

Chairman's Award - Team 1305

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2022 - Team 1305

Team Number

1305

Team Nickname

Ice Cubed

Team Location

North Bay, Ontario - Canada

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.

1305 opens doors. 100% of our students go to post-secondary education, 94% over the past 3 years have earned scholarships or awards, 75% went to STEM fields. Often we have a 1:1 mentor/student ratio. Students develop skills running camps. We also train students specifically in communication skills. Alum Gabby Russo says: "1305 made me realize how important it is for me to make a positive impact in my community, so I decided to volunteer at the Laurier food bank and raise money for charity."

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

North Bay is a small northeastern Ontario city on the traditional territory of the Nipissing First Nation Anishnabe. Our strong community relationship inspires sponsors, such as Canadore College, who provide us with a build space. A community team, we have students in 3 school boards, which also sponsor us. Many members live in rural areas with poor internet, but we make it work. We are a bilingual region, inspiring Projet Franco-FIRST. COVID has limited our buildroom to 5 people.

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?

We spread the message of FIRST year-round. Our Projet Franco-FIRST now includes the Vice-Versa project, which brings FLL to French elementary classes. Our Lego Around the World initiative brought 230 lbs of Lego and STEM lessons to children on 3 continents, and we will continue this project when restrictions are lifted. We have partnered with Science North and other organizations to run the North Bay Science Festival for the past 5 years. Our Key Performance Indicators measure our success.

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

We enjoy sharing expertise! We run our annual FIRST Gateway Conference. This year we are running a virtual ChEx event to share information about Chairman's. Students Ella, Fionna, Emily, and Tessa created the UV Cube, which was sent out to 50 FIRST teams across Canada for assembly and distribution. We run 3 FIRST progression qualifying events in our community. Captain Michelle is in her 2nd year on the FIRST Canada Youth Council. Many alumni and students have appeared on FIRST Canada LIVE.

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

We start and mentor teams from across Canada. Our 2018 Operation Yukon started and mentored 6 FLL teams in Yukon, the 1st in any Canadian territory. Now totally independent, Yukon currently has 2 FLL teams and 2 FTC teams, despite their continuous shutdown. Last year, we ran a virtual FTC workshop in Dubai. This year, we surpassed our expectations of starting 3 FTC teams by starting, mentoring and sponsoring 4 teams. We start, mentor and sponsor every FLL team in our area.

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?

We inspire innovators. We encourage all students to work on our robots and learn more about STEM. From our team, we have had 5 student made businesses go to market. We partner with Infinity Innovations to create a continuum for FLL projects. The spICE Girls FLL team alumni, some now on 1305, created prototypes of a filtration system and are working to bring it to market! We present to engineers and students annually, promoting engineering as a career through our PEO Engineers Night.

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

We thrive on community support. We partner with educational institutions: Canadore College, Nipissing U, and 3 school boards. We also partner with businesses such as Jared Kelso Productions that have grown out of our team. We partner with Les Compagnons to promote French STEM education. We are working with them to provide FLL lessons in French to children in 7 different classes. New this year, we have partnered with the North Bay Library to create a STEM themed room for youth.

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

1305 is committed to EDI. We ran virtual STEM camps for One Kids Place Children's Treatment Center for children with special needs. Registered play therapist and alum, Lauren Isenegger taught us inclusive language. We recognize barriers and work to accommodate members' special needs. We have a diverse array of students, from different schools, abilities and ages. To overcome students' financial barriers, we have no membership fees. We have a mental wellness moment at every full team meeting.

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

Our Event Report documents information about all our events, including who was involved and notes for future events. We mentored 4 rookie FTC teams to give them a firm foundation. We include our 2 community FTC teams in our full team meetings and outreach, easing their transition into FRC. Many FTC participants have joined FRC, bringing with them their prior experience and knowledge to share with 1305. We give students opportunities to lead events with an assigned mentor advisor.

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

All team members are responsible for recruiting and keeping sponsors. Over the past year, we sent our sponsors a recap video and Valentine's cards. We are prominent in our community due to our outreach such as the coin-operated Lego contraption at the hospital. Before COVID, we held sponsor appreciation evenings. Our Cool Degrees of Sponsorship recognise sponsors with incentives such as the sponsor's logo on our robot. A testament to sponsor loyalty, 10 have been with us for over 6 years.

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

COVID restrictions have negatively affected student engagement. To accommodate the limit of 5 in the build room, we switch out students. We arranged for a 2nd room at Canadore College to engage more students. We use Team App as our main form of communication. Since we spend so much time on Zoom, we've added more fun by adding Kahoots and wellness moments. We've also distributed holiday gifts for students and held an Ice Bash sliding party. We do text and call check-ins for our students.

