

Chairman's Award - Team 4585

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2021 - Team 4585

Team Number

4585

Team Nickname

Husky Robotics

Team Location

Midvale, Utah - USA

Describe the impact of the *FIRST* program on team participants within the last 3 years. This can include but is not limited to percentages of those graduating high school, attending college, in STEM careers, and in *FIRST* programs as mentors/sponsors.

In the last three years, we have witnessed FIRST change lives. We have seen students' futures change for the better. Students on the verge of dropping out have stayed in school so that they could be on the team, then go on to graduation and successful careers. Several have returned to become mentors for our and other teams at most levels of FIRST. Most of all, they have learned to look outside of themselves to serve others more willingly.

Describe your community along with how your team addresses its unique opportunities and circumstances.

Our summer robotics camps grow each year. Parents are asking earlier each year about them to make sure their kids get the opportunity. We have partnered with several organizations such as Bags to Beds, which repurposes plastic grocery bags into plastic yarn to be knitted into bedding for the homeless. We're also partnered with Five12. They gather food to be distributed discreetly to students who would otherwise have no meals on weekends; some within our student body.

Describe the team's methods, with emphasis on the past 3 years, for spreading the FIRST message in ways that are effective, scalable, sustainable, and creative. How does your team measure results?

Our team is called upon by our RD to present to businesses, sponsors, and at STEM events throughout the valley. We have also reached outside Utah to help promote FIRST in Denver. We participated in the Energy Fair/Kendrick Castillo Memorial Tournament. We have shared FIRST at comic cons, at multiple STEM/maker fairs, and at the Utah Capitol. We not only find sponsors for our team, but state-level sponsors for FIRST in Utah. Our favorite activities are elementary STEM nights.

Please provide specific examples of how your team members act as role models within the FIRST community with emphasis on the past 3 years.

Our team has a cheer that we call the "Husky Jump". Someone calls out, "Huskies jump!" to which the rest of the team replies, "How high?" as we jump up. The cheer is simple but shows one of our core principles. When asked to do things, though hard they might be, we say yes. It is who we are and that shows in how we act not only with the team, but in other areas of our lives as well.

Describe your team's initiatives to Assist, Mentor, and/or Start other *FIRST* teams with emphasis on activities within the past 3 years.

We have always welcomed kids from anywhere who want to play. We've had kids from 7 different schools on our team and have had foreign exchange students. The goal is always the same: have those students build FIRST where they are. This happened with a team in our district, and one in another valley, and we are working with our German alumnus and a Dutch team to expand FRC in Germany. We have mentored or started 5 FRC teams locally and 2 nationally, with 2 or 3 more in the works.

Beyond starting teams, what initiatives have you done to help inspire young people to be science and technology leaders and innovators? What results have you seen from your efforts in the past 3 years?

Our coach is working to turn Husky Robotics from a team to a system. We are reaching out to our community to build teams from FLL to FRC. It is our goal that kids will have access to all of FIRST. All sustained through fundraisers, grants, and sponsorships so that no one is denied based on the finances of their family. We began with summer camps, and now are working in refugee, homeless, and low income areas to develop this system, including the valley's only long-term family homeless shelter.

Describe the partnerships you've created with other organizations (teams, sponsors, educational institutions, philanthropic entities, etc.) and what you have accomplished together with emphasis on the past 3 years

In building our system, we train mentors, parents, and students to develop teams at all levels. Modeled after UT FIRST, we use resources to help teams in our community and beyond. We partnered with the Road Home, Palmer Court, and the Learning Branch to reach underrepresented kids. We gave out fliers at the Northern FLL State Championships, contacting all 49 teams to share what's after FLL. We never refuse help, including new mentors. We've also started a Discord for UT FRC.

Describe your team's efforts in the past 3 years to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion within your team, *FIRST*, and your communities.

Our team's priority has always involved being equitable, diverse, and inclusive. Our team realizes the financial burden of joining extracurriculars in school and we've vowed to keep the team free to join with the ultimate goal of propelling STEM into the future. Our team demographic and culture is built with emphasis on inclusivity with no discrimination on the basis of race, gender, class, or religion. Our team leadership is diverse in and of itself consisting of 40% women and 70% POC.

Explain how you ensure your team and the initiatives you have created will continue to run effectively for the foreseeable future

Our team consistently mentors any team in need so that they can maintain longevity and become self-sufficient. We are able produce effective results through monetary donations, human resources, and training through frequent mentoring and volunteer work. Offering a healthy dose of encouragement and teaching makes it fun for them and fosters their desire to teach what they have learned to others.

