



2021 *FIRST*® Annual Impact Report

OUR GAME-CHANGING YEAR



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ON THE COVER: *FIRST* ALUM APARNA RAJESH

FIRST alum Aparna Rajesh is the former co-captain of all-girls *FIRST* Tech Challenge Team 11306 "Prototype G" in Princeton, N.J. In the cover photo, she is participating at the 2019 *FIRST* Championship Detroit as an "honorary member" of *FIRST* Tech Challenge Winning Alliance Team 9971 "LANBROS."

Aparna is now studying computer science with a concentration in artificial intelligence and machine learning at the Stevens Institute of Technology. She is also a software developer and undergraduate research affiliate for Massachusetts Institute of Technology, working on a mission for NASA's CubeSat Launch Initiative." She pays it forward by volunteering for *FIRST*.

"*FIRST* was life-changing for me. It helped me pick up technical skills and identify my passion for software development, as well as helping me build teamwork, leadership, and presentation skills. As a *FIRST* mentor, I hope that I can help other students find a passion for STEM."

With the incredible support of mentors, educators, volunteers, sponsors, donors, and alumni, ***FIRST*® inspires young people to go on to better our world.** That inspiration comes from **our community ethos** of *Gracious Professionalism*® and *Coopertition*® and the *FIRST* Core Values of discovery, innovation, impact, inclusion, teamwork, and fun.

As part of *FIRST*, we're **building a culture around the Sport for the Mind™.** We know that when we participate in any sport, we use our creativity, imagination, and critical thinking as much as we use our muscles. We create inspiration when **we champion the strengths of every person** who plays the game and gives us a reason to cheer.

During **our game-changing year**, we adapted our evidence-based robotics and innovation challenges to **meet our youth participants where they needed us** – whether in person or in remote learning environments. As we cheered them on from the virtual bleachers, we were also inspired by the game-changing ways they innovated and impacted their own communities.

**Together, we are
FIRST GAME CHANGERS.**



FIRST GAME CHANGERS



SUSTAINING OUR MISSION

Leadership Letter

Since *FIRST* was founded in 1989, we've reached more than 2.5 million young people with our programs through their schools and communities around the world.

During the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, **1 in 7 children globally** lost more than three-quarters of their in-person learning. This had unavoidable impacts on student access to programs like *FIRST* that are interwoven into the school experience in classrooms and after school.

For the 2020-2021 season, we needed to do everything in our power to sustain our community and mission during this challenging period, one that's shown just how important scientists and innovators are to building a better future.

Our season theme, *FIRST*® GAME CHANGERSSM powered by *Star Wars: Force for Change*, was selected before the pandemic hit, but it foreshadowed what our focus would be throughout the season: changing the game so as many participants as possible could still get in the game (see page 18).

We rolled out program modifications, new remote-only activities, remote and hybrid event solutions, and supporting tools and services. This year, we also focused on expanding our equity, diversity, and inclusion (ED&I) capacity by adding an ED&I director to the executive leadership team, facilitating monthly staff trainings, bolstering our volunteer resources, and expanding our partnerships.

Our season theme and this report celebrate our inspiring "**FIRST game changers**" – the individuals and teams who innovate to make an impact in their communities. They supported needs from personal protective equipment (PPE) shortages to science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education access (see page 14).

To our organization, the most inspiring *FIRST* game changers were our supporters. We are overwhelmingly grateful for the incredible support and collaboration we received from our sponsors, donors, volunteers, mentors, educators, alumni, parents, and others new and returning to the *FIRST* community.

Together, despite the challenges, we continued to make exciting progress this year in growing our ability to deliver our mission.

- + Our *FIRST* LEGO League Discover division for young learners ages 4-6, piloted in 2019, continued to experience growth, and in our year 3 evaluation, teachers noted positive student outcomes in core program areas including teamwork, STEM literacy, and social-emotional learning (see page 12).
- + Seven years into our cross-program longitudinal impact study, *FIRST* participants and alumni continue to show lasting impact in STEM outcomes, with girls in *FIRST* reporting the largest difference in outcomes compared to their peers (see page 8).
- + The 2021 Christa McAuliffe Silver Dollar, a U.S. coin recognizing a STEM education hero advocated for by the *FIRST* community, was issued featuring the *FIRST* logo.
- + We expanded our leadership bench to continue growing our global movement, adding to our Board of Directors (including a *FIRST* alum, see page 16), hiring Dr. Janell N. Catlin as ED&I Director, and creating new Chief Executive Officer (see sidebar) and Chief Operating Officer roles on the *FIRST* leadership team (see page 38).

We also express our sincere gratitude to retiring *FIRST* Board of Directors members Bob Tuttle and Walt Havenstein for their decades of leadership and service to our mission (see page 24).

As part of this *FIRST* community, your support enabled us to adapt aggressively to meet our community's pressing needs while preserving our infrastructure – putting *FIRST* on strong footing to move into the recovery ahead and beyond to making our programs available in every school and community and accessible for every student. Thank you.



Chris Rake,
Executive VP and Chief
Operating Officer, *FIRST*



Kelly Ortberg,
Co-Chair, *FIRST* Board
of Directors



Dean Kamen,
Founder, *FIRST*



Introducing *FIRST* CEO Chris Moore

Chris Moore joined *FIRST* in November 2021 as chief executive officer (CEO), bringing visionary leadership, extensive advocacy and field-engagement experience, as well as deep experience in youth development and a passion for building programs that serve youth, families, and communities. Before joining *FIRST*, Chris served as CEO of Positive Coaching Alliance and the United States Youth Soccer Association, where he increased youth participation in recreational and competitive soccer programs nationwide.

"I'm honored to join an organization with such an impressive legacy of changing lives. *FIRST* is a Sport for the Mind, and today, it is more relevant than ever. We are poised to be the solution to challenges facing communities around the world." – Chris Moore, *FIRST* CEO

IMPACT

Research shows *FIRST*[®] drives STEM engagement and outcomes

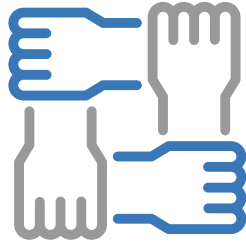
Research from a multi-year longitudinal study shows *FIRST* is advancing its mission to increase the number of students interested in STEM — and that interest is influencing their educational and career choices. [Detailed information can be found at **www.firstinspires.org/impact**](http://www.firstinspires.org/impact)

FIRST students are prepared for greater success in the classroom and workforce.

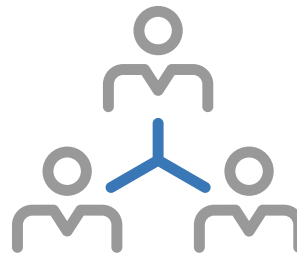
At *FIRST*, we understand that interest, rather than academic proficiency, is a greater predictor of children pursuing studies and careers in STEM fields. Our evidence-based programs use strategies known to increase student interest and engagement in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), including:



HANDS-ON LEARNING



**WORKING AS A TEAM
ON REAL-LIFE PROBLEMS**



**EXPOSURE TO CAREERS
AND ADULT MENTORS**



**EMPHASIS ON *FIRST*
CORE VALUES**



**CULMINATING CELEBRATION WHERE STUDENTS CAN
SHOWCASE WHAT THEY CREATED AND LEARNED**

Gains in Workforce Skills

FIRST participants show significant gains in workforce skills such as teamwork, communication, and problem-solving.

“*FIRST* has given me life skills and tools to work well with others and be a team player and always do my personal best with *Gracious Professionalism*[®]. These are skills I will use in my daily life and beyond!”

— Longitudinal study participant

Research highlights

Benefits of *FIRST*

FIRST students are two times more likely to show an increase in STEM-related attitudes and interests than comparison group students.

Positive impacts are evident for all *FIRST* students regardless of race, gender, income, or community type.



FIRST STUDENTS ARE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE LIKELY TO SHOW GAINS IN STEM OUTCOMES THAN COMPARISON STUDENTS

2x

- STEM Interest
- STEM Career Interest
- STEM Knowledge
- STEM Activity
- STEM Identity



FIRST Alumni

By their fourth year of college, *FIRST* alumni are more likely to be majoring in STEM fields and taking STEM courses than comparison group peers.

DECLARE A MAJOR IN STEM



DECLARE A MAJOR IN ENGINEERING OR COMPUTER SCIENCE



MORE LIKELY TO TAKE COURSES IN ENGINEERING OR COMPUTER SCIENCE

FIRST students are 2.5 times more likely to take engineering courses and 3.2 times more likely to take computer science courses their fourth year of college than the comparison group.

