

FIRST Impact Award - Team 3061

2025 - Team 3061
Team Number
3061
Team Nickname
Huskie Robotics
Team Location
Naperville, IL - USA
Describe the impact of the <i>FIRST</i> program on team participants within the last 3 years. Think about percentages of those graduating high school, attending college, in STEM careers, leadership skills, and serving as mentors/sponsors in <i>FIRST</i> programs.
With a 100% graduation rate, all 75 alumni go to college, and are pursuing a major in the STEAM field. 12 alumni volunteer & mentor in FIRST. Thru leadership initiatives, members become assured individuals in all fields, leading to internships/jobs at Microsoft & SpaceX; two alumni are Forbes 30 under 30. We had 2 Dean's List Finalists in the past 3 yrs, with 2 prior Dean's List Winners. Students have received scholarships to CMU, MIT, Notre Dame, UIUC, UMich, & WashU.
Describe your community along with its unique opportunities and circumstances. Think about your geographic region, diversity of town/school, language barriers, socioeconomic barriers, and cultural expectations.
Naperville is a large, diverse community where 1 in 3 people come from varied cultural backgrounds. High expectations for success are the norm. 27% are bilingual, facing language barriers & differing educational experiences. An increasing wealth gap means 40% of 22 district schools are Title I. Our outreach addresses unequal opportunities in young pups, our youth. In an area where local FLL began thru privileged families & communities, we have started 42 free 4-8 grade school district teams.
Describe the team's methods, with emphasis on the past 3 years, for spreading the <i>FIRST</i> Mission in ways that are effective, scalable, sustainable, and creative.
For the past 3 yrs, we've shared our team members' life-changing experiences with FIRST to 100s of middle school pups, effectively & sustainably inspiring many to join our team. At each outreach event, we collect forms from pups to pair them with our local FLL teams, growing the number of teams by 83% over the past 3 yrs. We introduce soft & hard engineering skills used in FIRST, with creative projects like wiring circuit animals, crafting catapults, & assembling 3D-printed spaceships.
Describe your team's goals and the progress you have made towards them to fulfill <i>FIRST's</i> Vision.
We aim to help those dream who are often overlooked. Thru UW's HuskyADAPT, students modify toys for special needs classes, aiding students with motor disabilities in functional play. Our Exploring STEAM program with Treehouse Pediatric Therapy Clinic brings robotics activities to students with learning disabilities. Our children's book, fully written & storyboarded, follows a girl of color's journey as she explores STEAM, celebrating the idea that anyone can dream to lead the future of STEAM.

