

Chairman's Award - Team 2338

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2016 - Team 2338

Team Number

2338

Team Name, Corporate/University Sponsors

Caterpillar Inc. / Navistar International / School District 308 & Oswego High School & Oswego East High School

Briefly describe the impact of the *FIRST* program on team participants with special emphasis on the 2015/2016 year and the preceding two to five years

100% of Gear it Forward students have been driven to go to college, with a majority entering a STEM related field. Over 20% of current team members were not considering STEM related careers, and because of joining 2338, they are now pursuing and researching these types of fields. Several students from our team have also received FIRST scholarships which has allowed FIRST and 2338 to significantly impact their immediate future.

Describe the impact of the *FIRST* program on your community with special emphasis on the 2015/2016 year and the preceding two to five years

We attend year-round events in our community such as freshman nights, football scrimmages, homecoming parades, Montgomery Fest, and science fairs at elementary schools as judges. We give back by visiting Feed My Starving Children many times to pack 53,136 meals. A committee for Lucent Technology's "Take our daughters and sons to work day" invited Gear it Forward to be the keynote presenters. We demonstrated our robots and spoke about how attendees can get involved in FIRST to over 500 people.

Team's innovative or creative method to spread the *FIRST* message

In 2015, we leveraged connections to appear on FOX News Chicago. We demonstrated our robot and explained to 93,750 viewers who we are and what FIRST is. We also host our Annual Kane County Cougars FIRST Robotics nights, where 8169 were in attendance. Our Annual Robotics Extravaganza, a week zero scrimmage has also reached over 1000 people. All local FRC teams are invited to both events where we educate a new audience about FIRST.

Describe examples of how your team members act as role models and inspire other *FIRST* team members to emulate

26% of our team is composed of siblings. Julia said, "I joined because of my sister's journey with 2338. She's had a great learning experience and a fun, enjoyable time". 74% of 2338 are leaders in the school's Project Lead the Way program helping connect more students to our FRC leadership. At competitions, Gear it Forward makes it a mission to help in the spirit of gracious professionalism. In 2013, 2338 helped a team that didn't pass inspection be able to compete; then beating us in a match.

Describe the team's initiatives to help start or form other FRC teams

Although starting a FRC team is a challenge due to funds and space we helped a pre-rookie team named Ironclad from Kankakee, IL get on its feet before registration. They expressed their admiration for our Chairman's win as well as our first seeded robot and our spirited cheer section. We invited them to a safety seminar and hosted a driving session at our facility. They borrowed our practice robot to attend an off-season competition.

Describe the team's initiatives to help start or form other *FIRST* teams (including Jr.FLL, FLL, & FTC)

Gear it Forward started and mentored three FTC teams this past fall. We created these teams from a business plan established in 2014 to fill the gap in our FIRST offerings. This had a dual purpose to involve the increasing number of students interested in participating, while giving our current members the hands on experience we promise. Our goal was to raise funds for two teams; however successful recruiting events proved the need for three.

Describe the team's initiatives on assisting other *FIRST* teams (including Jr.FLL, FLL, FTC, & FRC) with progressing through the *FIRST* program

Gear it Forward assisted team 2704 by meeting to discuss their recruitment challenges. Ideas were shared and soon they had numbers to sustain themselves for another year. To assist teams on a larger scale, 2338 shared published resources in the form of a scouting app with over 100 downloads. Teams at several competitions voiced their admiration for the quality and usefulness the app provided. An app was also created for the Oswego FLL qualifier to ensure clear communication for the event.

Describe how your team works with other *FIRST* teams to serve as mentors to younger or less experienced *FIRST*

teams (includes Jr.FLL, FLL, FTC, & FRC teams)

Currently 35% of 2338 members mentor a Jr. FLL, FLL FTC, or FRC team. 43% of those mentors are females to ensure growth in female membership on 2338. It was important when we selected mentors that they not only were knowledgeable, but approachable, sociable, and friendly to make all students feel part of a cohesive family. The bonds between our student mentors and Jr. FLL, FLL, FTC, and FRC students only adds to the synergy our team creates with teams we mentor and our community.

Describe your Corporate/University Sponsors

All of our team's accomplishments could not have been done without the help of our many sponsors. Sponsors consist of CUSD 308, Caterpillar, Field System Machining, Paramount Fence, Rogers Corporation, Innoquest, Share Machine, and our most recent sponsors Navistar and TE Connectivity. Our sponsors provide us with our facilities, mentors, transportation, materials, and funding. With this we have been able to keep expanding our team over the years and spread the word of FIRST.