3.2x

Computer Science

2.5x

Engineering



*x = times as likely

Research shows *FIRST* has a lasting impact on girls and young women

Women are critical to the advancement of STEM – but a significant gender gap remains within STEM careers. At *FIRST*, we are actively developing ways to address barriers to access and participation, particularly in managing and allocating resources, programs, and educational opportunities fairly to all genders. We are committed to creating a diverse, inclusive, and equitable community for all participants.

Girls in *FIRST* see amazing impacts. All *FIRST* participants are significantly more likely to have stronger STEM outcomes compared to their classmates, as evidenced by the *FIRST* Longitudinal Study. However, girls in *FIRST* report the largest differences in STEM outcomes over time when compared to their female peers, and higher than boys.



Women in *FIRST*

Young women in *FIRST* have significant gains in all STEM areas – including STEM interest, career interest, activity, knowledge, and identity – compared to young women in the comparison group.

DECLARE A MAJOR IN ENGINEERING OR COMPUTER SCIENCE

FEMALE *FIRST* ALUMNI

51%

FEMALE COMPARISON GROUP

16%

MORE LIKELY TO TAKE COURSES IN ENGINEERING OR COMPUTER SCIENCE

3.4x

Computer Science

2.6x

Engineering

STEM Outcomes

Female *FIRST* participants are 2.2 times more likely to have significantly stronger STEM interest than comparison group peers, and:

MORE LIKELY TO HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY STRONGER OUTCOMES IN STEM ATTITUDES, KNOWLEDGE, AND INTERESTS COMPARED TO THEIR PEERS

3.2x

STEM Activity

2.2x

STEM Interest

2.1x

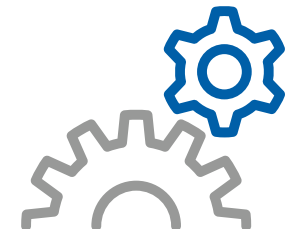
STEM Knowledge

1.9x

STEM Careers

1.4x

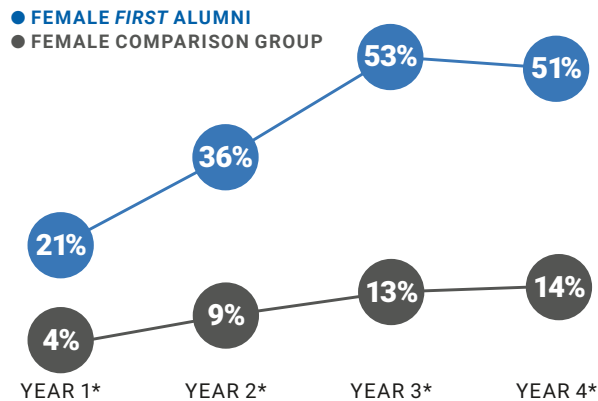
STEM Identity



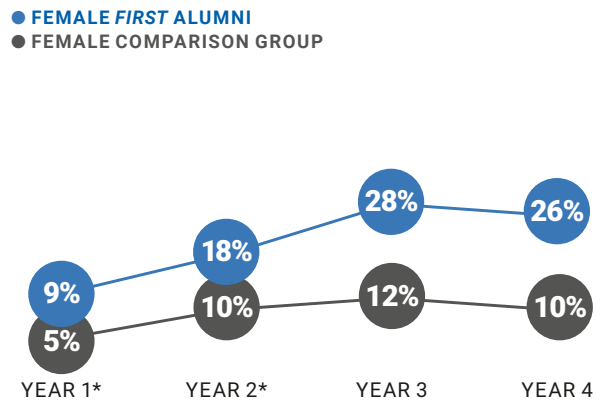
Declare STEM Majors

More female *FIRST* alumni declare majors in Engineering and Computer Science compared to young women in the comparison group.

% OF ENGINEERING MAJORS



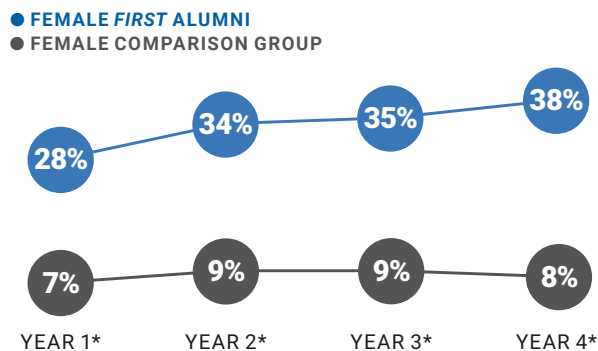
% OF COMPUTER SCIENCE MAJORS



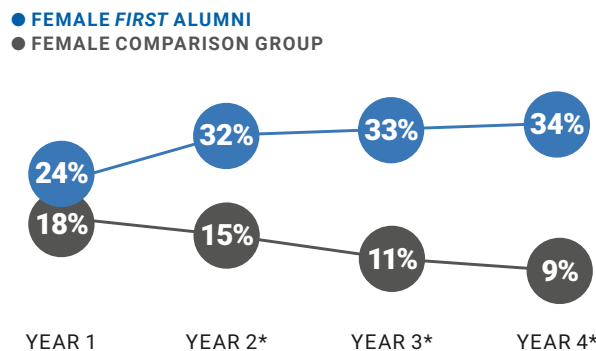
Take STEM Coursework

Female *FIRST* alumni are more likely to take coursework in Engineering or Computer Science each of the four years of college compared to their peers.

% OF ENGINEERING COURSEWORK



% OF COMPUTER SCIENCE COURSEWORK



“*FIRST* has made such a large impact on my life that I don’t know where or who I would be without it. I have been involved with *FIRST* for seven years, and the experiences that I have had have given me public speaking skills, confidence in my abilities, and life-long friendships. *FIRST* also has given me the opportunity to inspire others in STEAM fields.”

– Longitudinal study participant

Detailed information can be found at www.firstinspires.org/impact

SOURCE: *FIRST* Longitudinal Study: Findings at 84-Month Follow-Up, Brandeis University, March, 2021. *Differences statistically significant, $p \leq .05$. The study included 822 *FIRST* students and 451 comparison group students. The comparison group included students who did not participate in *FIRST* programs, but were enrolled in science and math classes at the same schools. All students received a baseline survey and follow-up surveys each year. Overall, 74% of students remained in the study at year seven.

PROGRAMS

FIRST Progression of Programs

A Suite of Hands-On, STEM Learning Programs

FIRST combines the rigor of STEM learning with the fun and excitement of traditional sports and the inspiration that comes from community through a progression of programs that have a proven impact on learning, interest, and skill-building inside and outside of the classroom.



“I would like to thank the *FIRST* organization. You’ve played a vital role in helping shape the outstandingly positive direction of [my son’s] path. *FIRST*’s mission, vision, and Core Values have bolstered the development of my son’s character and, accordingly, exponentially increased his opportunities. Thank you to all the beautiful volunteers who help make *FIRST* a powerfully impactful opportunity for many young people like my son.” – *FIRST* parent and donor



FIRST® LEGO® League Divisions

FIRST® LEGO® League guides youth through STEM learning and exploration at an early age. From Discover to Explore and then to Challenge, students will understand the basics of STEM and apply their skills in an exciting competition while gaining productive learning habits, confidence, and teamwork skills along the way.

	<p>AGES 4-6</p> <hr/> <p>GRADES PreK-1</p>	<h4>FIRST LEGO LEAGUE DISCOVER</h4> <p>This playful introductory STEM program ignites children’s natural curiosity and builds their habits of learning with hands-on activities in the classroom and at home using LEGO® DUPLO® bricks.</p>
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	<p>AGES 6-10</p> <hr/> <p>GRADES 2-4</p>	<h4>FIRST LEGO LEAGUE EXPLORE</h4> <p>Teams of students focus on the fundamentals of engineering as they explore real-world problems, learn to design and code, and create unique solutions made with LEGO bricks and powered by LEGO® Education SPIKE™ Essential or WeDo 2.0.</p>
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	<p>AGES 9-16*</p> <hr/> <p>GRADES 4-8</p>	<h4>FIRST LEGO LEAGUE CHALLENGE</h4> <p>Teams of students engage in research, problem solving, coding, and engineering – building and programming a LEGO® Education SPIKE™ Prime or LEGO® MINDSTORMS® robot that navigates the missions of a robot game. They also participate in the Innovation Project to identify and solve a relevant real-world problem.</p> <p>*Ages vary by country</p>
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Grades PreK-8 · Ages 4-16*



Young Innovators Use Skills and Imagination to Solve Problems as a Team

THE CHALLENGE

Through a guided, global robotics program, students are introduced to STEM learning and exploration at an early age. Children can begin with Discover (ages 4-6) and progress through Explore (ages 6-10) and Challenge (ages 9-16*), or join at any division based on their age or grade level.