What impact has your team seen from your efforts described in the above question? How does your team measure impact?
100% of Exploring STEAM Program participants found our robotics lessons “incredibly engaging”. With HuskyADAPT, 100% of teachers responded positively to the 15 modified toys distributed to district classrooms, giving feedback on possible upgrades. While strong numbers show success, it’s the gleaming smiles & instilled passion for STEAM that we deem truly impactful. When kids who felt overlooked can confidently see themselves as the future of STEAM, we know our efforts have paid off.
Please provide specific examples of how your team and team members act as role models within the <i>FIRST</i> community with emphasis on the past 3 years. How do you share these best practices with other teams?
FIRST Family: Dedicated 440+ hrs yearly mentoring smiling pups Hosted 65 FLL teams annually at district & regional tourneys Introduced SPOT (our open-source scouting app) to 18 teams Interviewed 16+ teams at Championships for NCWIT Sit With Me Sharing: Shared 190 online FRC resources: 21.5k+ views 55 posts as a 2nd yr Open Alliance team: 16.6k+ views Communicated with 25+ FRC teams, sharing best practices & building family Led Professional Development Conferences for 37 district FLL coaches
Describe your team's initiatives to Assist, Mentor, and/or Start other <i>FIRST</i> teams with emphasis on activities within the past 3 years.
Started: 23 district FLL teams in 2022; secured a \$477k 5-yr grant, at 42 teams now Mentored: All 42 FLL teams w/ 475 smiling young pups in 2024/25 Community-based FRC team 2704 thru professional skills workshops, team meetings & use of field for practice Assisted: With student-run FLL Qualifiers for 9 yrs; 3D printed parts for FLL & FTC teams In releasing CAD & software resources thru 3061-lib - 16 teams use By coordinating state-wide workshop by LinkedIn developer on STEAM career readiness
What other initiatives have you created, grown, sustained, or participated in (<i>FIRST</i> or otherwise) to help inspire young people to be science and technology leaders and innovators? What outcomes have you seen from your efforts in the past 3 years?
Our outreach is created by students to enrich students. Members dedicated 1,065 hrs at district FLL summer camps in the past 3 yrs, sustaining impact on young pups. Demos at the Alive Center STEAM Day & Scouts BSA expo inspire 1000+ youth to explore STEAM annually. Partnering with FTC 18255 to run FIRST Futures, we publish videos, articles & methods, aiming to sustainably inform students how to navigate job markets after graduation. Two students are on the Illinois FIRST Student Advisory Board.
Describe the partnerships and relationships that you've created with other organizations (teams, sponsors, educational institutions, government, philanthropic entities, etc.) and what you have accomplished together, with emphasis on the past 3 years.
With 10 yr sponsor Molex, headquartered locally, we have built a strong 2-way partnership. They sent us tools & expertise, & we connected with experts to share feedback on their FIRST Choice Kit of Parts, significant for electrical subteams. Recently, to reduce reliance on singular sponsors, we’ve diversified support, building 20+ partnerships across companies & organizations. These include the Dupage Children’s Museum, Alive Center, School District 203, Naperville Education Foundation & more.
Describe your team's efforts in the past 3 years to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion within your team, <i>FIRST</i>, and your communities.
Part of NCWIT’s Sit With Me campaign, we interview female members, alumni, & FLL pups on their STEAM journey to create our annual public Red Chair Video, giving women a voice in STEAM. As a result, 44% of our leadership is female. Active in Team 1868’s Menstrual Equity Initiative, we improve access to free period products, bridging the gender gap in FIRST & STEAM. We provide financial support & in-depth training so that all students can participate, regardless of financial status or skill level.

Explain how you ensure your team and the initiatives you have created will be sustainable.	
We play 2 games at once, this year and the next: capturing the present to build the future. Fostering growth, we document turnout & feedback from outreach events. We train our yearly influx of 60+ pups w/ training syllabi & our annual leadership workshops, built upon by new leadership. Using detailed Keep-Fix-Try's & the EDGE (explain, demonstrate, guide, enable) leadership method, we create an industry grade organizational structure, allowing each member to learn all team aspects.	
Highlight one area in which your team needs to improve and describe the steps actively being taken to make those improvements.	
Our large, no-cut team makes it overwhelming for pups to find a place among 11 subteams. To address this, we first rotate students within all subteams, with leads crafting intro lessons, working to help them find their place. Then, we implement a 6-week training program & certification process that marks members as proficient in skills, to give them the confidence to contribute. We have retained 365+ members over the past 3 yrs, the rate increasing year over year, working towards 100% retention.	
Briefly describe other matters of interest to the <i>FIRST</i> 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, particularly noteworthy, or had a large impact.	
Being in FRC & a competitive district creates rigorous schedules. 70% of all 6-12 Naperville students feel stressed, 50% don't talk about it. We are proposing that FIRST be integrated into classrooms, to ease club stress. Thru student-led academic support, Big Sibling/Little Sibling, & Huskie Hideaway (relaxation area), members balance work & self-care in safe spaces. Goals like ensuring no one sits alone at dinner boosts morale, especially for those who haven't felt the magic of a build season.	
Judge Feedback	
	Looking at the executive summaries and long essays, what's something we could include in our presentation that we didn't? An area the team has an opportunity to improve. Something that really impressed the judges.
Essay	
17 years ago, Huskie Robotics began with 5 passionate "pups." Today, we are a close-knit pack of 125+ members, united in our mission to inspire future innovators. Every student we empower today helps shape the future of FIRST, STEAM, and the world.	
Our Huskie Pack We are a student-led, mid-sized engineering company boasting 24 leadership roles working across 10+ classrooms. Communication and team structure are essential. At the helm are five captains—three oversee our core branches: Business, Robot, and Strategy. Our Systems Integration Specialist Captain directs four Feature Project Managers (FPMs), each responsible for a specific robot feature, while the Project Manager Captain ensures cohesion by leading events and facilitating communication among all leads. Each of our 11 subteams is headed by a leader who provides technical guidance and strong leadership. As our needs evolved, we introduced specialized roles such as Accountant and Open Alliance Coordinator. For team alignment, we hold stand-up sessions at each meal, where leads share progress, setbacks, and successes. Weekly cycle planning meetings, organized with the Linear and FMECA (Failure, Modes, Effect, Criticality Analysis) frameworks help us maintain a competitive timeline and mitigate risks. Our postseason “Keep, Fix, Try” (KFT) discussions refine processes, inspiring the creation of our eight-week Professional Skills Workshop series—a tradition that continues to strengthen our team.	

