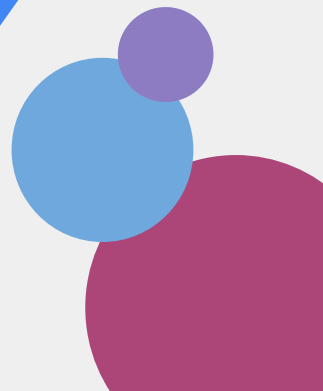
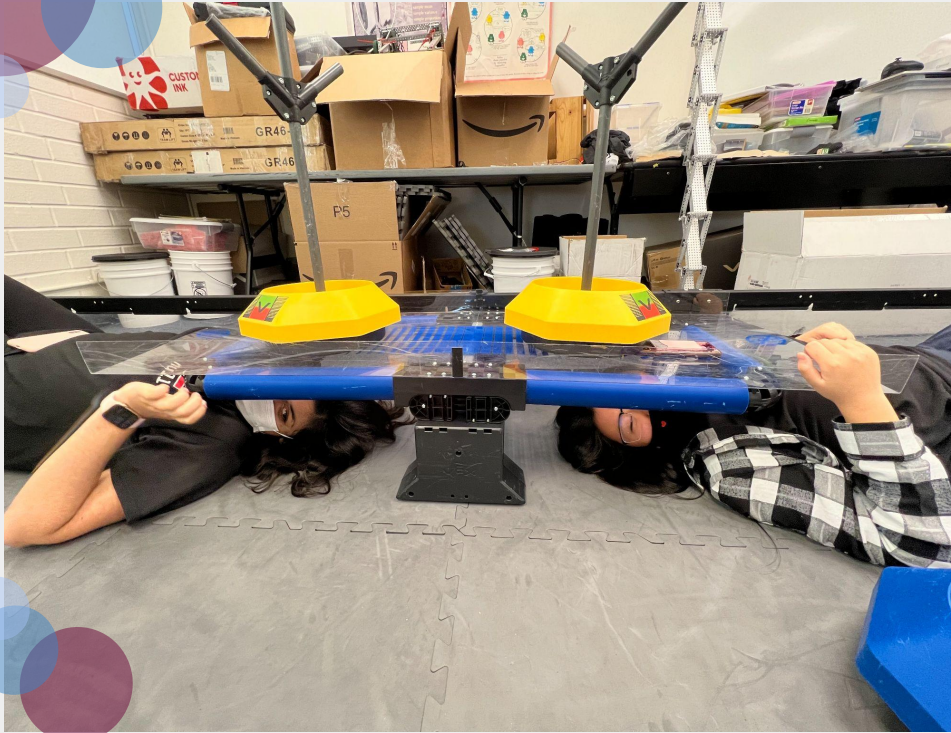




**GIRL POWERED**

**Team 62X's Journey**





(Anika Iyer and Karen Wu explore new perspectives, Team 62X, 2021)

You're probably wondering, what exactly are we doing under the platform? As members of **Team 62X**, we pride ourselves on bringing diverse perspectives to the table that constantly push the boundaries of design and innovation. And while trying to look at the field from the perspective of a mobile goal may not be the best idea, it serves as a general symbol of our team's base principle: breaking and remaking conventions. In order to do this, we need **diversity**.

## The Importance of Diversity

Our team prides ourselves on including all voices. We all come from varied backgrounds. Kensuke, Karen, and Anika are first generation Americans. Eric is a second generation American. Audrey is half-Jewish and half-Colombian. As a Latina, she has a firsthand awareness of intersectionality: according to the Student Research Foundation, Hispanic women hold less than 2% of the jobs in STEM.

As a team, we have a firsthand awareness of the importance of diversity. None of our accomplishments or designs would have been possible without the perspectives that each of us brings to the table. That's why we're pushing to make sure everyone is encouraged to learn about STEM.



(Team 62X and robot Tamatoa, 2021)

# Powered by Girls

## **Anika: Main Strategist, Main Driver Coach**

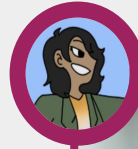
Anika is a junior, and was the original founder of Team 62X. She previously competed in VEX-IQ and placed 4th at the World Championships. She has since served primarily as a strategist and driver coach, drawing on her extensive game knowledge and skills in data analysis to craft game plans.