THE JOURNEY

Young children are introduced to STEM concepts and develop habits of learning through engaging, fun challenges using LEGO Education materials, with opportunities to show their skills through festivals and competitions.

THE OUTCOME

Students gain real-world problem-solving experiences that inspire them to experiment and grow their critical thinking, coding, and design skills while building confidence, growing their knowledge, and developing habits of learning.

*Ages vary by division and country

Grades 7-12 · Ages 12-18



It's Way More Than Building Robots

THE CHALLENGE

Teams of students design, build, program, and operate Android-smartphone-controlled robots to compete head-to-head in an alliance format. Students are encouraged to create a team identity and be an ambassador for *FIRST* and STEM in their communities.

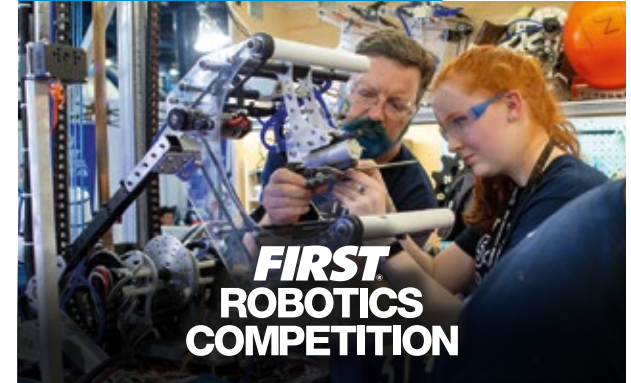
THE JOURNEY

Teams compete at local and regional events, qualifying up to the *FIRST* Championship. They earn awards based on their teamwork, creativity, innovation, and the engineering design process.

THE OUTCOME

While developing their STEM skills and mastering engineering principles, students learn the value of persistence, innovation, teamwork, and the engineering design process. Current and past participants can apply for scholarships from *FIRST* Scholarship Providers and participate in additional career discovery opportunities.

Grades 9-12 · Ages 14-18



An Exciting Sport Built Around the World of STEM

THE CHALLENGE

Under strict rules, with limited time and resources, high school teams use sophisticated technology to build and program industrial-size robots for a challenging field game. Each team creates a team identity, raises funds to meet its goals, and works to promote STEM in the local community.

THE JOURNEY

At district and regional events, cheering crowds root for qualifying teams as students compete with their robots for prestigious awards and a coveted spot at the *FIRST* Championship.

THE OUTCOME

As students learn real-world engineering concepts, they build their confidence and workforce skills and connect with professional team mentors and sponsors who can help them succeed. Current and past participants can apply for scholarships from *FIRST* Scholarship Providers and participate in additional career discovery opportunities.

Spotlight on *FIRST*® LEGO® League Discover



Discover Ignites Early Childhood STEM Engagement and Builds Habits of Learning

Building habits of learning in children early is critical to developing lifelong interest in STEM learning. With development support from the LEGO Foundation, *FIRST* piloted a new *FIRST* LEGO League division in 2019 and officially launched *FIRST* LEGO League Discover in 2020, expanding *FIRST* programming to reach children as young as 4.

The *FIRST* LEGO League divisions (see page 10) guide young children through STEM learning and exploration at an early age. Designed for children ages 4-6, Discover ignites their natural curiosity and builds their habits of learning with hands-on activities in the classroom and at home using LEGO® DUPLO® bricks, including the LEGO Education STEAM Park Set, to grow their understanding of gears, motion, measurement, and solving problems together, and themed Discover Sets that help children explore how STEM relates to their world.

Discover is implemented through *FIRST* Class Packs, which provide facilitators with the tools and resources to lead early learners through 10 sessions and a culminating event celebration as they explore STEM through creative play. Children record what they learn in an Engineering Notebook and take home Discover More Family Engagement Sets to extend and reinforce their habits of learning with family at home.

Discover Impact: Key Findings

Since Discover launched, a global pandemic interrupted access to STEM learning, and yet Discover experienced continued global growth and demand among early childhood education programs. Through generous sponsorship from the LEGO Foundation, *FIRST* reached 32,107 youth world-wide between 2018-2021.

A three-year evaluation* of *FIRST* LEGO League Discover conducted by WestEd shows strong findings from teachers and facilitators, who note positive student outcomes in core *FIRST* program areas including STEM literacy and social-emotional learning:

- + Almost all teachers reported that Discover meets the needs of students academically, socially, and emotionally.
- + Teachers noted positive student outcomes in social-emotional learning, including gains in self-awareness, self-regulation, cooperation, positive interactions with peers, responsibility, and empathy.
- + 92% of teachers reported that students had gains in STEM literacy, use of STEM vocabulary, and emerging understanding of the engineering design process.
- + Teachers noted that Discover meets the diverse needs of their students. Students with learning differences were engaged and had positive outcomes. Hands-on learning with little reliance on written words makes Discover accessible to those with language needs.
- + Teachers reported gains in their ability to effectively teach STEM to young learners, including recognizing the importance of hands-on learning and feeling more confident to teach STEM by the end of Discover.



Discover in Action in México

When *FIRST* asked leaders from RobotiX, the *FIRST* LEGO League partner for México, to help pilot its new early childhood STEM program, they eagerly agreed. “We were so enthusiastic about the potential to impact children at early learning ages,” Roberto Saint Martin S., director of RobotiX, said.

Three years of Discover grant funding from the LEGO Foundation has enabled RobotiX to reach more than 12,500 students, mostly ages 5-6 and 50% girls, across several states in México through preschools and childcare centers, focusing on vulnerable sites that reach children in difficult economic situations or with disabilities. Roberto says teachers are impressed by how much their students’ vocabularies grow through Discover’s real-world theme and sessions, and observed the young children becoming more tolerant with each other and able to work as a team.

Discover’s impact has been noticed by parents too; often those without access pressure the schools to increase Discover enrollment. Many sites have been able to share the materials to reach more children, with RobotiX providing best practices on how to ensure every child gets the whole Discover experience. “Resources are scarce in México, so when they get these opportunities, schools want every child to have it because it’s so enriching,” Roberto said.



Demand from families and schools has grown each year, even as the pandemic closed many of México’s public schools to in-class learning. “It’s great proof that Discover is an incredibly scalable program that could have greater impacts for education,” Roberto said, crediting the multi-year grant funding for making it possible to track program impact and develop strategies for sustainability. “With this grant, we’re able to pilot these programs and show it’s possible to invest in them, and we’re seeing more change coming through the schools as a result.”



“The community to which our students belong has serious economic problems, so the implementation of the program was a great opportunity for the children and their families. [Discover] has contributed a lot to the family union, to the development of cognitive skills and creativity of the students. Through the sessions, we saw all the learning that the students developed.”

– Discover grant recipient, Jardín de Niños El Barquito, Sonora, México





Inspired by *FIRST*: Meet These Community Game Changers

Amidst an ongoing global pandemic, our community not only upheld the *FIRST* Core Values (see below), but also continued to innovate and *change the game* to make an impact in their backyards and on a global scale. These stories of *FIRST* students and alumni are just a sample of the thousands in our community worldwide that **exemplify what it means to be a game changer**.

FIRST Core Values We express the *FIRST* philosophies of *Gracious Professionalism*[®] and *Coopertition*[®] through our Core Values:

DISCOVERY We explore new skills and ideas.

IMPACT We apply what we learn to improve our world.

TEAMWORK We are stronger when we work together.

INNOVATION We use creativity and persistence to solve problems.

INCLUSION We respect each other and embrace our differences.

FUN We enjoy and celebrate what we do!



FIRST Students Rise to the PPE Challenge

When the COVID pandemic began and the 2019-2020 season came to a halt, the *FIRST* community immediately leapt into action. Students switched gears from robot building to personal protective equipment (PPE) production and community outreach. The *FIRST* in Michigan community swiftly began the “[1 Million PPE Challenge](#)” to assist healthcare professionals and first responders in getting the proper protection needed to fight COVID-19. Students across the United States banded together (virtually) from their homes and team workshops to produce and donate over 2.2 million pieces of PPE, including face shields, face masks and accessories, and safety glasses.

One of the students who contributed, Angelica Whitney, a *FIRST* Tech Challenge participant from New Hampshire, created more than 7,000 pieces of PPE for healthcare facilities, nursing homes, and others, using her team’s 3-D printers and the fundraising skills she honed over seven years in *FIRST*. “I really wanted to make a difference in my community,” she said.

As the pandemic lingers, *FIRST* teams across all programs are continuing to use their resources to meet the needs of their local communities and proving their infallible resilience as they navigate these challenging times as a collective community.



