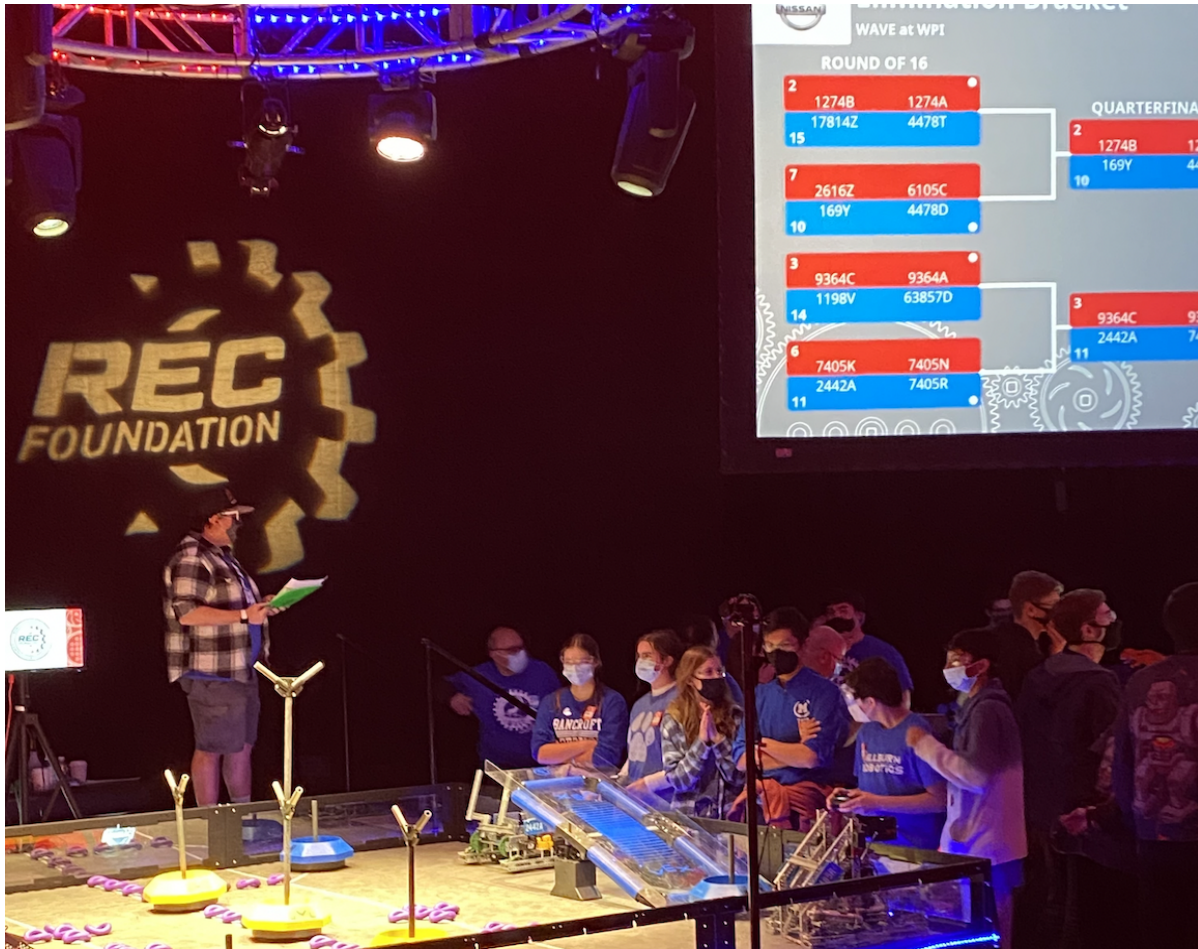
Our secret to success, however, is our unmatched communication skills. Throughout the process of building our robot and deciding on strategies, we have come across many opposing viewpoints. Team 2442A's diversity in ideas and approach is one of our defining factors, and we always ensure every member is part of each decision we make. When we fail, we fail **together**, and when we succeed, we do it together.



Our goals are to make an impact with our skills in the VEX robotics competition. Our goal is not to be celebrated because we are a female team, but to be celebrated because of our success on the field. Beyond that, we hope to be able to bring our robot to the communities near us. We hope to visit children near us, and to inspire them with engineering and robotics the way we were inspired.

Our team has many different role models in STEM. Many of us are fond of Ada Lovelace, and we greatly admire her for her contributions in computer science. We also admire other great women such as Sally Ride, the third woman and first member of the LGBTQ+ community in space, and Katherine Johnson, whose mathematical calculations were critical to the success of the first and subsequent crewed U.S. space flights. While there are many influential women we admire, there are a couple we all collectively look up to. Of these women, the most notable is our coach, Mrs. Heinricher. We have all had different experiences with Mrs. H, but one thing remains constant: her ability to inspire and motivate us to do our best.





Quarterfinal match at WPI WAVE

When posed with the question “what does girl power mean to you?”, our immediate answer was women supporting women. However, after deeper thought, we realized we had some different ideas. We came to the conclusion that, if equality is the goal, then women in STEM shouldn’t be singled out under the banner of “Girl Power.” It categorizes women as different and groups them together. Our success in this field shouldn’t be seen as out of the ordinary. If we truly want to empower girls, give them the power and privilege to be seen as equivalent. One of the main focuses of our team is to make a name for ourselves, as formidable opponents and powerful allies. As Ruth Bader Ginsburg once said, “Women should be in all places where decisions are being made... It shouldn’t be that women are the exception.”

We want to be known for our actions and our strengths on the field. While we are proud to be women in STEM, we will not allow it to be what defines us.