

***FIRST* Impact Award - Team 8573**

2025 - Team 8573
Team Number
8573
Team Nickname
Rogue-Rangers LEGACY
Team Location
McAllen, TX - 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.
100% of our seniors graduated with honors, continuing our legacy of excellence. The impact of FIRST extends beyond high school, with most alumni returning as volunteers and mentors. Many pursue STEM careers at universities like UT Austin, Texas A&M, and UT San Antonio. Our alumni support the FIRST community by mentoring FTC and FLL teams, volunteering at competitions and events throughout South Texas, and ensuring future generations continue to benefit from the opportunities FIRST provides.
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.
Our community is predominantly Hispanic, with many students facing underrepresentation in STEM. As a community-based team, 8573 is dedicated to expanding access to FIRST for underprivileged, underserved, low-income, and female students. Our team consists of 10 members from 5 school districts, providing FRC opportunities to students whose schools only offer FTC. By actively recruiting and mentoring students from diverse backgrounds, we continue to foster a new wave of STEM leaders in our region.
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.
Over the past 3 years, 8573 has expanded FIRST outreach through STEM camps with South Texas College & Leap for STEM, leading 10 camps over 20 weeks impacting over 1,000 students across 10 cities in our region. We engage in community events like hosting recruitment fairs at our local library and have been featured on KRGV Channel 5 NEWS for our STEM efforts. Our impact is measured by camp participation, student engagement, and team growth, ensuring the sustainability of FIRST in South Texas.
Describe your team's goals and the progress you have made towards them to fulfill <i>FIRST's</i> Vision.
8573 provides opportunities to underrepresented & underprivileged students. Our team goal is to give FRC opportunities to students who otherwise would not have them. The majority of the members come

from schools that don't offer FRC membership. Some of our members have FTC experience, but many of them are rookies to FRC. By offering FRC membership to students who come from several school districts that lack that opportunity, we continue the mission of FIRST by allowing our members to turn Pro.

What impact has your team seen from your efforts described in the above question? How does your team measure impact?

8573 has seen our members rise to the level of excellence. We have set the bar high for our members and they have risen to the occasion. Over 3 years, our team has achieved great accolades overcoming obstacles like financial budgets, limitation to workspace, and being successful in the FRC realm. Our members have graduated and used the skill set learned through FRC to have successful college careers. We are now seeing skilled 8573 alumni being well prepared to overcome any obstacle in life.

Please provide specific examples of how your team and team members act as role models within the *FIRST* community with emphasis on the past 3 years. How do you share these best practices with other teams?

8573 has had an impact in FIRST by actively supporting FTC and FLL events across South Texas. Over the past 3 years, we've supported Program Delivery Partners in running three FTC leagues and multiple FLL events, impacting over 300 FTC and over 300 FLL teams in South Texas. Our members take on volunteer roles, ensuring events run smoothly while embodying FIRST Core Values. Through mentorship and service, we foster volunteerism, strengthen STEM outreach, and inspire the next generation.

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

Over the past three years, 8573 has launched 15 rookie FTC teams through the Gear Up Region One ESC Program, focusing on 9th-grade students in rural areas. Our summer camps help develop leadership, coding skills, and understanding of FIRST Core Values. In addition, we've mentored FTC and FLL teams, sparking a passion for STEM and supporting the growth of local robotics teams. By fostering these young teams, we help build a stronger and more inclusive STEM community in our South Texas region.

What other initiatives have you created, grown, sustained, or participated in (*FIRST* 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?

8573 has inspired young people to become STEM leaders and innovators by providing mentorship to new teams. In 2022, FTC#13523 was the South Texas Regional Inspire Winner advancing to Worlds. In 2023, Rookies FRC#9128 & FRC#9136 were FiT RAS advancing to Worlds & 8573 was able to provide guidance in advising them on what it took us to become RAS Winners at Worlds in 2022. Both these two Texas FRC Rookies resulted in multiple rookie awards at the 2023 FIRST World Championship due to our efforts.

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.

Over 3 yrs, our goal was to build capacity by establishing a strong foundation sustaining a community based team in South Texas. Our obstacle has been overcoming the financial means to support our team.

Our grant funding has been over \$40k and 8573 has received sponsorship from NASA/Gene Haas/AEP/TWC/Siemens/NI. We've partnered up with a non-profit Leap for STEM allowing us to receive our grant funding. Elks Lodge #1402 has supported us providing a work space within their premises.

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

Since 8573 was founded, we have always prioritized equity, diversity, & inclusion. As 8573, we actively engage & embrace the FIRST Core Values conducting outreach events/providing opportunities within our community. We believe that every student should have an opportunity to participate in FIRST/FRC. With our efforts, we've fostered a more inclusive & devoted team that spreads a motive to help represent students with STEM opportunities for minorities/females/underrepresented/underserved members.

Explain how you ensure your team and the initiatives you have created will be sustainable.