Affinity Group “LGBTQ+ of FIRST” Fosters Inclusive Community

As part of celebrating [2021 Pride Month](#) (see page 19), *FIRST* teamed up with a student-run affinity group to amplify the voices and experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) members within our community. LGBTQ+ of *FIRST* seeks to create a safe and educated space for students, mentors, and volunteers through outreach events and educational resources. Their stories, told through a blog series, helped us highlight important LGBTQ+ topics during Pride Month, including how to support *FIRST* students coming out, how to be a positive ally, and advice for LGBTQ+ students dealing with resistance towards acceptance.

Eva, a *FIRST* alum from Indiana who has participated in and mentored seven *FIRST* teams, [wrote](#) about finding her identity while founding Neurodivergent of *FIRST* and joining LGBTQ+ of *FIRST*. “My lifeline through this time was *FIRST*, including LGBTQ+ of *FIRST*. It was somewhere to be myself without fear. It was somewhere to meet people like me who also shared my love of robots. It was somewhere safe,” she said.

Through Pride Month discussions and ongoing inclusion efforts, LGBTQ+ of *FIRST* works within the *FIRST* community to express the importance of listening to varying perspectives from LGBTQ+ people, working to understand different identities, and advocating for LGBTQ+ rights.





PickUp Patrol: From Student Innovation to Global App

In 2009, *FIRST* LEGO League team “NXtreme” from Mont Vernon, N.H., addressed transportation problems within their community as part of their [Innovation Project](#) during the SMART MOVE season. Twelve years later, that project is now known as PickUp Patrol: a school dismissal app that is used in three countries, 36 states, and countless schools, helping educators and parents coordinate dismissals.

FIRST alum Tony Edvalson (second from left), an original member of the elementary school team behind the groundbreaking app, now works full time for PickUp Patrol as a software engineer. “Working at PickUp Patrol has been incredibly rewarding,” said Edvalson. “Developing an idea from scratch and seeing it succeed has taught me a lot about how to build a product and manage it.”

PickUp Patrol’s core product is still intact today, with additional features to address the changing needs of schools during the ongoing COVID pandemic. “Learning about innovation at a young age has had a huge impact on my life,” Edvalson continued. “It has given me the confidence to come up with new ideas and share them with others.”



FIRST Alum Elected to Board of Directors

Dr. Melissa Smith, *FIRST* alum and staff user experience researcher at Google/YouTube, knows a thing or two about changing the game. She is the first *FIRST* alum on the [FIRST Board of Directors](#), having participated as a student and actively volunteered in various roles for over 20 years. Outside of her career at Google, where she is leading research to improve the artist and industry experience across YouTube’s various surfaces, she continues to pay the *FIRST* mission forward: Melissa volunteers her time as a head referee and on the Greater San Francisco Region Planning Committee. “I think it’s important for *FIRST* alumni to give back to *FIRST*, however they can, as we can all attest to the positive impact this program had on our lives and our journeys,” said Smith. “Helping to ensure *FIRST* can be there for the next generation of students is part of the journey.”



“LAUNCH TEAM 6352” Helps Make STEM More Accessible

FIRST Robotics Competition team “LAUNCH TEAM 6352” has engaged over 100 students in their community using FIRST @ Home activities. Within the FIRST @ Home offerings, there are activities for every age group, and LAUNCH TEAM appreciated having this breadth of materials so that every student who wanted the experience could participate remotely. “We really wanted to make sure that the kids were having fun, and they were encouraged to use their creativity,” said LAUNCH TEAM president Noel Robertson. “We didn’t want it to feel like homework.”

After seeing the impact they made in their own community, LAUNCH TEAM hopes to inspire others to host similar projects in their communities. To make resources available to even more students, LAUNCH TEAM worked with the FIRST Education team to create Google Classroom lessons for the FIRST LEGO League RePLAYSM season.



All-Girls Libyan Teams Promote Gender Equality

Team “LYBOTICS Change” – the first all-girls FIRST Tech Challenge team in Libya – is changing perceptions and breaking down barriers for women and girls. Amidst staggering civil unrest in Libya, the broader LYBOTICS organization has created a safe place for children of all ages to learn and have fun. Even more game changing, the LYBOTICS organization, which became a FIRST Tech Challenge partner in 2021, supports two all-girl robotics teams and several mixed gender teams – 10 years after the Libyan revolution in 2011, and during a time when Libyan women continue to fight for gender equality against very real threats to their lives.

Understandably, the girls’ families were initially reluctant to let them join the robotics team, as their participation defies the social norms of Libya’s deeply fragmented society. But with bravery and perseverance, the teams formed and have since empowered these young women to hone their skills and confidence as STEM leaders. For the first time, they can receive support from mentors and others they would not normally have access to and pursue higher education and careers in STEM fields. The girls are making waves of positive change in Libya, garnering support in their regions and on social media, and helping to evolve girls’ and women’s rights across the country.



FIRST® GAME CHANGERSSM powered by *Star Wars: Force for Change*

The *FIRST* GAME CHANGERS powered by *Star Wars: Force for Change* season theme challenged us to revolutionize the traditional world of sports and fitness and be game changers. Across our programs, we celebrated the evolution of our sports and activities that make us physically and mentally strong.

A Season in Numbers

318,000+

students impacted in 90 countries

139,000+

mentor, coach, judge, and volunteer roles

9.8+ million

volunteer hours served



GET IN THE GAME

With the global COVID-19 pandemic continuing throughout the 2020-2021 season, we set out to ensure that as many *FIRST* participants as possible could “get in the game” across learning environments through core program elements:



GAME PLAY

Fun, thematic robot game challenges to enhance engineering and teamwork skills



INNOVATION PROJECT

Real-world innovation projects designed to test problem-solving skills and make a community impact



CAREERS

Career exploration, mentorship, and scholarship opportunities for fostering personal and professional development



COMMUNITY

Young people, and the adults who mentor and support them, are part of our thriving, inclusive global robotics community



RECOGNITION

Opportunities to celebrate and be recognized for achievements

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS



The **2021 Christa McAuliffe Silver Dollar**, a U.S. Mint coin commemorating the first teacher selected to go to space and featuring the *FIRST* logo, was presented to Dr. Jill Biden, First Lady of the United States and an educator, who called it “a tribute to all educators.”

FIRST, with our sponsors, hosted **virtual career discovery events** for students and alumni on topics such as advancing equity and STEM in the sports industry, how robotics is being used across industries, and how to make the most of their *FIRST* experience.

The ***FIRST* Mentor Network presented by NI** launched with an interactive platform allowing teams and interested mentors to find each other.



FIRST partnered with Qualcomm to launch the **2021 *FIRST* Innovation Challenge presented by Qualcomm**, which gave *FIRST* Tech Challenge and *FIRST* Robotics Competition teams a pathway to join *FIRST* LEGO League teams in advancing to the 2021 Global Innovation Awards presented by *Star Wars: Force for Change*. Cheddar News featured some of the teams and their health and fitness solutions in its “Young Innovators” series.



FIRST joined the **Human Rights Campaign’s Project THRIVE** to reinforce our **commitment to inclusion** and the importance of allyship to support LGBTQ+ colleagues, mentors, volunteers, and student participants.

FIRST made free PreK-12 STEM engagement activities available for educators and parents on ***FIRST* @ Home** to support remote and hybrid learning environments.



Grades PreK-8 · Ages 4-16*

Teams worked together to research and invent new ways and places for people of all abilities to play, move, and stay active. In **PLAYMAKERS**,SM Discover and Explore students designed new obstacle courses and play structures, built a LEGO® model, and tracked what they learned in an Engineering Notebook. Explore teams brought their model to life using LEGO® Education WeDo 2.0. In **RePLAY**,SM Challenge teams identified and researched a problem related to people not being active enough, then designed a new piece of technology or improved an existing one to help solve it. They also built and programmed an autonomous LEGO robot to solve play and fitness-themed missions on a competition field. Teams competed and shared what they learned at remote, hybrid, and in-person events.

*Ages vary by division and country



FIRST
GLOBAL INNOVATION AWARDS

POWERED BY STAR WARS
FORCE FOR CHANGE



FIRST LEGO League Challenge
Global Innovation Award Winner

2021 WINNER Team "SESI Big Bang," Sao Paulo, Brazil

INNOVATION PROJECT FIGLOVE

FIGLOVE is an innovative strip with an ultrasonic sensor placed in the palm of the hand that reduces pain during exercise – especially beneficial to people with fibromyalgia. SESI Big Bang is a FIRST LEGO League Challenge team of six students and two coaches hoping to make the world a better place through scientific and innovative solutions.

