

Chairman's Award - Team 2992

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2022 - Team 2992

Team Number

2992

Team Nickname

The S.S. Prometheus

Team Location

Mandeville, Louisiana - 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.

The FIRST program has always been known to get people out of their comfort zones and to learn more than they would in a conventional classroom. We are lucky that, as a team, there are many opportunities for all people. We use our leadership positions to teach students how to lead by example and be responsible for their work so they are better prepared for the real world. Over 90% of our students go on to pursue STEM degrees in college.

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

Team 2992 is proud of our growing community outreach efforts. Through our mutual relationship with the City of Mandeville, the city provides us with shop space while we participate in many of their community events. Another one of our unique circumstances that we utilize is connection to STEM companies through student family members. These connections (outlined in our business plan) provide us opportunities to have mentorship and guidance from people working in relevant fields.

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?

Spreading the word of FIRST is one of the most important things to members of our team. The effectiveness of our message is measured by the number of lives we touch. These lives can be anything from one person attending an outreach event, to an entire camp filled with excited students. Our team has our own spin on everything we do, and having creative ways to share our world of robotics is a major part of all of them.

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

As an experienced member of the FIRST community, Team 2992 takes it upon ourselves to share our knowledge and experience within the community. We mentor many local younger FIRST teams and provide them the spark that can light their FIRST fire. We have also pioneered our "Lifeboat Crew" to assist rookie teams pass inspection at events. We also volunteer at FTC competitions and use strict safety practices.

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

Our team is passionate about lifting other teams up so everyone can compete. Team 2992 assisted team 8118 get the ground running on their robot for the 2020 season, providing shop space, materials, machining, and code help. Our team has assisted with the creation of 20 FLL explore and multiple FLL Challenge teams in our feeder schools. Our team had also continued to mentor local FTC team 14374 since their transition to a community team in the 2019 season.

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 team has always followed the statement "FIRST is more than robots". Team 2992 hosts annual summer camps and participates in numerous outreach events every season. At our summer camps, we teach the principles of engineering and design through many activities and challenges. At our various outreach events we use hands-on STEM activities to show the beauty of the iterative design process. Our team has noticed a rapid growth in STEM and robotics in our local area and beyond.

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 on team 2992 believe that partnerships we have gained are important to our success. Over the last few years we have grown our relationship with the City of Mandeville which provides us with shop space and community outreach. Our local Barnes and Noble has given us the opportunity to hold fundraisers and show our robots to the community through their "Book Fairs" program. Finally, Southeastern Louisiana University offered a location for our offseason competition Northshore Knockout.

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

We are passionate about promoting ED&I within our team and the community. We have increased the number of female members by 100% over the past year, and we are more racially diverse than our school average. All members are encouraged to take FIRST ED&I training, and many do. We promote equity by offering our summer camps at free and reduced prices to underprivileged families. To have a broader impact, we advocate with local, state, and national governments for equitable STEM access.

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

One thing always on our team's mind is how our actions and practices will affect what we do in the future. We make it a priority to ensure that once our plans are introduced, they remain in circulation. Our team does this by consistently training newer members so that they can work to the best of their ability from the start of their career on the team. We have mentors that educate our students as they work to develop the team knowledge base through hands-on experience.

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

Team 2992 knows that we would be nothing without our sponsors giving us their support. We believe that gratitude and communication to our sponsors should be high on our priorities list. Our team has the privilege of being sponsored by so many amazing businesses and companies. We are always on the lookout for potential sponsors, and we believe that getting our word out can only be a positive look for our team. We also gave a tier discount to any sponsor due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

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

Our team knows we have our faults, but acknowledging them makes us stronger. Our team often does not take into account the time things will take and how long we will need. Beginning time management processes on our team would heavily increase our productivity. Through organization and workflow checks we as a team believe that we can become more effective with time management skills. We can also make sure that everyone is working on something that has to be done to ensure that deadlines are met.

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

Our team strives to reach past the goal "FIRST is more than robots" through many avenues. We live by the statement "We build robots and so much more". Our team provides information about FIRST to nearly every school in our area. We continually hold our summer camps, day camps, robot demonstrations, as well as continually looking for sponsorships and mentorships.

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.

One interesting project our team dedicated our time to over the past season was building an accessibility lift for someone in our community. This lift was based off of a handicap accessible chair and modified heavily from there. Using parts from

our shop we were able to build a fully functioning chair that allows this individual to not need assistance when going between floors in their home.

Essay

On team 2992 we have a saying that "We build Robots And So Much More", and over the last 3 years we have truly expanded this saying to everything that our team involves ourselves in. We build future leaders and innovators by making our team accessible to people from all walks of life. While we look at our successfulness over the last three seasons, our team sees growth and advancement in all facets of our team, but we also see the ways we can be even better than before.

Over the last three seasons we have expanded aspirations in becoming more involved in both our local community and our spread throughout the country. This expansion began in the 2019-2020 seasons when we cast a wider net in the outreach and fundraising departments of our team. Coming off of a successful year in the 2019 season we believed that we could spread our successes to a larger community that we already had. During the fall semester of the 2019-2020 school year we participated in multiple STEM expos at local museums, events, and community gatherings. This time was also when our team began partnering with local and national business to host events and fundraisers. The first major instance of this was our partnership with our local Barnes and Noble through their "Book Fairs" system. With these "Book Fairs" our team would be able to go to our local branch and hold an all day miniature STEM fair. At these events we were able to spread the word of FIRST and STEM as well as obtain a percentage of the proceeds to help fund our team.