## **Karen: Main Builder, Lead Strategist**

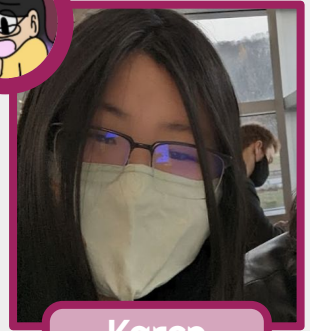
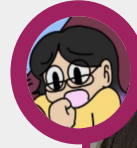
Karen is a junior, and is one of the two original members of 62X. She has always had a strong interest in STEM, and uses her experience in physics and applied mathematics to make precise and effective builds. She additionally records and analyzes all of our matches to determine the best strategies we can use.

## **Audrey: Main Programmer, Lead Builder**

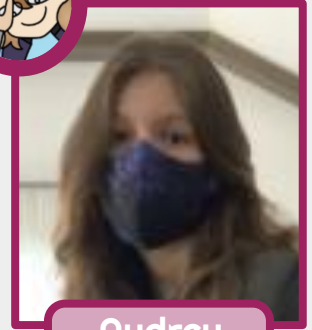
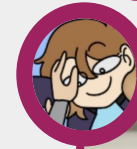
Audrey is a junior, with this season being her 5th year competing in VRC. She joined 62X for the 2021-2022 season, bringing extensive building and programming experience to the table.



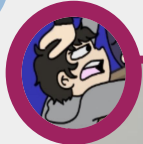
**Anika**  
(she/her)



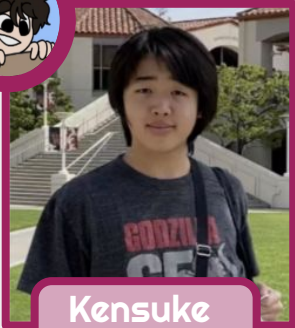
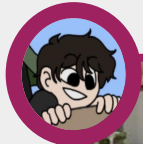
**Karen**  
(she/her)



**Audrey**  
(she/her)



**Eric**  
(he/him)



**Kensuke**  
(he/him)

## The Others

### **Eric: Main Driver, Lead Programmer**

Eric is a junior, and joined 62X in the 2020-2021 season. He is skilled in programming and driving.

### **Kensuke: Main CAD Designer, Lead Builder**

Kensuke is a junior, and joined 62X in the 2020-2021 season. He is skilled in using CAD software to plan our designs.



Karen builds a tower using blocks at the local science museum (photo courtesy of Xin Guan, 2014)

## How It All Started: Karen's Story

In 2012, Karen saw a flyer about a Lego robotics club at her elementary school. She was ecstatic— she loved building with Lego bricks in her free time and bringing them to life with robotics felt like the logical next step. However, when she walked through the door of the club, she realized that there were no other girls there. The intimidation drove her away from the club.

In 2017, Karen started at a new school and decided to take another shot at her STEM dreams. She took an advanced math course and joined the school's math club. In math class, she met Anika and they bonded over their passion for STEM. Neither of them knew it at the time, but they would become teammates someday.





Audrey Engman wins a Science Fair Award (photo courtesy of Luz Engman 2016)

## How It All Started: Audrey's Story

In 2016, Audrey had just moved across the country and started at a new school in Los Angeles. Despite being scared by her unfamiliar surroundings, she jumped right into the school's science fair because of her passion for STEM.

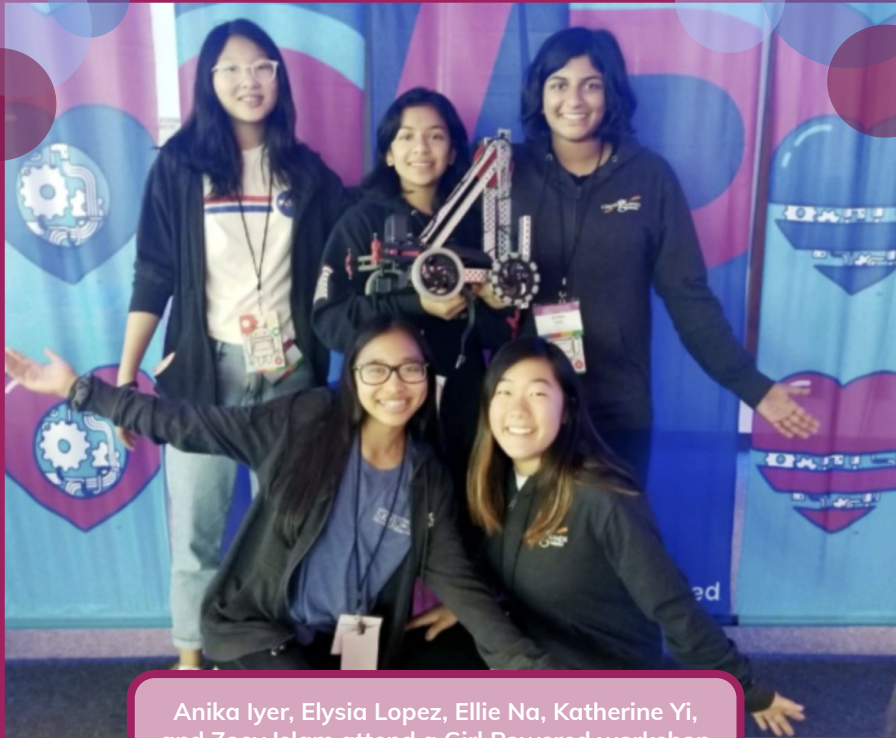
In 2017, Audrey had just joined a robotics team where she started out as the only girl. By the time she joined team 62X in 2021, Audrey had participated in numerous other STEM related activities, including Science Bowl and Math Club. Despite the great academic and social strides she had made as a result of participating in these activities, she also began to experience firsthand a lot of the issues faced by women in STEM, from being constantly talked over to having misogynistic jokes made at her expense. Instead of being discouraged, this only inspired her to work harder to create a more welcoming environment for girls who came after her.

