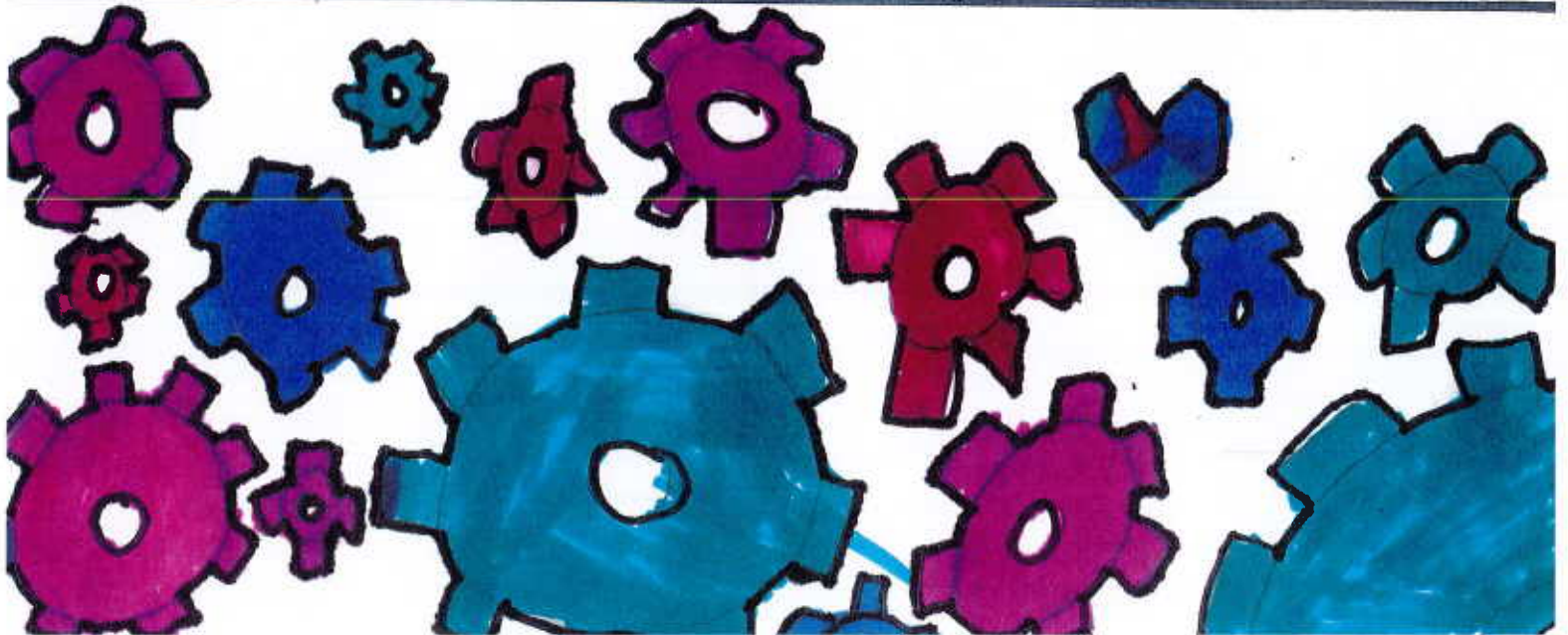


Girl Powered: Girls Can Do Anything!

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Girl Powered: Girls Can Do Anything!

By Geneva M.

When I hear the phrase, "Girl Powered", it makes me think that girls can do anything. Women can do jobs that men can do. Women persist! When I'm in robotics, I persist! I am in charge of the Engineering Notebook, and I like to get things done!

There are five fifth graders and three fourth graders on the robotics team. Three of us fifth graders are girls, and one is in fourth grade, and we know we need to get more girls on the team for next year. So we decided to host a REC Foundation and VEX "Girl Powered" workshop. We made big "Girl Powered" signs to put in the auditorium. We also folded and made pinwheels with bright colors to look like our robot's gears. We invited two female college students from nearby Occidental College who are part of the Boundless Brilliance club. This club has female members who promote STEM learning in elementary schools. Sydney and Evelyn came to talk to our third through fifth grade girls about studying science at college and their goals of becoming doctors. After the workshop, we asked our students what they want to be when they grow up, and surprisingly and happily, we heard they want to be doctors, engineers, and some want to work at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in Pasadena, California. In reflection, I felt that the workshop was a success, and I hope some of the students will join robotics next year.

We use our strengths to help our robotics team. For instance, I love to write, so I keep the engineering journal. Maricela has coding experience, and she built and coded the robot with Hazel. Gemma also tried to build and code the robot, too. Even though I am the notebook keeper, when I was asked to drive the robot at a league meet, I wasn't feeling so sure about it, but because women persist, I said I would give it a try. When I was at the competition, I felt nervous, but confident. I scored 63 points with my partner! I was surprised at how well I did, but it made me feel like I could do anything! I can't wait to drive again!

Our school is diverse, and it is reflected in our robotics team. We are of different cultures, different grade levels, and we have four boys and four girls. We have known each other since Kindergarten, so we get along and are respectful of each other. Our goal is to win an award and go to the Worlds in 2023, so that keeps us focused and excited!

Several of us follow Mark Rober on YouTube. He is a former NASA engineer, and he makes mechanical robots that do what humans can do. Mark Rober has a son with special needs, and that reminds us to include students on our team with special needs (one of our teammates receives help from the school's resource specialist). It is important that we remember to invite students with special needs because in the past, their strengths have greatly helped the team.

In summary, being on the robotics team has been a great experience for me. Working along with different people has been fun, and I believe that "teamwork makes the dream work." Girls can do anything boys can do, and I plan to aim for the stars by becoming an astronaut!