Huskie Heritage The growth of Huskies is deeply tied to the guidance of our 20 mentors. Through close collaboration, we gain hands-on experience with professional tools, allowing the robot to be entirely student built. Mentors demonstrate and guide rather than direct, prompting us to reflect on challenges and develop critical thinking. They emphasize personal growth, urging us to learn from mistakes and build problem-solving skills. As mentor Christopher John says, “If every four years there are another 100 individuals moving out into the world with a better sense of how to interact with each other, then each of those corners of the world will be a better place, not only for them but for all of the people they interact with.” Mentors remain with us for an average of six years, staying connected through alumni and mentor chat groups. Alumni continue to bolster FIRST’s impact as well—30% serve as FRC mentors and volunteers. Spencer Gore, one of our original five members, returned as a mentor this year. Now a Forbes 30 Under 30 honoree and CEO, he exemplifies our enduring spirit: once a Huskie, a Huskie forever.

UnLEASHING DEI At Huskie Robotics, inclusivity isn’t just a goal, it’s a commitment. Over the past three years, we’ve increased the number of women on our team by 10%, achieving over 40% female leadership. Joining NCWIT’s Sit With Me movement, we have documented the experiences of 70+ women with our Red Chair. Our annual Sit With Me video—featuring interviews with members, alumni, mentors, and FLL participants—is viewed by corporate sponsors and the public, inspiring action: we sit down to stand up. Our Women in STEAM conference offers female leaders a platform to share stories of overcoming adversity, inspiring youth. But beyond advocacy, we create change: through the m.e. FIRST movement, we distribute pads and tampons in all bathrooms at competitions, fostering more inclusive spaces. At TWIST, an off-season FRC event, our all-female drive and pit teams served as role models, empowering girls to lead in male-dominated areas. Through the University of Washington’s HuskyADAPT initiative, we modify children’s toys like roller coasters, trains, and dancing animals to aid motor-skill development. The electrical subteam replaces a difficult to press ON switch with a simple button. All they have to do is press! After trial distributions and feedback, we have already provided 12 revised kits to special-needs classrooms. Through FIRST Futures, we bridge the gap between FRC and the workforce. We help students translate their FIRST skills into resumes, applications, and career opportunities by connecting them with industry professionals, ensuring their time and effort in FRC directly supports their future careers. This inspires continued participation in STEAM despite local challenges and expands FIRST’s impact and inclusivity.

Fostering PAWssionate Pups We have dedicated 5,276 hours across 25+ outreach events in the past three years to enrich and cultivate future STEAM leaders, impacting 7,260 pups in the past 12 months alone. Members apply to be outreach coordinators for events, empowering students team-wide to lead community-focused events. Partnering with organizations like the Dupage Children’s Museum, we showcase FIRST through FRC robot and FLL kit demos, introducing STEAM concepts to more than 500 youth. Our commitment extends to supporting the next generation. We collaborated with Scouts BSA to run interactive booths that connected 44 families with local FLL teams, further expanding community impact. Each year, we visit PLTW classrooms in junior high schools, giving 6th-8th graders a behind-the-scenes look at our team—from pre-season training to competition. Many current team members credit these sessions for inspiring their journey into robotics and STEAM.