During this time we also expanded our mentorship of local FIRST robotics teams both in and out of our local school system. The first example of this is our mentorship of FTC team 14374 Dark Matter, which is a local community team made up of 7th-10th grade students from our parish, and can be homeschooled or in a local school. Our mentorship of FTC 14374 consists of many aspects, these can range from design and fabrication assistance to partnerships in local outreach events and camps. Many members of our team now are veterans of 14374 which allows us to begin forging relationships with these students from an early age and the beginning of their FIRST career. A second example of this is our team's mentorship of a local school's 20 FLL Explore teams all made up of members in 2nd and 3rd grade. Our team mentors younger students and helps the students harness the ideas of problem solving and innovation from a young age, taking a page from our own playbook we light the fire of STEM from an early age. A final example of our expansion in mentorship and assistance is through 2020 rookie team 8118 Geraring with Grace. Team 8118 was founded just before the 2020 season and was going into the build season with limited space, resources, and experience, but we on team 2992 assisted them with everything they needed. With our help team 8118 was able to build a robot that could complete all tasks in the game and they were even ready to play at their first ever regional in week 5 of the competition season.

Once Team 2992 had heard of the start of the Covid-19 pandemic and the cancellation of many events we knew there would be a sad and abrupt end to the 2020 season. Once our school was announced closed for the rest of the school year, and our state began imposing restrictions we knew that going virtual for the remainder of the season was the next step in to salvage the remainder of Infinite Recharge. With the remainder of our school year being online, many students had time on their hands and were itching for a way to let their creative sides come out by entering the PTC and Onshape-Robots to the Rescue Challenge. The purpose of this challenge was to design a robot that could help in the Covid pandemic and that could be made using standard FRC parts. In this challenge we decided to design a robot that could be used to sort and deliver packages to by using a delivery robot inside of a sprinter van. In this challenge we partnered with FTC 14374 to tag-team this challenge where our robot did the sorting and their robot did the delivering. In this challenge we placed 12th for concept and won the down to details award for the idea and execution of design with our model.

One area our team has spent a great deal of time on over the last few seasons is our summer and day camps. With the Covid-19 pandemic our team had to become creative with the ways we could still host these camps without putting any team members or campers in harms way. That is the reason that our camps over the summer of 2020 were held within the strictest possible Covid-19 protocols and rules. Even with more stipulations than normal the team was still able to hold our annual robotics summer camps during that summer. These summer camps are our team's own combination of various different STEM challenges and focuses. The main event of our summer camps is our own themed game inspired by FLL and is played with Lego Ev3 robots. Over the years we have expanded our camps with multiple weeks and the addition of many new demonstrations with our sponsors.

Essay - page 2

One partnership that our team is very proud of is with our local city, the city of Mandeville. While this sponsorship began more than three years ago we have made it a priority to expand our relations beginning in the 2019 season. This partnership began when our team outgrew the small classroom we had been working out of at our school. With our teams successes early in our career our city decided to dedicate a workshop at our local public works building. This shop is where we build our robots, host team meetings and socials, and hold events like our summer camps and media night. With this partnership we in return provide our city with demonstrations at local events, assistance with local events like Keep Mandeville Beautiful.

One amazing addition to our teams partnership with our city was our unique opportunity to help those in need through our summer camps. During of August 2020 our school had been delayed due to Covid-19, and with this extended time our team realized that this would be an amazing opportunity to expand our camps for all people. So we set out to design a camp that would be affordable, interesting, and educational. In this camp we focus on all areas of science- these include Chemistry, Aerospace, Earth Science, Physics, Engineering, and Robotics. This camp was thought of during a time of need for our community for some interactive learning, and with our relationship we were even commended by our mayor. At this camp we were also able to welcome children from lower class communities to be campers. This was an amazing opportunity to further prove our commitment and relationship with our city.

Another amazing relationship with our sponsors is with NASA. As a NASA house team we have some amazing opportunities available to our team that have helped us grow and learn throughout our time in the First Robotics Competition. Through the NASA house program we are able to collaborate with other teams in the program. More specifically being one of the NASA house teams for the NASA John C. Stennis space center we are able to be involved with many community programs and collaborate with the center in many ways. One ongoing relationship we have grown is working with the Infinity science center at the space center. From the grand reopening of the center we have been a centerpiece at events they hold about once a month. Being able to grow our relationship with one of our biggest sponsors is an amazing experience and a great way to give back to our sponsors.

One amazing thing that our team had the opportunity to hold was our first ever offseason event "Northshore Knockout". This event was supposed to take place in July of 2021, and would have been our teams first endeavor to holding an offseason event for FRC teams. This event would have been fully funded and held by our team at Southeastern Louisiana University. The main reason we held this event was to allow teams from everywhere to attend not just those in our immediate area. Our team saw an opportunity to help the local FIRST community, and we took the challenges head on. Our team went between multiple venues, sponsors, and even dates to make this event a success for all that attended. Sadly this event ended up being canceled because of the rising Delta variant cases in our state, but we look forward to holding it in the future.

One area our team has seen a rapid growth in is STEM advocacy. Over the summer of 2021 our team participated in the SASA national convention for the advocacy of STEM education and the expanded funding of ESSA title 4 part A grant for expanded STEM funding and education. This opportunity was an amazing experience for our team, and many of our members now have the ability to say they have lobbied congress for the expanded funding of an idea they believe in. Being the only team from the whole state of Louisiana who participated gave us an amazing and personal experience with every person we talked to in each of our meetings. The best part of this is that with our help the expanded funding passed in both houses of congress and there is now expanded funding for this grant.

The final place we have made a measurable impact over the last three years is within our own school system. Our team has been asked to help reform the curriculum around STEM and education for those interested in STEM because of the measurable impact we have had on our community. Being able to help our school board shape the minds of young innovators and problem solvers is what the FIRST program is all about, and we are incredibly happy to assist in this endeavor. Our team is in contact with our schools central office and personnel very often and respond with any questions they may have.