SEASON FACTS

216,480

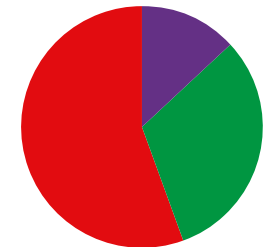
students in
69 countries explored
STEM concepts and
gained real-world
problem-solving
experiences through
the guided, global
FIRST LEGO League
program.

33,824

individual teams

1,579

Class Packs and
School Packs



28,464

Discover students

67,872

Explore students

120,144

Challenge students



Grades 7-12 · Ages 12-18

Teams challenged themselves to exceed their personal and team potentials and redefine the game. Students programmed their robots to compete in three minutes of game play with autonomous and driver-controlled sections through remote, hybrid, and in-person events. This exciting, fast-paced game incorporated tasks including delivering wobble goals to the correct randomized target zone, parking their robot on top of the launch line, and collecting and launching rings to score in various goals. This year, teams also had the opportunity to participate in the remote FIRST Innovation Challenge presented by Qualcomm.



PRESENTED BY Qualcomm



POWERED BY STAR WARS FORCE FOR CHANGE



FIRST Tech Challenge Global Innovation Award Winner

2021 WINNER Team 14725 "Java the Hutts," Fort Meyers, Florida
FIRST INNOVATION CHALLENGE SOLUTION PATHWAYS

Java the Hutt's PATHWAYS mobility tool is an ultra-wideband (UWB) detector device with an integrated vibration motor module that attaches to the cane of a visually impaired user and forms a safe path. The small, hard-working team aims to build engineering skills and spread awareness of robotics and get more students involved with FIRST.

SEASON FACTS

49,210

students in 42 countries developed STEM skills, practiced engineering principles, and explored the value of teamwork through FIRST Tech Challenge.

5,172

individual teams

111

Class Packs





Grades 9-12 · Ages 14-18

FIRST Robotics Competition introduced three new team challenge opportunities with remote judging for students to develop skills from engineering design to business development this season, in lieu of the program’s typical large in-person competitions: In **INFINITE RECHARGESM at Home**, teams demonstrated their robot’s technical skills in a competition based on the 2020 INFINITE RECHARGE field game. The **Game Design Challenge** invited teams to design an original robotics game and compete for judged awards. The **FIRST Innovation Challenge presented by Qualcomm** challenged teams to explore the invention process by designing a health and fitness-themed innovation, creating a business model, and pitching their idea.



POWERED BY **STAR WARS**
FORCE FOR CHANGE



FIRST Robotics Competition Global Innovation Award Winner

2021 WINNER Team 5553 “Robo’Lyon,” Rhone, France

FIRST INNOVATION CHALLENGE SOLUTION WALK ASSISTANT

Robo’Lyon, a FIRST Robotics Competition team of seven students, was inspired by their personal experiences with Parkinson’s disease to create the Walk Assistant, a hands-free solution for patients with the nervous system disorder who develop a “freezing” symptom, a sudden inability to move that can lead to dangerous situations. The team uses the iterative Scrum method to make progress on their project.

SEASON FACTS

52,340

students in **30 countries** unlocked real-world engineering concepts, self-confidence, and workforce skills, supported by professional team mentors and sponsors.

3,079

individual teams

125

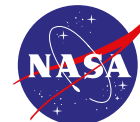
rookie teams

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Through *FIRST* programs, kids of all ages and backgrounds are building pathways for their futures. As a nonprofit more than three decades into our mission, we know we would not have this impact without the support of our sponsors, suppliers, donors, and other financial contributors. Their partnership, acknowledged in part on these pages, enables our participants to have the tools they need to succeed and build a better world.

Together, we are changing the game.

2020-2021 STRATEGIC PARTNERS



THANK YOU TO OUR RETIRING LONG-TIME BOARD MEMBERS

Robert M. Tuttle

SERVED 2002-2021 ON BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bob Tuttle is one of our organization's earliest and most passionate supporters, willing to step in wherever his service is needed and instrumental to our growth. He has been a volunteer for *FIRST* since its early development more than 30 years ago, including 16 years as *FIRST* Board of Directors treasurer and eight years as co-chair, and he even served as interim president in 2005 and 2013.

Bob is a General Partner of 1848 Associates, a commercial real estate development entity. Prior to that, he held several executive positions for over 20 years in the aerospace industry before joining *FIRST* founder Dean Kamen as executive vice president of DEKA Research & Development Corporation.

FIRST extends our deepest thanks and appreciation for his visionary guidance, exceptional leadership, and unconditional commitment to *FIRST*.



Walter P. Havenstein

SERVED 2006-2021 ON BOARD OF DIRECTORS

For 15 years, Walt Havenstein brought his leadership experience and engineering passion to the *FIRST* Board of Directors, including three years as Board chair and eight years as chair of its Audit Committee. Understanding the value of *FIRST* to industry, Walt originated the idea that *FIRST* is "the only sport where every kid can turn pro."

Walt is the retired chief executive officer of Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC). Prior to SAIC, Walt was president and chief executive officer of BAE Systems Inc., a *FIRST* Strategic Partner, and had a long career in the defense industry and in the U.S. Marine Corps.

FIRST shares our deepest thanks and appreciation for his invaluable leadership, outstanding dedication, and extraordinary service.



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“As a participant, FIRST taught me to be confident and bold. As an alum, FIRST has taught me to be humble. FIRST has made my life what it is today, and I will be forever grateful. I hope to help many students experience the same impact as I have. Here’s to decades more of FIRST opportunity, impact, influence, and inspiration. Here’s to a brighter future.”

– Maddie Burris, FIRST alum, donor, and volunteer

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“The real world is about uncertainty and making tradeoffs. When the algorithms you learned in school don’t cut it, or your plans don’t work, or your information in a given domain is incomplete, that changes the way you think about problems and react to failures. Having that real-world experience so young, through *FIRST*, was huge.”

– [Ajay Penmatcha](#), *FIRST* alum & donor

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"We are thrilled to collaborate with *FIRST* again this year and engage young people in STEM learning. Educating our youth and providing access to *FIRST* programs for students of all backgrounds has never been so important as it is right now."

– Kathleen Kennedy, president, Lucasfilm, *FIRST* sponsor

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“This program is by far the best inspirational program I have ever experienced with our youth. The impact *FIRST* makes on students challenges them on the education they receive in class and makes it the most rewarding... experience of their lives. I feel fortunate that three of my children participated in the program and continued to mentor teams both during and after college. ... I am pleased to see the pandemic is not preventing this program from advancing.”

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– [Angela Baker](#), senior director of corporate responsibility, Qualcomm Incorporated, *FIRST* sponsor



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"FIRST gave me so much as a student, introducing me to STEM study, electrical and software work, and applying engineering concepts outside the classroom. Volunteering helps me give back and give those same experiences to students and future engineers."

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“After we became a Scholarship Provider, a group of *FIRST* alumni formed a new student club on campus – *FIRST* at Rice. The club is looking to build on the university’s longstanding commitment to EDI by focusing their activities on equitable engagement of students from traditionally marginalized identities. We look forward to our continued partnership with *FIRST* to create pathways for more students from diverse backgrounds to pursue STEM degrees and careers.”

– Yvette E. Pearson, Ph.D., associate dean of engineering, Rice University

Program Delivery Partners

FIRST is the vehicle by which young people of all backgrounds can discover a love of learning, hone their creativity, and unlock their full amazing potential. Our Program Delivery Partners work tirelessly to bring programs that keep STEM exciting and accessible to communities and classrooms around the world. This season was an unprecedented challenge for our partners, and they rose to meet it. The following key organizations in the field implement *FIRST* programs in their respective regions.

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THANK YOU, FIRST VOLUNTEERS!

For over 30 years, *FIRST* volunteers have championed the game by cheering on our players, encouraging innovation and collaboration, and preparing them for the future. This season brought unprecedented challenges, and *FIRST* volunteers answered the call. They learned new systems, adapted to virtual events, and expanded their skillsets to deliver on the mission of *FIRST* and prepare the next generation of game changers.

We are proud to honor the 2020-2021 *FIRST* Volunteer of the Year Award recipients:

FIRST LEGO LEAGUE EXPLORE

Rick Ramhap (Long Island, NY), who partnered with School-Business Partnerships of Long Island to bring *FIRST* LEGO League Explore to Long Island.

Stephen Swartzentruber (Ontario, Canada), who was instrumental in training and recruiting volunteers, communicating with teams, and producing online events.

FIRST LEGO LEAGUE CHALLENGE

David Baran (Maryland), who ensured the virtual environment for competitions was optimized for the *FIRST* community to have the quality experiences they have at in-person events.