Describe your team's innovative strategies to recruit, retain, and engage your sponsors within the past 3 years

Our sponsors are found, retained, and engaged in various ways, all reflective of our team culture. Along with tried-and-true standards such as branding and thank you notes, we encourage our followers to learn more about them. Whether on social media or linking their logos on our sponsors webpage to their websites, inviting mentors from their ranks, sending team uniforms, or volunteering to take part in their corporate events, we engage them in all our efforts and share their support.

Highlight one area in which your team needs to improve and describe the steps actively being taken to make those improvements.

Time management has been a continuous area of improvement for all our members. From previous years, we have continued to use Slack as a form of improved productivity and communication. This year we have added some productivity software called Trello. It allows us to follow all deadlines as well as who is involved in completing each task. Having a formalized list helps us reach our goals much faster. There is always room for improvement and we continue to make progress.

Describe your team's goals to fulfill the mission of *FIRST* and the progress you have made towards those goals.

Our team is working on the local, state, national, and international scale in efforts to strengthen FIRST and its participants. We seek to strengthen not only our team, but any who ask for our help from all levels of FIRST and from other programs including science fair, Science Olympiad, CTSOs, developing props for our theater groups, and other student organizations on campus. We strive to become a Hall of Fame-caliber team, whether we are ever so honored or not.

Briefly describe other matters of interest to the *FIRST* Judges, including items that may not fit into the above topics. The judges are interested in learning about aspects of your team that may be unique or particularly noteworthy.

For three years, our team hosted the kickoff event in Utah. We coordinated and/or collaborated with other FRC teams to increase the level of abilities of FRC teams in Utah by developing training, robotics fairs, and off-season events.

Essay

We are Team 4585, Husky Robotics, at Hillcrest HS. We are an organization of students and mentors devoted to the heralding of ideas and values associated with FIRST robotics programs. The members of our team represent a diversity of backgrounds, passions, and interests. When we come together, the result is a team of students excited to engage in all aspects of life. This cohesive atmosphere can be attributed to our team's enthusiasm both for learning from and teaching each other. Our proficiency in training and instruction has contributed to our team's capacity for outreach in local as well as global communities. Since our founding in 2013, Husky Robotics has sparked the imaginations of over 600 students in the fields of engineering, technology, and business.

Our team culture ensures that all team members are empowered to learn sustainable skills for the work environment, giving all students the ability to explore the foundations of STEM-related occupations. We also focus on progressing as a student-led effort and enhancing students' critical thinking abilities. We are proud to have created a safe space for members of all demographics while encouraging their scientific, technological, engineering, and mathematical aspirations. Our team has created practical opportunities for any who desire them.

Our robotics team continues to impact the community and promote STEM and FIRST awareness at every venue and event we attend, drawing students and mentors into the program. Husky Robotics created a state-level Discord server to facilitate FRC communication. The team volunteers annually at the Canyons School District's FLL Qualifier and hosts an annual summer robotics camp that serves the community, where we embody the FIRST core values of Gracious Professionalism and Coopertition. Another way that Husky Robotics has impacted the community is by having created and mentored several FLL, FTC, and FRC teams including this year. The parents of the kids who engage are astonished by the impact that programs like these have on a kid's life and the children are fascinated with the idea of cooperative competition.

Our team's main goal is to spread FIRST and its principles to young minds. To achieve this goal, we have many methods to attract children to FIRST and to make sure that they end up with a very memorable experience. If we were to describe our attempts to spread the message of FIRST in one word, it would be emphatic. We are very vocal about our team, FIRST, and the opportunities and benefits it affords us and all its participants. Husky Robotics has hosted booths at the Boeing Company Family Day event, FanX Salt Lake Comic Convention, the Days of '47 Rodeo Fair, the Silver Mesa Elementary Night, and numerous other events. We also coordinated the first-ever full FRC field at a comic convention where over 100,000 guests saw over 20 teams from all FIRST levels show what they do. Grant Imahara addressed the guests from the field to discuss FIRST and its impact. On that same field was held the first FRC bots vs. Star Wars droids match. Our team has recruited FRC and FTC members through flyers at the Utah FLL State Championship. During such events, we represented and spread the ideals of FIRST throughout these communities and beyond. We regularly accept students who want to participate in FIRST but do not have any teams nearby, including visiting international students. Among our alumni are a visiting Argentine student whose cousin is on our team, and an exchange student from Germany who has returned home with the idea of spreading the core values of FIRST and coordinating our efforts with a Dutch FRC team to expand FRC in central Germany. Currently, our roster includes a student from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Every team member in Husky Robotics works to serve as a role model, exemplifying FIRST core values at every opportunity. At competitions, our team is always proactive in aiding any team in need. Husky Robotics works to spread Gracious Professionalism and Coopertition to everyone within FIRST and our community. Our team works to serve as an example for new teams by sharing all we can, including our leadership model. We operate within a business-like framework; a CEO at the helm with other officers and Project Managers along the chain of command. Each of these chooses a "number one," usually an underclassman, who learns the tasks and can substitute when officers aren't present. They then go on to fill that position the next year. We also help coordinate workshops and joint build sessions to promote communication and cooperation between other FTC and FRC teams. One example is the recent state-wide virtual Utah joint FTC Build Day and Symposium which we hosted and at which one of our alumni was the keynote speaker.

