

2014 Small Chairman's Essays

Impact on Team Members - 479 count

At the beginning of the year, reserved students would stay in the background. These students stuck to their comfort zone and they did not explore beyond it. As the year progressed, the students moved from their comfort zones. These students were able to work with their new confidence and inspiration. They feel at home in their surroundings and participate freely. New students typically enter the team not knowing what they can contribute, but they leave with many new skills.

Impact on Community - 497 count

Our team strives to spread STEM throughout our community. We have been able to spark an interest in kids through library demos. We engage all ages with our robot and activities. We created a partnership with a local coffee shop and a local gourmet popcorn shop. Strange Brew allowed us to create a coffee blend, Robot Rampage, that they sell. Not Just Popcorn created a popcorn that is named Red Alert Velvet. These partnerships allow us to spread the name of the businesses while promoting FIRST.

Innovative Methods to Spread FIRST - 494 count

To spread the name of FIRST®, we went to Camp Ability, a camp for disabled children, and showed the children what STEM is all about. At a local middle school, we held a dodgeball tournament to raise funds for FLL teams. We initiated a club, IT Girls, which has 46 young girls that create exciting new projects while learning the basics in programming. A team member started a program called GEARS, Girls Engineering Awesome Robots Successfully. GEARS was picked up by Girls Scouts of America.

Role Models - 424 count

Our mentors encourage each student to become a leader that is committed to excellence. Captains of the team strive to inspire members to do their best and to always ask for help. Our head coach holds the team to high expectations. He encourages us to ask each other: Can I trust you? Are you committed to excellence? Do you care about me? Our team is structured around these three questions and they keep us all accountable.

Starting FRC Teams - 488 count

When we assist a new FRC team, our first concern is to spread the word about FIRST®. We assist any team that needs help. We invite them to our facilities to receive help or use any of our equipment. We have students from other schools that have the intent of starting their own team. We invite them to our team to gain knowledge about FIRST® and participate in a build season. We foster two developing teams, 3180 and 4926, by giving them care packages which include new tools and snacks.

Starting Jr. FLL, FLL, FTC Teams - 472 count

To grow FIRST®, we employ “Vertical Articulation.” Vertical articulation allows students the chance to grow through the different teams. Our goal is to create a Red Alert League, just like other sports. We have started 2 Jr. FLL teams, 8 FLL teams, and 2 FTC teams that feed into our FRC team. They gain problem solving skills and knowledge about STEM from each level. Each year we run a FLL tournament that has inspired young people outside of our school to pursue STEM.

Assisting Jr. FLL, FLL, and FTC teams - 409 count

We take great pride in the younger teams in our area. Each of them have several of our high school students as mentors. We run the Indy South FLL tournament to excite kids about FIRST and to inspire them to stay in the program. We volunteer at other local FLL events to inspire all teams to continue on until they reach the top of the chain. A growing percentage of our FRC team now consists of FLL veterans.

Partnering with other team - 483 count

We have partnered with a local team to set up several events. At an offseason competition, CAGE Match, our team helped 1529 set up the playing field and the pit area. We set up a “silly science fair” for all ages at the same event. These activities inspire kids to engage in STEM related programs. This year we were also invited to help set up a breakfast at the kickoff event. For several years we have asked 234 to weld our frame and in return we provide their team with breakfast.

Sponsors - 492 count

We have three \$5,000 sponsors: Endress + Hauser, Rolls Royce and one which chooses to be anonymous. We also have numerous smaller business sponsors which are equally as important to our team’s sustainability. Several companies donate items for our events and for our work areas. Center Grove Education Foundation donated laptops, Grand Rental Station donated machines for an offseason fair, and Floortech donated carpet for our practice field. We would not be successful without this support.

Partnerships with our sponsors - 443 count

We provide presentations to our corporate sponsors. Since the companies are mostly engineering related, they enjoy the robot, but they are even more impressed with the time requirement of six weeks. We enjoy spreading the word of FIRST during these events. The employees are encouraged to ask questions, run the robot, and browse our non-engineering table. Every employee is invited to come watch us in action at our shop or at a competition.

What is FIRST - 499 count

FIRST® stands for “For Inspiration and Recognition in Science and Technology,” but it has become much more for our entire FIRST® family. FIRST® allows students and mentors to explore the infinite possibilities that molds students into leaders. These students express self-confidence, communication skills, and are committed to excellence. FIRST® gives a multitude of opportunities for students to be inspired by their education and to become active not only in STEM, but also in business and media.

Matters of interest - 497 count

Someone once said that FIRST® “is the hardest fun you will ever have.” FIRST® is all about being the best you can be. We believe that FIRST® helps tremendously to create the skill set to overcome life’s obstacles and challenges. We see FIRST® as an avenue to give us the skills necessary to change the world. We’re inspired by those who have come before us and are motivated to do even more. FIRST® creates quality workers and citizens which is why our team believes that we should be student led.