

FIRST Impact Award - Team 3284

2025 - Team 3284

Team Number

3284

Team Nickname

Camdenton LASER 3284

Team Location

Camdenton, MO - USA

Describe the impact of the *FIRST* 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 *FIRST* programs.

3284 has fostered a group of successful alumni. 100% of LASER alumni have both graduated high school and work within a STEM field. Over 90% of our members are pursuing higher education and multiple are receiving their PhD's. Our members have received internship/job offers from leading industries such as Boeing, SpaceX, Google AI, Mastercard, and more. Furthermore, many of the alumni come back to mentor either our team or another team, promoting the FIRST message past graduation.

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.

LASER's location presents diverse opportunities and challenges, including a limited industrial presence. Acknowledging the lack of FIRST in our community, 3284 has broadened its outreach to include students from the lake area, offering valuable STEAM opportunities to more local youth. Across seas, we form lasting bonds with foreign exchange students, welcoming them to our team. We also aim to encourage education, as less than ½ of our community has earned beyond a high school education.

Describe the team's methods, with emphasis on the past 3 years, for spreading the *FIRST* Mission in ways that are effective, scalable, sustainable, and creative.

LASER strives to support the FIRST mission across our community. 3284 celebrated National Read A Book Day by handing out 1K+ used books to local organizations. Through FIRST Flowers, an outreach program inspired by Dr. Woodie Flowers, we donated 2K+ bouquets to nursing homes using donated flowers from local businesses and weddings. Another initiative we run is #BuildItFIRST. In this program, we donate repurposed Legos to our local hospital, domestic violence shelters, and more.

Describe your team's goals and the progress you have made towards them to fulfill *FIRST's* Vision.

3284 is proud of the steps we've made towards our goals in sharing the FIRST message on a local to world scale. We consistently host STEAM demonstrations, hosting over 20 in the past 3 years, many of which are at underserved schools. LASER also hosts 5 annual youth camps, expanding STEAM. Globally, we send kits to an African organization, African Sky, to engage young women in STEAM. Similarly, we send STEAM kits to students in the St. Joseph Indian School, promoting STEAM where many lack access.

What impact has your team seen from your efforts described in the above question? How does your team measure impact?
Kids of all ages have shown increased interest in FIRST principles in their daily classrooms. 3284 measures our impact by the lives we touch through STEAM and how we can positively affect others. Youth around the globe have been able to interact with STEAM principles and concepts, and have regularly shown excitement for these opportunities. Through all of our initiatives, we have succeeded in expanding the FIRST message to millions of people and are continuously working to increase that amount.
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?
3284 works tirelessly to act as role models within the FIRST community. We started the viral hashtag, #WalkLikeWoodie which uses the ethos of Dr. Flowers to reach 17 million people over the past 3 years. At each competition 3284 attends, we offer assistance through Operation Clean Sweep supplying hygiene products, parts, and tools as needed. On our various social media and our website, we have published resources as well as shared our demonstrations and events, displaying them across the globe.
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.
Covering the past 3 years, LASER has assisted 134 and mentored 49 teams. We have formulated connections with a variety of teams in the Missouri region and beyond including teams from locations such as Brazil and Turkey. We are also consistently mentoring Moroccan FTC team 23864. Additionally, 3284 has created a FIRST pipeline within our school district. We have garnered an excited community and now have 43 teams and 1 in 17 youth in our district involved with LASER.
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?
To encourage future generations to pursue STEAM, 3284 has grown its impact by leading STEAM stations at Dogwood Elementary connecting with 160 2nd graders. LASER also established a Special Education FLL team, offering students the chance to engage in FLL tournaments, giving them access to opportunities they might have otherwise missed. Through collaboration with 3284, these students have become STEAM innovators. These events, along with mentorship, have helped sustain our K-12 FIRST pipeline.
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.
LASER has partnered with many organizations to further outreach initiatives. We partner with local businesses to receive flowers for multiple initiatives. Also, LASER has hosted MO STEM Day at the Capitol for over a decade. There, we partner with multiple teams, such as 1710 and 1986, to build connections with legislators over STEAM funding and education. Sparking an international movement, 3284 created #WalkLikeWoodie in 2019 and FIRST adopted it in 2020, forming a connection with FIRST.
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.
3284 completes the FIRST Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Training yearly; teaching team members the value of including everyone and making sure that new team members feel welcomed onto the team. LASER ladies also annually attend Boeing STEM Day to further interact with women in STEM fields. We also host a mother-daughter STEAM camp to engage women across our community in STEM concepts. Due to our continued efforts to include women, over half of our leadership is female.