No Pack Left Behind Our impact extends to the broader FRC community. Over the past three years, we have enhanced SPOT, our open-source, modular scouting app that streamlines the scouting process for teams. With a customizable interface, SPOT is used by 18+ teams to gather critical data that boosts performance. Team 8906 Cache Money said “We just set it up and tested it out and it is absolutely amazing. Our scouters found it simple and intuitive”. In 2022, we launched our software library, 3061-lib, focused on swerve-based drivetrain technology, which now supports 16 teams in robot development. Embracing coopertition, we joined Open Alliance last season to share successes and failures. From robot to business, each lead contributes regular updates. With over 16,000 views, our posts have fostered a growing network of teams that learn and innovate together. This year, we started mentoring community FRC team 2704, Roaring Robotics, sharing best practices, inviting them to meetings, and giving equipment, to strengthen FRC in the area. Our commitment also transcends borders, collaborating with Japanese team Hanabi (9494) to provide workspace and batteries at competitions and Israeli team ORBIT (1690) on software development.

Corporate Canines Maintaining sponsorships and partnerships while seeking new opportunities is essential to our mission of creating a lasting impact. Direct student engagement allows organizations to gain confidence in the impact of their support, fostering lasting partnerships through student led pitches. When we identified Linear as the ideal project management tool but found its cost prohibitive, Project Manager Jai Gupta reached out directly to the CEO. Impressed by our achievements and potential, we secured a free lifetime subscription. We emphasize maintaining strong relationships with our 22 sponsors through weekly updates, where each subteam shares progress, inviting feedback. Weekly sponsor posts on social media foster ties. A highlight was a demo session at Rockwell Automation's facility, where we showcased our robot to company leaders, stakeholders, and clients, including FIRST CEO Chris Moore. Our community partnerships with the Naperville Education Foundation (NEF), Naperville Public Library, and philanthropic organizations like the Alive Center amplify our impact. Through STEAM days and public demonstrations, we ensure FIRST remains accessible, creating an impact that will not just last for months or seasons, but for years and decades to come.

Inspiring the FUR-ture We inspire the next generation of STEAM innovators by integrating FIRST into local education systems, bridging classroom learning with real-world applications in engineering, coding, and teamwork. Our School District 203 FIRST pipeline nurtures robotics passion from elementary through high school. In just two years, we nearly doubled the number of FLL teams in the district—from 23 to 42. Our efforts kick off each summer with a district FLL camp led by Huskies that introduces 240 students to hands-on robotics. To ensure lasting impact, we host a Professional Development conference for 37 D203 FLL coaches, equipping them with essential training and strategies. Per Lego Education Key Account Manager Steven Weniger, "The student leaders who facilitated the session demonstrated remarkable knowledge of the FLL rules and expectations, providing invaluable insights that will empower all coaches." Trained in student-led FLL bootcamps, student mentors have dedicated 420+ hours to support 42 teams and 475 students. They not only share technical expertise but also build confidence, empowering teams to overcome challenges. Each year, we organize two major student-led FLL competitions—one for elementary teams and a state-wide qualifier for junior high teams. Many pups go on to join our high school team, carrying forward the passion nurtured through FLL. Recognizing our impact, the Naperville Education Foundation awarded us a five-year, \$477K grant in 2022 to expand STEAM access, directly supporting new teams, resources, and robust programs for both students and educators. One of our next steps is proposing a FIRST Robotics Engineering Exploration Curriculum as an engineering capstone course, to strengthen our pipeline and further FIRST impact.

Leaving Paw Prints Behind Team 3061 fully embraces the FIRST ethos, having made a meaningful impact on multiple levels. After 17 years of passion, hard work, and love, we are diving deeper than ever before. We stand for diversity, inclusion, and sustainability. We are coopertition and gracious professionalism. We are innovators and believers. We are Huskie Robotics. ;