## How It All Started: Anika's Story

In 2019, Anika was a member of VEX-IQ Team 10700B, and had the opportunity to attend a Girl Powered workshop hosted by Google. For the first time, she saw a large gathering of girls just like her: all passionate about STEM, all skilled, all motivated to succeed.

Prior to that experience, Anika had always found herself being the only girl in the STEM activities she pursued, from competitive math to Science Bowl to programming. She had resigned herself to always being the minority.

But that day, Anika realized that there were countless young women who were just as passionate about STEM—all they needed was to be **empowered**. Upon returning home from the event, she messaged Karen, one of her closest friends, with an invitation to form a robotics team.



Anika Iyer, Elysia Lopez, Ellie Na, Katherine Yi, and Zoey Islam attend a Girl Powered workshop at Google (photo courtesy of Team 10700B, 2019)



## Our Strength

Every member of 62X is a all-rounder. We regularly take turns driving, building, coding, and strategizing, ensuring that every one of our members has full access to learning every skill that robotics teaches. The versatility of our members has proven a strength multiple times, particularly during quarantine. During the 2020-2021 season, we were forced to operate almost completely asynchronously. This meant that our members would often hold onto the robot for long stretches of time, and would need to complete work in building, programming, and strategy. But, this didn't stop us, as we had already implemented our practice of working across disciplines.



Karen Wu and Kensuke Shimojo building together  
(photo courtesy of Team 62X, 2020)



## What Girl Powered Means To Us

Girl Powered is about empowerment—not just for girls, but for other underrepresented groups, including racial minorities and the LGBTQ+ community. Girl Powered is about setting an example—showing the world that everyone is capable of innovation, and if we all come together, great things will be accomplished.



Xin Guan, software engineer at Google, sits at her desk (photo courtesy of Xin Guan)

## Our Role Model

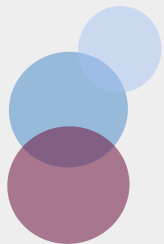
We are fortunate to be surrounded by many amazing women in STEM. Xin Guan is Karen's mom and a software engineering manager at Google. Beyond her career, she has also financially supported one middle school girl in rural China each year for the last twelve years and organized and taught a programming class for kids. She inspires us to not only create innovative designs, but also share our love for STEM with others.

We also want to give a special shoutout to all the female STEM teachers and faculty at Harvard-Westlake for inspiring and encouraging us along our journey, and for believing in our capabilities.



## Empowering the Community

We're lucky enough to have built a community within our team where women and minorities are supported and given a voice, but we want to make sure that other young women like us have these same opportunities. We help mentor an all-girls team— the first in Harvard-Westlake history— at our school, and have advised them throughout their robotics journey. Additionally, Anika works with the nonprofit organization Shero's Rise. Shero's Rise is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing girls and young women from underserved communities with the essential skills, experiences, tools, and support needed to become empowered agents of change in their world.



# Girl Powered: Team 62X's Journey

## Team 62X from Harvard-Westlake

Anika Iyer

Audrey Engman

Eric Yoon

Karen Wu

Kensuke Shimojo

## With Special Thanks To:

Andrew Theiss, our highschool mentor

Tripp Reed and Damaris Saenz, our middle school mentors

Xin Guan, our inspiration

Our sister 62 teams, for cheering us on and learning with us

Team GMR 10700B, for introducing Anika to robotics