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

Our mission is to develop well rounded Gracious Professionals and provide STEAM education, leadership and entrepreneurial opportunities for students through *FIRST* Robotics. The past year, we started, mentored and sponsored 4 FTC teams, helping to bridge the gap between FLL and FRC. We expanded the reach of *FIRST* into the Francophone community with Projet Franco-*FIRST*. We inspire others; over the past 12 years we have averaged over one day per week, year round of community involvement.

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.

It has been a tough 2 years, but 1305 makes it work! We face challenge with courage! For example, with no previous FTC experience, we jumped in to run an inaugural FTC Qualifier and started 4 new FTC teams, 2 qualifying for provincials. We are proud that 1305 Champion North Bay Mayor McDonald and Mentor Brad Stenning are members of the FIRST Robotics Canada EAB. Other 1305 champions: Speaker of the House Anthony Rota and Hon. Vic Fedeli MPP, are always quick to respond to our team.

Essay

We make it work!

We are FIRST Team 1305, Near North Student Robotics Initiative, Ice Cubed. We are located in North Bay, Ontario, Canada on the traditional territory of the Nipissing First Nation Anishnabe. 1305 has been making it work for 22 years, 19 with FIRST. With a focus on sustainability, outreach and people, we find ways to make it work in the face of change and challenge. We live up to our motto of "never ever quit."

Outreach

Even during the pandemic, we make outreach work. 1305 keeps it cool with outreach, walking with the Science North float in the Santa Claus parade and supporting our local soup kitchen through the Coldest Night of the Year fundraiser since 2014. We recognized front-line workers in our community with our Seeds of Gratitude project, thanking them with cards and gifts donated by local businesses. Also cool, since 2014, 1305 has had a mining themed coin-operated interactive Lego contraption at our hospital with all proceeds going to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit.

We value our relationship with FIRST Canada and enthusiastically assist them in promoting STEM. Our students have appeared on FIRST Canada LIVE 11 times and our alumni are also frequent contributors. Many of our alumni go on to key volunteer roles at FIRST events.

One of 1305's unique outreach initiatives in support of inclusion is Projet Franco-FIRST. It started in 2018 to bring FIRST to Francophone students. Our first project with this initiative was a workshop at Camp Soleil. Through this program we also started, mentored, and sponsored a French-speaking FLL team and supported North Bay's carnival. Now, Franco-FIRST has a new project, Vice-Versa, a 12-week program bringing FLL into 7 Francophone grade 5-8 classes. It is led by last year's co-captain and alum Colton Chaput with a partnership between 1305, Les Compagnons (a Francophone cultural center), Conseil scolaire catholique Franco-Nord, and the French Canadian Youth Federation. To further support this project, 1305 built all 7 Lego tables for the classrooms and prepared the code for the EV3s. Our goal is to start FTC teams in this school board.

We ran a virtual FTC SIM workshop for a class in Dubai and another 2 day classroom workshop at West Ferris Secondary School. Additionally, we ran 7 virtual 2021 summer camps including: 2 at One Kids Place Children's Treatment Center, 1 virtual Lego Spike Prime camp for Indigenous children, and 4 FTC coding camps. All 7 were sponsored by FIRST Canada. 100% of students in these camps were from underserved groups. Proof of the impact of these camps comes in a quote from a parent of a camper: "My son would like to join FIRST Team 1305 so he can teach coding like the girls did."

Sought out by the North Bay Library Board because of our long history of community engagement, we are now excited to be partnering with them to create a dedicated STEM-themed room in the library. It will feature interactive technology and FIRST material so that children and teens will come to the library to engage in STEM. This room will provide space for FLL teams to meet and practice. With free access to the auditorium, we plan to have FLL practice fields set up in the fall.

In 2016, one of our FLL teams started a mattress recycling program in our city, resulting in the recycling of more than 19 900 mattresses, which would fill more than 6 Olympic-sized swimming pools! Another way we make it work in our city is seen in North Bay's annual 1305 Day. We look forward to the mayor once again proclaiming May 13th (13/05) as the 5th annual 1305 Day.

We are diligent in making outreach work. In doing so, we have averaged over 1 day of community involvement per week year-round since 2011.

Sustainability

We make it work through sustainability!

We measure success using our 5 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): Expand Growth and Impact; Support the STEM Efforts of the FIRST Family; Increase Commitment to Safety, Wellness, and Diversity; Improve Robot Success; Product Completion. By working to achieve the goals in our KPIs, our team remains sustainable.