Not only do we want to inspire other people, we endeavor to start and assist teams in other areas as well. It is a personal ambition for us to help underprivileged areas increase their STEM education. We are working to introduce FIRST robotics to elementary schools and middle schools, recreational centers, and even other countries. Two of our alumni assisted in creating and mentoring Team 6411 in Jordan High School which went on to win the Utah Regional by beating us in the semi-finals. Last season, we helped Rookie team 8174 from Olympus High School, team 7151 from Real Salt Lake Academy, and team 7906 from Cottonwood High School. Several of our members traveled to teach them about the different facets of running an FRC program. We are currently working with an alumnus to expand FRC in Germany with the long-term goal of establishing a region in central Germany. In addition, we have created and mentored FLL Team 21867 and three FTC teams in 2019 - one at Midvale Middle School, Union Middle School, and a second team at Hillcrest High School. Inspired by our annual summer camp, Butler Middle School added an FLL team after one of their teachers saw what robotics could do for the community. We are talking with Day Care center directors to create FIRST Lego League teams and expand our reach to children who are unable to join a school team. To actively mentor teams, we invite any team to work in our shop to gain experience from our members. At Husky Robotics, we aim to spread the spirit and knowledge of FIRST to as many people as possible.

Husky Robotics utilizes fundraisers, sponsorships, and grants as the main source of funding for the team. Some of our sponsors include Control4, Boeing, Intellihot, ANSYS, NASA, the Department of Defense, and Mountain America Credit Union. To maintain the strong partnerships we have with our sponsors, we have several ways to acknowledge their support for our team. We send "Thank You" packages that include a personalized card as well as Husky Robotics t-shirts and other merch. Our drive for knowledge has bolstered our recognition among sponsors and has helped our success in finding and retaining sponsors. We have been asked to represent FIRST at multiple events, such as Hour of Code events at an Adobe hub in Lehi, UT, Goldman Sachs in Salt Lake City, and the Bonneville Chapter of SCTE because of our desire to spread STEM fundamentals.

Team 4585 was a part of the pilot program to place FRC teams in all Canyons School District high schools starting in Fall, 2012. This was an opportunity for the school to understand FIRST ideals. In 2013, we were awarded the Rookie All-Star award, gaining even more experience at World Championships in St. Louis, Missouri. Each subsequent year, the judges have recognized various aspects of our efforts in promoting and honoring FIRST. These have included the Entrepreneurship, Team Spirit, Gracious Professionalism, and Creativity Awards. Our team has always ventured to exemplify the values of FIRST. Our incredible mentors, two of whom have been honored as Outstanding Volunteers at the Utah Regional kept pushing us to reach further in all aspects of what a team does, particularly in the establishment and mentorship of newer programs through hands-on experience.

We would describe FIRST as a global program whose mission is to get students as excited about STEM fields and problem-solving as they are about sports, entertainment, and inclusion. FIRST teaches kids all aspects of professional life as engineers, including the business side, in the form of competitive robotics at four levels from kindergarten through 12th grade. Our members learn these from hands-on experience and our dedicated mentors who have had past experience. Members are encouraged and inspired to reach further, dream bigger, and change lives. Husky Robotics recognizes the importance of FIRST as a medium to develop such people into future problem-solvers.

Husky Robotics, in partnership with the Learning Branch, have started two FLL teams at Palmer Court, the only long-term family homeless shelter in the Salt Lake valley. Husky Robotics members volunteer as mentors to the FLL Challenge and Explore teams every Saturday. We teach kids about FIRST values, STEM opportunities, and careers. A teacher from the Learning Branch, who is a college student, is the rookie head coach. She is being trained by our lead coach to become another inspiring mentor.

Husky Robotics aims to include as many people as possible, whether or not they have previous knowledge of STEM. The majority of our student body struggles with cycles of poverty and isolation. Our goal is to convey the concept that through our actions and FIRST, those cycles can be broken, changing lives for generations to come. We have many opportunities to not only help one learn but to gain relationships with others that last a lifetime. We have become a second family for people to come to as well as an inclusive space where everyone has the freedom to express their ideas. Our motto is, "Building a permanent and visible presence in our community." As a team, we strive to achieve this to its maximum efficacy through generations to come.