Sofia Ben souda (Morocco), who was national head referee and translated many community resources and shared them with teams in her area.

FIRST TECH CHALLENGE

Thomas Barnette and **Trey Woodlief** (North Carolina), *FIRST* alumni who developed *FIRST* Tech Challenge Live, the official scoring software used at traditional and hybrid events, along with other resources for event management in collaboration with fellow volunteer developers.

FIRST ROBOTICS COMPETITION

David Greenley (Pennsylvania), who managed judges in conducting over 6,000 individual and team interviews and gave continued support to the judging process.

Peter Johnson (California), who has been a major contributor to WPILib, the software library provided for teams to write code for their robots.

INDONESIA
PT Edukasi Kreatifitas
Anak/CK Education ●●

IRELAND
The Institution of Engineering
and Technology
(The IET) ●●
FIRST Tech Challenge UK ●

ISRAEL
FIRST Israel & Technion ●●●●

ITALY
Fondazione Museo Civico
di Rovereto ●●

JAMAICA
Jamaica College Foundation ●

JAPAN
FIRST Japan ●●

JORDAN
Jubilee Center for Excellence
in Education ●●

KAZAKHSTAN
USTEM Robotics
Kazakhstan/Central Asia
Robotics Development
Foundation* ●●●

KENYA
CODERINA ●●

LATVIA
MTÜ Robotika ●●

LEBANON
Education and Technology
Center ●●

LESOTHO
Tshwane University of
Technology/*FIRST*
South Africa ●

LITHUANIA
Robotikos Akademija ●●

LUXEMBOURG
Stichting Techniekpromotie ●●

MALAYSIA
Sasbadi Sdn Bhd ●●

MÉXICO
RobotiX ●●
Explora, Descubre y
Crea, A.C. ●

MOLDOVA
MTÜ Robotika ●●

MONGOLIA
Mongolia Robot Education
Association ●

MONTENEGRO
Young Inventors of
Montenegro ●

MOROCCO
Play Academy ●●

NETHERLANDS
Stichting Techniekpromotie ●●
STEAMUp ●

NEW ZEALAND
FIRST New Zealand Trust ●●

NIGERIA
CODERINA ●●●

NORWAY
FIRST Scandinavia ●●

OMAN
ATLAB ●

PAKISTAN
STARFALL Foundation ●●

PARAGUAY
Espacios de Ser S.A.* ●

PERU
Wernher Von Braun IEP SA ●
Edubots ●

PHILIPPINES
FELTA Multi-Media, Inc. ●●

POLAND
ALE Nauczanie Foundation ●●

PORTUGAL
Evoluir21 ●●

QATAR
ATLAB ●●
Texas A&M University Qatar ●

REPUBLIC OF KOREA
FEST (Federation for Education
of Creative Science and
Technology) ●●●

**REPUBLIC OF
NORTHERN
MACEDONIA**
EDUAct ●●

ROMANIA
CRESTEM ●●
Natie Prin Educatie
Association ●

RUSSIA
Robotics Laboratory "Future
Engineers" ●●●

SAUDI ARABIA
ATLAB ●●●
Thaka Holding Co/BeSteam ●

SINGAPORE
Duck Learning ●●

SLOVAKIA
FIRST LEGO League
Slovensko, o.z. ●

SLOVENIA
Zavod Super Glavce ●●

SOUTH AFRICA
Tshwane University of
Technology/FIRST
South Africa ●●●

SPAIN
Fundación Scientia ●●●

SWEDEN
FIRST Scandinavia ●●

SWITZERLAND
HANDS on TECHNOLOGY
e.V. ●●

THAILAND
GAMMACO ●●
The Prince Royal's College ●

**TRINIDAD AND
TOBAGO**
NIHERST ●

TUNISIA
Edurobot Tunisia ●●

TURKEY
Bilim Kahramanlari
Bulusuyor (BKD) ●●
Fikret Yüksel Foundation ●

UKRAINE
Innovative Education
Solutions ●●

**UNITED ARAB
EMIRATES**
ATLAB ●●
ATLAB and AUS ●

UNITED KINGDOM
The Institution of Engineering
and Technology
(The IET) ●●
FIRST Tech Challenge UK ●

UNITED STATES
ADVENTIST ROBOTICS LEAGUE
Adventist Robotics League ●●

DODEA – EUROPE
DoDEA – Europe ●

**NATIONAL SOCIETY OF
BLACK ENGINEERS**
National Society of
Black Engineers ●●

ALABAMA
FIRST in Alabama ●●●

ALASKA
Juneau Economic
Development Council ●●●
FIRST Washington ●

ARIZONA
Arizona State University ●●
Coconuts Robotics ●

ARKANSAS
Science and Technology
Group Inc. ●●●

CALIFORNIA – CENTRAL
Clovis Unified School
District ●●

CALIFORNIA – LOS ANGELES
Alt-NEXT ●

LA Robotics ●
Southern California
Robotics League ●●

CALIFORNIA – NORTHERN
Playing at Learning ●●●

CALIFORNIA – SAN DIEGO
Matt Nilsen ●

CALIFORNIA – SOUTHERN
Southern California
Robotics League ●●

COLORADO
Colorado FIRST ●●●

CONNECTICUT
NE FIRST ●●●●

DELAWARE
Delaware State University ●●

First State Robotics ●
FIRST Mid-Atlantic ●

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
FIRST Chesapeake ●●
James Madison University ●●

FLORIDA
Tampa Bay Robotics ●

FLORIDA – CENTRAL
Renaissance Jax, Inc. ●●

FLORIDA – NORTHEAST
Renaissance Jax, Inc. ●●

FLORIDA – NORTHWEST
DEFENSEWERX Inc. ●●

FLORIDA – SOUTH
Green Mouse Academy ●●

FLORIDA – WEST COAST
Hillsborough Community
College ●●

GEORGIA
Georgia FIRST ●●●●

Georgia Institute of
Technology ●

GUAM
SIFA ●●

HAWAII
Hawaii FIRST Robotics ●●●

IDAHO
Regents of the University
of Idaho ●●●

ILLINOIS
Illinois FIRST Robotics ●●●

INDIANA
Indiana FIRST, Inc. ●●●●
Purdue Fort Wayne (PFW) ●

IOWA
Iowa State University ●●
University of Iowa ●

KANSAS
FIRST in Missouri ●

KANSAS – CENTRAL
Oklahoma Science and
Engineering Foundation
(OKSEF) ●

KANSAS – KANSAS CITY REGION
KC STEM Alliance ●●

KANSAS – SOUTHWEST
Mid-America Air Museum/
City of Liberal ●●

KENTUCKY
Northern Kentucky
University ●●
FTC in Kentucky, Inc. ●

LOUISIANA
FIRST Louisiana-
Mississippi ●●●

MAINE
Robotics Institute of Maine ●
NE FIRST ●

MARYLAND
FIRST Chesapeake ●●
Rockville Robotics, Inc. ●
University of Maryland
Baltimore County ●

MASSACHUSETTS
NE FIRST ●●

WPI Robotics Resource
Center ●
MIT Lincoln Laboratory ●
Boston Tech Initiative, Corp. ●

MICHIGAN
FIRST in Michigan ●●●●

MINNESOTA
High Tech Kids ●●●

MISSISSIPPI
Robotics Alliance of
Mississippi ●●
Center for Mathematics and
Science Education/The
University of Mississippi ●

MISSOURI
FIRST in Missouri ●

MISSOURI – CENTRAL
Camdenton R-III School
District ●●
FIRST in Missouri ●●

MISSOURI – EAST
St. Louis Community College
– Florissant Valley ●●
FIRST in Missouri ●●

MISSOURI – KANSAS CITY
KC STEM Alliance ●●

MONTANA
College of Engineering,
Montana State University ●
Ed Huth ●

NEBRASKA
University of Nebraska
– Lincoln 4-H Youth
Development ●●

NEVADA
FIRST Nevada ●●●

NEW HAMPSHIRE
NE FIRST ●●●●
FIRST New Hampshire
Robotics ●●●

NEW JERSEY
FIRST Tech Challenge
New Jersey ●
FIRST Mid-Atlantic ●

NEW JERSEY – NORTH
MOREA – Mount Olive
 Robotics Education
 Association ●●

FIRST Mid-Atlantic ●●

NEW JERSEY – SOUTH
 Rowan University ●●

NEW MEXICO
 Land of Enchantment
 Robotics ●●●

FIRST in Texas ●

NEW YORK – EXCELSIOR
 Mohawk Valley Community
 College ●

NEW YORK – FINGER LAKES
 University of Rochester ●●

NEW YORK – LONG ISLAND
 School-Business Partnership
 of Long Island, Inc. ●●●

**NEW YORK – MID-HUDSON
 VALLEY**
 Hudson Valley
FIRST LEGO League ●●

NEW YORK – NEW YORK CITY
 NYC *FIRST* ●●●

NEW YORK – POTSDAM
 Clarkson University ●

NORTH CAROLINA
 North Carolina A&T State
 University ●●

FIRST North Carolina ●●

NORTH DAKOTA
 Bismarck Career Academy ●
 University of North Dakota,
 School of Engineering
 & Mines ●●