In order to be a sustainable team we need to recruit and engage new and passionate members, especially since we are within a low population density area. One of our strategies to make sustainability work was our 2019 Robot Build Bash, a 9 week event that introduced prospective students to the basics of FRC. It was a big success! Our current captain, Michelle, joined the team after participating in the event.

We start, sponsor and mentor every FLL Challenge and Explore team in our community. Last year, to support safety and social distancing, we lent 30 EV3 kits to FLL Challenge teams in our community to be shared amongst team members.

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Another way we attract new students is via FTC. 73% of students on our new FTC teams have progressed from FLL. This year, we started, mentored and sponsored 4 new FTC teams, including 2 school teams and 2 community teams, 1 of which being an all-girls team. The 2 school teams were run as a grade 11 course at West Ferris Secondary School. FTC not only involved more students in STEM, but also gave them leadership and skill training, which has proven useful in their transition to FRC.

As the longest sustained FRC team in Northern Ontario, we are committed to not only increasing the sustainability of our team, but FIRST as a whole, especially in Northern Ontario. Therefore, to make FIRST more accessible in Northern Ontario, we are a FIRST hub and run North Bay tournaments for all 3 progressions of FIRST: FLL, FTC, and FRC. We have run the North Bay FRC event (with most of the steering committee affiliated with our team) since 2014. It reduces travel time and therefore cost for our fellow Northern Ontario teams. Additionally, running these events makes FIRST more accessible to local FIRST spectators in our community. Our FIRST events are a big deal in our city. Last October, we hosted and ran our 6th annual FIRST Gateway Conference virtually. The conference featured a variety of presentations, with topics such as My Journey Through STEM as an Indigenous Person, Robots in Medicine, Robot Reboot, Starting and Sustaining FRC Teams and FTC Tips. A big thank you to FRC teams 772, 4069, 4152 and 5672 for graciously sharing their knowledge with other FIRST teams at our conference.

A key aspect of our sustainability is our dedication to building a strong relationship with our sponsors, partners and Champions. Since 2013, Canadore College has graciously provided a space for us to meet and build, with access to trade shops. We recognize our sponsors through our Cool Degrees of Sponsorship, with 7 levels ranging from Frost (\$25) to North Pole (\$10,000+). We are a community team welcoming students from different schools and school boards. We are unique in that we have had 3 different school boards sponsor our team, and we are not aware of any other community team in Ontario sponsored by a school board. In 2018, we started a registered charity, through which we issue tax receipts.

After 22 awesome years, we have proven that we never ever quit. We are a strong and sustained team.

People

The people on our team are really the ones who make it work.

We nurture diversity and inclusivity. One way we do this is by working around other student interests, which brings an assortment of knowledge and skill. For example, Business Manager Michael has a busy schedule with piano, a paper route, cadets, and family commitments. We accommodate his and other student schedules. In doing so, not only do the students continue to learn other skills, but when they come back to our team we too benefit from those skills. Similarly, our mentors have diverse backgrounds, from business, to engineering, to fine arts. To make FIRST more accessible and in the spirit of #WeBelong, we pride ourselves on maintaining continuous intake and no membership fees. Because of our continuous intake, students can join our team year-round, meaning anyone can develop FIRST skills even if their schedule does not align with the FIRST season.

Our mentors and students make it work. We often have a 1:1 student to mentor ratio, meaning students get education that suits their needs. Every student lead on our team has a dedicated mentor advisor. The parents of our team help us make it work, and often support us even after their child has graduated. Our alumni also make it work. Many frequently return to help us, mentor other teams and volunteer at events across the province. Our alum, Anthony Caliciuri, helped start CU FIRST, which founded the 1st FRC event in Ottawa. Recently he was co director and VC of the North Bay FTC tournament.

Gracious Professionalism is at the heart of our team, and is what makes us strong. 1305 is a place where people create life-long connections. We are a FIRST family. We add even more fun to our team by having parties and gatherings. In December, we had a 1305 Ice Bash with sledding and fun in the park. We also had a February FTC Bash with skating, a campfire, and watching FTC Provincial Champs.

Last year, we adjusted our KPI, Increase Commitment to Safety and Diversity, to include wellness in order to address the challenges our members are facing during this pandemic. To achieve this goal, we introduced Wellness Moments to our full team meetings, inspired by FIRST Canada LIVE. Wellness Moments help promote wellbeing by sharing a moment of happiness and tools members can use to work on their personal wellness. The team has shared some Wellness Moments such as crocheting, drinking water, and walking. Sara shares, "The Wellness Moments in our full team meetings bring our team even closer together."

We make it work!

Through this season of Rapid React, we make it work through sustainability, outreach, and our people. Through these challenging times, we have been greatly tested, yet we have proven that we make it work and are truly a never ever quit team.

Thank you, merci, miigwetch!