Explain how you ensure your team and the initiatives you have created will be sustainable.	
LASER has a FIRST pipeline in our district, including all progressions. Fundraising ensures the sustainability of much of our team, garnering support for LASER. We annually host a Christmas tree lot, where all LASER progressions participate. Tacos and Trivia Night is a fundraiser 3284 hosts to excite community members for STEAM, further supporting our longevity. Curating strong relationships with sponsors and consistently working with them shows our gratitude for their support.	
Highlight one area in which your team needs to improve and describe the steps actively being taken to make those improvements.	
3284 has many seniors, presenting a need for the transition of knowledge; thus we established a new team structure. Switching from a student-president system to a variety of leads and advisors ensures our student leadership structure passes down knowledge. We also work to include students of all ages in this leadership team so that when our graduating class leaves, our team is sustained and continues to be impactful. All leads are communicated with to include and encourage all team members.	
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.	
LASER often reflects upon the needs of our community, fostering multiple initiatives to help all we can. Caring for Our Community focuses on a different need of our community each year; concentrating on our domestic violence shelter and a homeless shelter over the past 2 years. Concurrently, Sunshine for Seniors centers around providing holiday-themed gift bags and cards to seniors in assisted living facilities. We also participate in Go Baby Go! to help children with impaired mobility.	
Judge Feedback	
	Is there anything we could improve on? An area the team has an opportunity to improve. Something that really impressed the judges.

Essay	
LASER emits a light that brightens a plethora of possibilities for the world. Our illumination directs the FIRST® community, highlighting the core values to accomplish our goal of sharing the FIRST® message. Possibilities are endless as we show others how they can shine their own light. Global collaboration is what nurtures the development of innovators. From the smallest glimmer to the radiance of the sun, we are changing lives - one moment at a time.	
A Glimmer Despite being in an area with limited industry, LASER remains a beacon of inspiration for students in rural school districts. We are a small low income town with a population of 4k surrounded by other towns with similar adversities. Throughout this area, we encourage every student to pursue STEAM. LASER highlights the continuance of education; as a result 100% of 3284 alum pursue STEAM at a higher level. Our commitment to safety glistens as members of 3284 earn OSHA-10 & CPR/AED certifications. To ensure a positive & safe environment beyond physical safety, all team members & coaches complete the FIRST® DEI training. Promoting further inclusion, LASER has created a FIRST®-approved FLL experience for students in the CHS special education program. These students were able to explore STEAM concepts through FIRST®, program their robot, competed in FLL Challenge matches, met other FLL groups, & receive personalized trophies. Their excitement has led them to make plans to compete again. This inclusion makes these often overlooked students feel recognized & involved in the school. LASER looks for opportunities to radiate our light. We regularly participate in the CHS homecoming parades, volunteer & show our	

robot at local Meet the Teacher Nights, & recently included the National Honor Society to assist at our competitions & events. Continuing our partnerships, we have run a Food Truck Frenzy with sports teams at their competitions. LASER works with the CHS Agriculture Department by donating their homegrown flowers to our local cancer center & nursing homes. LASER is sharing STEAM at the speed of light & has all FIRST® progressions from preK-12. By mentoring 42 younger teams & hosting 13 summer camps, 3284 sustains our district-wide FIRST® pipeline. Furthering our mission of increasing excitement, we also developed & taught stations that incorporate real-life STEAM applications into the second-grade curriculum at our local elementary school.

A Beam 3284 strives to use our light so it can uplift not only students but also members of our community. LASER dedicates itself to sharing holiday cheer by caroling at nursing homes & helping the local law enforcement give families presents through Shop With a Cop; thus giving LASER members an opportunity to set a positive example of service & leadership. In addition, we volunteer with the Salvation Army to help raise funds for those in need during the holidays by bell ringing. Continuing our efforts to share holiday cheer, we started the Sunshine for Seniors (SFS) program, where our team creates holiday-themed gift bags & cards & donates them to every resident in a nursing home. Similarly to how SFS brightens days, FIRST® Flowers brings positivity into lives. Named in the legacy of Dr. Woodie Flowers, LASER has donated 2k handcrafted flower bouquets & cards to nursing homes, the cancer center & the local hospital. Reflecting upon the needs of our community is immensely important to LASER & is the foundation of Caring for Our Community, an initiative where we focus our efforts on a different need in our community each year. We have been focusing our efforts on the local Citizens Against Domestic Violence (CADV) shelter; 3284 assembles & donates hygiene bags filled with personal care items, books & puzzles. We ensure the sharing of FIRST®'s message wherever we can by actively seeking ways to showcase the benefits of STEAM. Our team works in collaboration with news outlets such as Lake Expo & Lake Sun to share our efforts of making STEAM accessible to more people in our community. Furthering these efforts, LASER goes on air with local radio station, KRMS, to describe the benefits of FIRST® & how STEAM can change lives. We also give various demonstrations & presentations throughout our community, such as the local Rotary Club. Curating a stronger bond with the people in our community is essential to 3284. At our annual Trivia Night, people can purchase a trivia table, engage in various rounds of trivia & interact with LASER members; thus raising money & awareness about FIRST® & LASER in an exciting way. We also host a sponsor dinner where sponsors interact with all LASER progressions & hear from keynote speakers such as team alum. Yearly, LASER fosters seasonal festivity by hosting a tree lot where we sell Christmas trees. We recognize that Camdenton is an area lacking access to STEAM & are determined to ensure accessibility for young innovators. #BuildItFIRST is an initiative LASER started, where we assemble bags repurposing LEGOs with handmade challenge cards to engage critical thinking skills. These donated bags go to the local CADV shelter, cancer center & children's hospital for children to access & explore STEAM. As a team with predominantly female leadership, we understand how crucial women are in innovation. LASER hosts an annual Mother Daughter STEAM Camp where we invite women throughout the community to come for a day of STEAM learning & fun. 3284 is also committed to giving our area more access to FIRST® & is why we have expanded our team by encouraging students from other schools to join. LASER goes to Meet the Teacher Nights & demonstrates our team, sharing FIRST® & recruiting students.