To ensure sustainability, 8573 has implemented that we continue building on establishing a legacy for our future. Our program has offered our members an opportunity to lead by example, motivate, and inspire other teams in Texas. Becoming a Impact Winner in 2024, 8573 has shown that a strong sustainability plan can provide a successful infrastructure to excellence. By fostering a culture and investing in our youth we know that this will build a stronger FIRST community for new generations.

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

8573 recognizes our need to enhance our Sustainability Plan with emphasis on finances to ensure success. To address this problem, we focus on resources to fund Registration/Build Season/Travel/Lodging/Food expenses. As 8573 continues to grow & our need for resources grows with it. We continue to rely on the support of our mentors/parents/members/sponsors to make these improvements to our team. We proactively take steps to achieve long term stability & stay resilient in managing our resources.

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, particularly noteworthy, or had a large impact.

8573 is a fairly young but a very driven Community Team from South Texas. Our team has lots of grit & perseverance to achieve success. We have the right mindset with all the FIRST Core Values incorporated into our team ethos. Regardless of adversity, our team has overcome each obstacle. This is why our team has won 12 awards in 3 years. Some noteworthy accomplishments is winning RAS at the 2022 World Championship, Engineering Inspiration Award & Event Winner in 2023, and Impact Award in 2024.

Judge Feedback

What do you feel is more important in the impact of a team? Measuring how much impact a team has within their community (or) measuring the quality of the impact the team has within their community?

An area the team has an opportunity to improve.

Something that really impressed the judges.

Essay

8573 is the first FRC community team in South Texas & we have 10 members with four mentors. Our team ethos is R.O.G.U.E - which represents Relationship, Outreach, Gracious Professionalism, Unity, & Excellence. Our program originated from a small rural town in the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) region in 2018-19 as FTC#15181 & #17513. With a successful FTC rookie season, the 20-21 season with Covid changed our course. Opportunities became slim & the pandemic changed the entire world. Schools in the RGV took a step back with in-person instruction because of Covid. Team participation decreased drastically from 140 to 40 FTC teams. Our Rogue-Rangers did not compete in 20-21. With low FTC participation, our team felt it was not beneficial. The idea of jumping into FRC & creating the only community team in our region became a reality. 8573 was formed in 2021 with many strong-minded & very dedicated members that lived in rural areas in South Texas. Our members, mentors, & parents were prepared to step up to the FRC level. Our founding members had been in robotics since elementary, middle school, & now high school. While in middle school, our members were pioneers in starting an all-female FTC team. With mentorship from 8573, FTC #13523 eventually became the Inspire Award Winner at the South Texas Regional advancing to the 22 World Championship. 8573s top goal is to impact a "Legacy" by spreading the message of FIRST & fostering a culture of all Core Values. Our members are enthusiastic & motivated to deliver our program's goals. 8573 was initiated with the purpose for recruiting students that may not have the opportunity of participating in FRC at their schools. We found out that regardless of opportunities, some students still fall through the cracks at their campus. Primarily because the programs, funding, & certain departments only pertain to certain demographics & populations of students. Some of our members unfortunately didn't meet some of their own school system criteria to join robotics or they do not offer FRC. Our members bring years of robotics experience sharing their knowledge with future generations is the initiative to build stronger communities. 8573 has gained the respect of school district teams & admiration of FIRST officials in our region over the years. We have hosted, assisted, & volunteered in multiple FIRST events throughout South Texas (25+ FTC league events/3 FTC Area Champs/6 FLL Qualifiers/2 FLL Area events). In the 2022-23 FTC season, 8573 traveled to all of the 13 FTC events to provide support for 90+ teams from Laredo to Harlingen, TX. At the events, 8573 members, mentors, alumni, & parents assisted with load-in/out, setup/breakdown, taking on event roles like Queuing/Field Reset/Game Announcer. Our alums/mentors volunteered as Referees/Field Managers/Scorekeepers for all the FTC South Texas events. It is a collective team effort that we participate in supporting our local Program Delivery Partners with all their events & all the FTC teams within the RGV. In 2023, FTC in our area grew to 110 teams. 8573 continued to provide regional support to the FTC program & was instrumental in recruiting 15 rookie FTC Freshman teams from the Region One ESC Gear Up program through our Summer STEM Camps at South Texas College. Through our outreach efforts, we have successfully mentored teams that have advanced to the World Championship. We started hosting mini STEM camps with the City of Alton during their Summer Recreation Program & participated in their annual Christmas Parades. In the summer of 2022 & 2023, we hosted Arduino/LEGO EV3/Spike Prime Coding Camps with South Texas College. 8573 has held 10 Camps over 20 weeks in two summers reaching over 1000+ students throughout 8 districts in South Texas. We participated in the local festivals like the McAllen Fiesta de Palmas event promoting &