OHIO
 WPAFB Educational
 Outreach ●●●

OKLAHOMA
 Oklahoma Science and
 Engineering Foundation
 (OKSEF) ●●●

Southwest Oklahoma
 State University ●

OREGON
 Oregon Robotics Tournament
 & Outreach Program ●●●

FIRST Washington ●

PENNSYLVANIA
 Pennsylvania *FIRST* ●

PENNSYLVANIA – CENTRAL
 Appalachia Intermediate
 Unit 8 ●●

PENNSYLVANIA – EAST
FIRST Mid-Atlantic ●●

Capital Intermediate Unit 15 ●

EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA
FIRST Mid-Atlantic ●

PENNSYLVANIA – NORTHWEST
 Penn State Erie, The
 Behrend College ●

PENNSYLVANIA – SOUTHWEST
 BrainSTEM Learning ●●

PUERTO RICO
 Eureka Enrichment
 Services, Inc. ●●

RHODE ISLAND
 NE *FIRST* ●

New England Institute
 of Technology ●

Rhode Island School
 of the Future ●●

SOUTH CAROLINA
 South Carolina *FIRST* LEGO
 League and Robotics
 Education, Inc. ●●

South Carolina Robotics
 Education Foundation ●

SOUTH DAKOTA
 EmBe ●●

TENNESSEE
 Tennessee *FIRST* ●

**TENNESSEE – CHATTANOOGA
 (NORTH GEORGIA)**
 Tennessee Valley Robotics ●●

TENNESSEE – EAST
 Tennessee Tech University ●●

TENNESSEE – WEST
 University of Memphis
 and Herff College
 of Engineering ●

The Children’s Museum
 of Memphis ●

TEXAS
FIRST in Texas ●

TEXAS – CENTRAL
FIRST in Texas ●●●

TEXAS – EAST
FIRST in Texas ●●
 San Jacinto College ●

TEXAS – NORTH
 DFW Technology and
 Education Council ●
FIRST in Texas ●●

TEXAS – PANHANDLE
FIRST in Texas ●●

TEXAS – SOUTH
FIRST in Texas ●●●

TEXAS – WEST
 The University of Texas
 at El Paso – College
 of Engineering ●●

FIRST in Texas ●

UTAH
 Weber State University,
 College of Applied Science
 and Technology ●●●

Southern Utah University ●

VERMONT
 NE *FIRST* ●
 Norwich University ●
 University of Vermont ●

VIRGINIA
FIRST Chesapeake ●●
 James Madison University ●●

WASHINGTON
FIRST Washington ●●●

WEST VIRGINIA
 Fairmont State University ●●●

WISCONSIN
 BadgerBOTS Robotics
 Corporation ●●
 Milwaukee School of
 Engineering ●

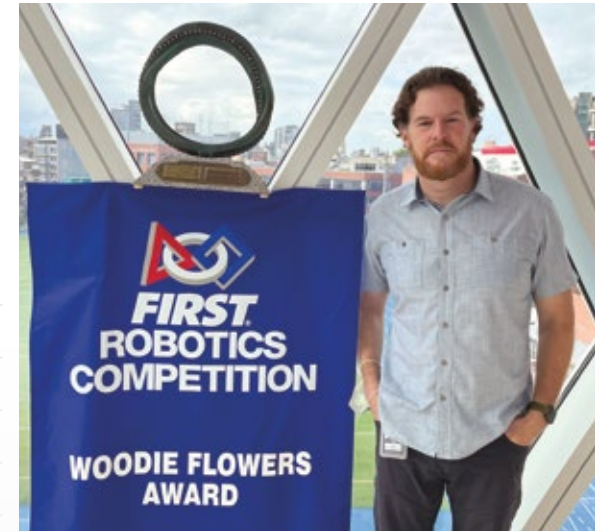
WYOMING
 Natrona County School
 District ●●●

URUGUAY
 Plan Ceibal ●●

VIETNAM
 Viet Tinh Anh JSC ●●

ZIMBABWE
 Tshwane University of
 Technology/*FIRST*
 South Africa ●●

2021 WOODIE FLOWERS AWARD RECIPIENT



Matt Fagen, Mentor, *FIRST* Robotics Competition Team 4253 “Raid Zero,” Taipei

Dr. William Murphy founded The Woodie Flowers Award (WFA) in 1996 to recognize mentors who lead, inspire, and empower using excellent communication skills – starting with Dr. Woodie Flowers, *FIRST* Distinguished Advisor, who defined what it means to be a mentor and an effective communicator in the art and science of engineering and design. Following in Woodie’s footsteps, WFA winners serve as valued advisors to *FIRST*.

The 2021 WFA was awarded to Matt Fagen, director of robotics at Taipei American School and mentor to *FIRST* Robotics Competition Team 4253 “Raid Zero” from Taipei. He has mentored the team to success for a decade, and also established a STEM center there. With a degree in physics and another in music composition, Matt is the consummate communicator with words, music, and actions. The students from Raid Zero describe their mentor as “the conductor that breathes life into our orchestra ... made of innovators, thinkers, designers, programmers, engineers, and dreamers.”

FINANCIALS

Financials

In FY2020, the COVID-19 pandemic caused the suspension of our season and cancellation of *FIRST* Championship, which significantly decreased our revenues, leading to an operating deficit for the first time in over 17 years.

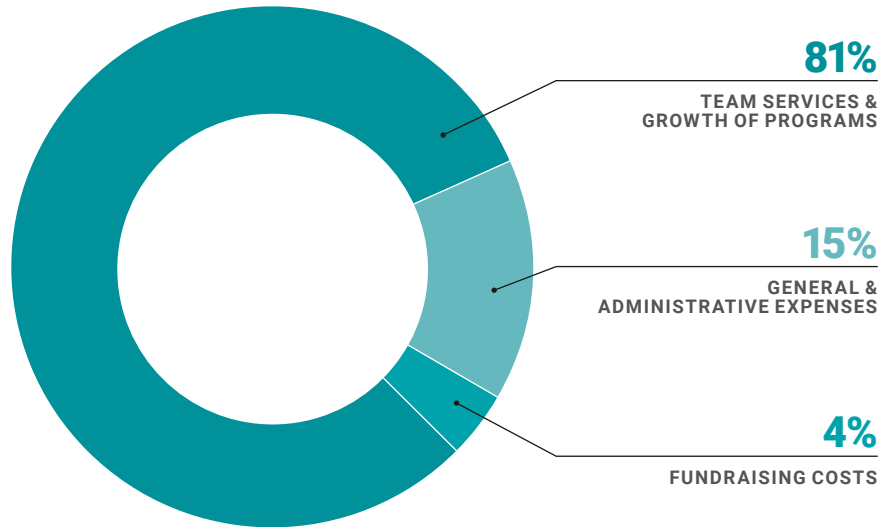
In FY2021, we focused our financial efforts on sustaining our community and participation in our programs through investments in key program modifications, remote activities, hybrid event solutions, and supporting tools and services. Unfortunately, reduced participation resulting from delayed pandemic recovery and lingering impacts did cause us to incur a financial loss for the year. Similar to FY2020, we were able to continue to strategically

manage our expense footprint while simultaneously pivoting and investing in needed program modifications, as well as several key initiatives such as our Youth Protection Program, Information Technology, Program Evaluations, Diversity & Inclusion Program, and Education Initiative.

Support from generous contributors remained strong, as many individuals, small businesses, corporations – including over 200 of the *Fortune* 500 companies – and foundations maintained or increased their support. In addition, many of our contributors also provided significant support in the way of unrestricted donations, providing *FIRST* with important flexibility to manage the pandemic

impacts and address our most important business needs. This contributed support continued to provide meaningful experiences to hundreds of thousands of youth engaged worldwide in the *FIRST* progression of programs.

As noted in the pie chart below, and in keeping with long-time practices, *FIRST* continues to apply the maximum percentage of funds possible to directly benefit *FIRST* participants. Despite disciplined cost controls, we experienced a slight increase in G&A expenses over previous years due to reduced program participation. Included within the modest G&A expenses are several significant investments in infrastructure enhancements, including those noted.



See Financial Statements, page 38.



Charity Navigator Star Rating

This rating certifies our continued commitment to accountability, transparency, and sound fiscal management.