An Illumination LASER's light shines bright to expand beyond our community & reach across our state. We annually go to STEM Day at the Capitol, advocating for STEM funding with numerous legislators & this past year we invited teams 1710 & 1986 to join us in our advocacy. At STEM Day, we engage youth in talking to legislators about STEAM, host our Capitol Cup (an FLL Challenge Competition) & showcase our FTC program. In alignment with our advocacy, LASER championed a mental health bill requiring mental health awareness training for all MO students.

Collaboration with other FIRST® teams is essential to our mission. 3284 alongside other teams assists team 1939 at Go Baby Go! in constructing custom-built ride-on cars for children with impaired mobility. LASER has become a League Facilitator with team 6424, encouraging MO teams to reach out to us for inquiries & assistance. In addition to this role, LASER has hosted 10 competitions for our FLL & FTC progressions. Helping teams at the FRC level is also incredibly important to 3284. We invited 9428 to our kickoff & have been mentoring them through the past 2 years with robot design & impact. This year, team 4522 reached out to us for assistance competing for the Impact Award. Our continued contact with all teams has led everyone to successful seasons & shared positivity through FIRST®.

3284 works each year to share STEAM across MO. Ladies of 3284 attend the Boeing Women in STEM Day. At this event, we connect with other women & discuss opportunities in STEAM fields beyond high school. LASER annually demonstrates STEAM from FLL to FRC at the State Fair, working with other MO teams to highlight FIRST®. Similarly to the State Fair, we attend the Maker Faire where we display all FIRST® progressions to raise excitement for creativity. Sharing STEAM for LASER does not stop at demonstrations, we also start FIRST® teams for those who lack access. In the Skyline schools, LASER has started & assisted FLL & FTC teams through their initial seasons.

A Luminescence LASER shares our light & places ourselves as a beacon both nationally & internationally. 3284 has worked closely with teams ranging from Brazil to Turkey, totaling 13 teams impacted through Zoom meetings. Mentoring team 7565 with Impact & Engineering Inspiration (EI) helped guide them to win the EI award at the world championship. We were also invited to the KC STEM Alliance Global Exchange where we work to connect with other teams, such as Moroccan team 23864. LASER started Operation Clean Sweep, an initiative where we support teams at all our competitions. Upon arrival, LASER visits all pits & says we are a resource for robot supplies, hygiene products, or anything they may need. We accept all opportunities to share our knowledge using social media to connect with FIRST® teams. 3284 has been recognized on social media by REVRobotics, & teams reach out to us & set up meetings for assistance. LASER sustains an international FIRST® presence through our viral hashtag, #WalkLikeWoodie. To honor the legacy of Dr. Woodie Flowers, we use social media to share his ethos globally. #WalkLikeWoodie has over 17 million impacts & is used at numerous events including districts, regionals & on the world stage. FRC team 4400 highlighted our initiatives to honor Dr. Flowers in the OMG! Robots magazine. Beyond FIRST®, LASER shines worldwide with organizations & schools. LASER met with African Sky, where we connected with an all-female orphanage in Cameroon & sent STEAM lessons to them. This year, we mailed kits to encourage these girls to interact with STEAM. 3284 has formed a similar connection with the St. Joseph Indian School in SD, sending hygiene products & kits to youth with limited access to pursue their passions for STEAM.

A Radiance The light we've fostered for 16 years allows us to continue expanding our luminosity; placing the spotlight on FIRST® for the world to see. Connections are the founding forces behind what LASER accomplishes. Every life we touch begins to share their own light, creating a world inspired by STEAM & FIRST®. As our light refracts across the globe, we see a brilliant radiance of purple. ;