creating awareness in our region. Our partnership with Leap for STEM has allowed us to promote STEM camp opportunities for young hispanic females, underrepresented, & underserved communities in South Texas. This has led to another partnership with the McAllen Elks Lodge #1402 that has sponsored our team in our advancement to the 22 World Championship. The Elks have allowed us to host fundraisers like our BBQ Chicken Plate Fundraiser & Cookie Box Fundraiser to raise funds for our travel/lodging expenses. Additionally, the Elks have provided us support with a make-shift workspace within their premises. Our most notable trait of 8573s team structure is that every member has different talents & capability skill sets. Some team members excel in coding & others in the engineering aspect. Other members focus their skill sets on the Marketing/Business aspect for our team. Team roles are split into 4 Main Groups: Business Team, Mechanical/Programming Team, Drive Team, & Scout Team. The Business Team is in charge of marketing techniques, presentation skills, & promoting 8573 in FIRST. Mechanical/Programming Team works together to design, construct sub-systems, & program/code. Our Drive Team is essential in testing the robot's performance & driving the robot at the events. Lastly, our Scout Team pulls through during competitions. Scouts create game strategies, record matches, document team's match performance, & analyze data. Our members have experience in competing in robotics since their grade school years. 8573 works as one unit pulling each other up with the concept of T.E.A.M. - Together Everyone Achieves More. In 8573 there is always a role to fill in no matter how big or small the role may be. Being a community team, all members have had to pick up new skill sets. Everyone has interchangeable roles to properly support one another. We have four mentors, two being FIRST Alumni that assist in successfully guiding 8573. Our Grant Funding process is something that 8573 is proud of in receiving a substantial amount of funding these past 4 years. 8573 would not be able to push through & be able to compete today without the support of our sponsors. We are honored to have received over \$40k in total funds over 4 seasons. Our continued sponsorship has included NASA, AEP, Gene Haas, Texas Workforce Commission, NI, Argosy, Siemens, & the Elks Lodge #1402. Our team would not survive without grant funding. 8573 has had an impact on how we have influenced the infrastructure of a successful FIRST Community team model from South Texas. In 2022, 8573 built momentum attending two District Events, then qualified for the FiT District Championship, & then the 22 FIRST World Championship. 8573 earned the RAS Award (Galileo) at the World Championship & was honored to be one of six teams world-wide to win this award at this event. In 2023, we continued our success with earning our first-ever blue banner at the San Antonio District Event as Event Winners & our first-ever EI Award. This was a huge accomplishment to earn both these awards at the same event as a third year team. Our accolades have put the spotlight on our team, opening up opportunities to grow, expand & share our knowledge to our community, our youth, & the world. Outreach opportunities opened up to mentor rookie team #9126 Silver Hawks from Chinese Taipei. #9126 eventually won the RAS award at the Silicon Valley Regional event qualifying them to World Champs. We also had the opportunity to guide #9128 Itkan Robotics and #9136 Rampage, our two FiT District Champs RAS winners to worlds. We provided advice and guidance in preparing them for their run at the 2023 FIRST World Champs. Both teams won several awards as Rookies at the World Championship. On 2/3/23, 8573 was invited by KRGV Channel 5 to do a special segment to showcase our team & robot on their Spanish segment "Al Medio Dia Valle" which translates at Mid Day in the Valley. 8573 was interviewed on live TV on Noticias RGV. We shared our story to our international Spanish community & reached over 60k viewers via the KRGV local news outlet in South Texas. Our initiatives to build stronger communities keeps pushing through & breaking down all barriers in our way. We continue to grow our program each year as our team develops. We have partnered up with Leap for STEM, our 501(c)3 non-profit organization to expand STEM awareness in South Texas. Our team initiative is to become an active partner in our community with shaping & supporting students in all avenues & endeavors. Our members advocate for STEM/Robotics to the communities in the Rio Grande Valley. Our 8573 team has guided students &

parents through robotics simulations & demos at Community Events at the McAllen Public Library & Buc Days Event this past season. We have allowed younger kids to partake & interact with the competition bots by participating in mini break-out sessions. Women in STEM is a priority on our team, which is why we inspire more women to join FIRST & take hands-on experience with robots. We created awareness for young Hispanic females through our All-Girls Lego Camps in the summer. We hope these young ladies become future leaders in the STEM field. We aim to increase diversity and be role-models to younger generations to see representation in the upcoming generations of Hispanic girls. All this has been done in efforts to promote STEM/Robotics throughout the last three seasons. Our vision has been to Impact as many future FIRSTers & encourage the youth in our community to become part of a robotics team, encourage them to recruit new members, and/or create their own team. We know that our region of South Texas has lots of talent & the RGV is a sleeping giant ready to wake up & conquer the world. We are looking for those future engineers & leaders of our next generation to lead the way. This past season, all of our efforts were rewarded as 8573 earned its first ever Impact Award at San Antonio. Our Rogue-Rangers Legacy 8573 team is a strong advocate of STEM/Robotics & showcasing to our community that everyone can make their mark and leave their own Legacy.;