GIVE WITH CONFIDENCE



Exceptional

This Charity Navigator rating represents Form 990 data from 2019, the most recent rating available at www.charitynavigator.org/ein/222990908. More recent filing data is available, but Charity Navigator has not factored it into their score due to COVID's effects.



Statements of Activities

	JUNE 30, 2021	JUNE 30, 2020
Revenues and other support:		
Program registration fees	5,789,688	15,091,513
Contributions and grants	4,343,936	11,896,431
Other income	596,476	1,017,589
Special event income, net of expenses	-	424,659
Net assets released from restrictions	36,703,128	39,856,978
Total revenues (losses) and other support	\$ 47,433,228	\$ 68,287,170
Expenses:		
FIRST Program Expenses	38,807,648	57,950,115
Net cost of building space occupied by unrelated not-for-profit organizations	245,537	320,651
General, administrative, and supporting services	6,926,858	8,330,803
Fundraising and Development	2,090,659	2,400,224
Total expenses	\$ 48,070,702	\$ 69,001,793
Operating surplus (deficit)	(637,474)	(714,623)

Statements of Financial Position

	JUNE 30, 2021	JUNE 30, 2020
Assets:		
Cash and cash equivalents*	35,631,704	42,609,063
Short-term investments*	16,500,000	8,250,000
Pledges, receivables, program supply inventory, and other assets	11,416,654	15,932,819
Net property, plant, and equipment	4,517,153	5,221,972
Total assets, end of year	\$ 68,065,511	\$ 72,013,854
Liabilities and net assets:		
Total liabilities, end of year	\$ 8,544,094	\$ 9,133,145
Net assets:		
Unrestricted	28,040,103	28,677,577
Temporarily restricted	31,481,314	34,203,135
Total net assets, end of year	\$ 59,521,417	\$ 62,880,712
Total liabilities and net assets, end of year	\$ 68,065,511	\$ 72,013,857

For each of the two fiscal years summarized above, FIRST received unmodified (unqualified) opinions from its independent auditor, BerryDunn.

*NOTE: The cash and short-term investments are comprised of both unrestricted funds and donor temporarily restricted funds. The increase in restricted funds includes pre-payments of future restricted sponsorships from certain grantors. The total liquid assets balance available to FIRST, for operating purposes, at June 30, 2021, is equivalent to approximately seven months of FIRST operating expenses.

The financial information presented here is condensed and does not include the value of all donated services and materials. Audited Financial Statements (AFS) are readily available on our website at www.firstinspires.org under "About/Annual Report & Financials."

Leadership

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Robert K. Ortberg CO-CHAIR
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Donald Bossi CO-CHAIR & SECRETARY
Technology Venture Partners, General Partner

Richard L. Clemmer CO-CHAIR
Former Chief Executive Officer & President, NXP Semiconductors

Dr. Laurie Leshin VICE CHAIR
President, Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Dr. Vincent Wilczynski TREASURER
Deputy Dean, Yale School of Engineering & Applied Science & James S. Tyler Director of the Center for Engineering Innovation & Design, Yale University

Dean Kamen FOUNDER
President, DEKA Research & Development Corporation

John E. Abele
Founding Chairman, Retired, Boston Scientific Corporation

Ursula Burns
Senior Advisor, Teneo Ltd.

Leanne G. Caret
President & Chief Executive Officer, Boeing Defense, Space & Security

Dr. Robin N. Coger
Dean, College of Engineering, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (A&T)

Karen Horting
Executive Director & CEO, Society of Women Engineers

Dr. Paul E. Jacobs
Chairman & Chief Executive Officer, XCOM Labs, Inc.

Scott McKay
Former Executive Vice President & Chief Strategy Officer, Genworth Financial

Blake Moret
Chairman & CEO, Rockwell Automation

David Siegel
Co-Chairman, Two Sigma

Dr. Melissa Smith
Staff User Experience Researcher, Google/YouTube

Raj Subramaniam
President, Chief Operating Officer and Director, FedEx Corp.

LEADERSHIP CONTINUED

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Chairman & Chief Executive Officer, Retired, Delphi Corporation

François J. Castaing
Executive Vice President, Retired, Chrysler Corporation

L. John Doerr III
Chairman, Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers

Gary L. Tooker
Chairman of the Board, Retired, Motorola, Inc.

James R. Utaski FIRST CHAIRMAN: 2000-2002
Corporate Mergers & Acquisitions Officer, Retired, Johnson & Johnson

SENIOR ADVISORS

Dr. Shirley Ann Jackson
President, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen
Deputy Chairman of the Board, LEGO Foundation & KIRKBI A/S

Dr. William P. Murphy, Jr.
Founder, Cordis Corporation

Steve Sanghi
Chairman of the Board, President & Chief Executive Officer, Microchip Technology, Inc.

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator, New Hampshire

Josh S. Weston
Honorary Chairman, Automatic Data Processing, Inc.

EXECUTIVE ADVISORY BOARD

Dr. Woodie Flowers (1943-2019)
EAB CHAIR EMERITUS & DISTINGUISHED ADVISOR

Kevin Ross CO-CHAIR
Founder, FIRST Washington

Heidi Sipe CO-CHAIR
Superintendent, Umatilla Public Schools

Charlie Ackerman
Senior Vice President – Human Resources North America, Robert Bosch LLC

Ray Almgren
Chief Operating Officer, Swift Sensors, Inc.

Gail Alpert
President, FIRST in Michigan

Susie Armstrong
Senior Vice President of Engineering, Qualcomm

Mark Breadner
Co-Founder and Former President, FIRST Canada

Cosema (Connie) Crawford, P.E.
Director of P3 Rail, Itinera Infrastructures and Concessions

Greg Hale
Vice President & Chief Safety Officer, Walt Disney Parks & Resorts

Luan Heimlich
Manager, Technology-based Outreach, Department of Engineering, Macquarie University

Jahmy J. Hindman
Chief Technology Officer, Deere & Company

James E. Heppelmann
President & Chief Executive Officer, PTC

Kent H. Hughes
Public Policy Scholar, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

Esben Stærk Jørgensen
President, LEGO® Education

David Lavery
Program Executive for Solar System Exploration, NASA

Ceci Neumann
Independent Law Practice Professional

Cate Prescott
Global Vice President of Human Resources, NI

Nancy Quan
Senior Vice President & Chief Technical Officer, The Coca-Cola Company

FIRST LEADERSHIP TEAM

Chris Moore
Chief Executive Officer, FIRST

Chris Rake
Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer

Mark Giordano
Vice President, Development & Alumni Relations

Erica Newton Fessia
Vice President, Global Field Operations

Danielle Pliska
Vice President, Finance

Ron Falcone
Chief Sourcing Officer

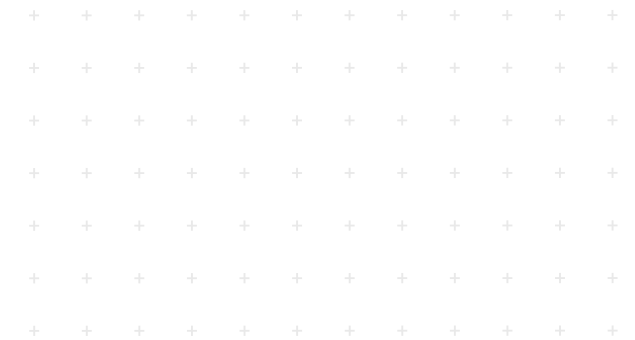
Amy Lynn Hunt
Chief People Officer

Dr. Janell N. Catlin
Senior Director, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Nancy Boyer, Ph.D.
Senior Director, Evaluation and Impact

Brooke Blew
Senior Director, Marketing and Communications

Chuck Harris
Senior Director, IT and Software Development



Learn more about FIRST Leadership at firstinspires.org/about/leadership

FIRST® is a robotics community preparing young people for the future.

VISION

“To transform our culture by creating a world where science and technology are celebrated and where young people dream of becoming science and technology leaders.”

– Dean Kamen, *FIRST* Founder

MISSION

To inspire young people to be science and technology leaders and innovators, by engaging them in exciting mentor-based programs that build science, engineering, and technology skills, that inspire innovation, and that foster well-rounded life capabilities including self-confidence, communication, and leadership.

IMPACT

For three decades, *FIRST* participants have developed self-confidence in STEM, meaningful friendships, and valuable, real-world skills that open pathways and help young people build a better future. *FIRST* programs are proven to encourage students to pursue education and careers in STEM-related fields, but they also inspire kids to become leaders and innovators in any industry.



200 Bedford Street, Manchester, NH 03101
800.871.8326 | www.firstinspires.org

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