Describe the strength of your partnership with your sponsors with special emphasis on the 2015/2016 year and the preceding two to five years

We show our gratitude to our amazing sponsors by offering various levels of recognition; Copper, Bronze, Silver, Gold, and the highest level, Titanium. For Navistar, we held a season wrap-up at their global headquarters to present the Chairman's trophy to the CEO, Troy Clark. Afterwards, Navistar recommended we apply for a grant from one of their suppliers, TE Connectivity. We applied and received the \$5000 grant and created a stronger synergy between 2338 and the fortune 500 company.

Describe how your team would explain what *FIRST* is to someone who has never heard of it

F~riendship and family for a lifetime that you wouldn't have without FIRST. I~nnovation. Learning to put your ideas into real life applications. R~elationships between students and the surrounding community and sponsors. S~ynergy-working together creates a greater impact than the sum of each individual action. T~eachable moments. Side by side learning from mentors in different fields.

Briefly describe other matters of interest to the *FIRST* judges, if any

In the summer of 2014 team 2338 created 2338 University. This is a six week program designed to help aspiring members learn and develop leadership techniques. The five pillars of the program that emphasize these skills are Model the Way, Inspired a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. This season previous graduates taught the various modules. A total of 25 have graduated from the program and are eligible to become part of the leadership team.

Team Captain/Student Representative that has double-checked this submission.

Annie Hubbard

Essay

"Synergy is better than my way or your way. It's our way" ~ Stephen Covey.

This quote defines the overall efforts of 2338 Gear it Forward in conjunction with our community, sponsors, members, and Gears In Training. Many independent efforts create a culture that is much larger than the sum of it's parts. 2338, Gear it Forward has become family to the people, teams and businesses that we get to know.

Team 2338 has 56 student members and 14 mentors that come from many diverse backgrounds. Minorities have climbed to 43%, from 30% in the previous season. Our female numbers have stayed consistent at 26%. A growing 43% of female team members mentor teams from our younger FIRST teams,(Gears in Training) within the school district. This sustained effort will guarantee a progression of females into our FRC program. 28% of our members participate in athletics, while another 67% participate in extracurricular activities such as band, choir, and academic clubs. Our average ACT score is 30 compared to the state's average of 20.6, and our GPA is 3.9 on a 4.0 scale compared to our district's 2.7. Our most celebrated statistic is that 100% of Gear it Forward students have gone to college.

Alumni from past years have come back to mentor during build season. Brandon Kreitzer, a 1st year alumni, says,"FIRST taught me a wide variety of skills that cannot necessarily be shown in a classroom setting. Being able to come back to Gear it Forward to mentor is an amazing feeling where I am able to pass on everything that I learned into future generations so they can get the most from FIRST." Adam Van Boekel, a 3rd year alumni of team 2338, also said, "It's great to come back and mentor to share the importance of STEM education to the next generation of students."

In 2007, two Caterpillar mentors, Community Unit School District 308 (CUSD 308) and 12 students started 2338. The first competition season resulted in a Rookie All Star win, competing at World Championships, and placing 14th in our division. Continuing successes include three Safety Awards, two Spirit Awards, Judges' Award, Gracious Professionalism Award, the FIRST Dean's List Finalist Award, four time Regional Finalists, and a Regional Winning Alliance. At the 2015 Midwest Regional, we finished qualifications in first seed and won our most celebrated achievement, the Regional Chairman's Award. At Championships, we won the Archimedes Division and moved on to

the Einstein field, where we placed fourth in the semi finals.

Although the receiving of our various awards in season is such an honor, some of our greatest accomplishments have come from our ability to create relationships. This past summer we were approached by a pre-rookie FRC team about how 2338 works. They spoke of admiration for our Chairman's win as well as our first seed robot and our spirited cheer section. We jumped at the opportunity to mentor this new team, Ironclad from Kankakee, IL. We invited them to a safety training hosted by one of our sponsors during the summer. We suggested Ironclad also borrow our practice robot to attend R2OC, an off-season competition in Rockford, IL. We hosted them at the Gearbox (our workshop) for a practice session before the big event. Once at R2OC, we coached Ironclad, helping them perform well enough to be selected for an alliance in eliminations. 2338 and Ironclad sat together in the stands, creating a friendship between the two teams. We have weekly emails and skype sessions with them to ensure that they continue on a path to success. 35% of Gear it Forward mentors many FLL and Jr. FLL teams during the year. This past fall we also started and mentored three FTC teams. We created these teams from a business plan established in 2014 to fill the gap in our FIRST offerings. This had a dual purpose to involve the increasing number of students interested in participating, while giving our current members the hands on experience we promise. This was not an easy task. Our goal was to raise funds for two teams, but successful recruiting events proved the need for three. We then presented this need to our community and sponsors which had an overwhelming response of \$6500 raised.

We promote FTC as a way to train and prepare members for the challenge a FRC season will provide. To help these new teams, we provide student and parental mentorship, our meeting facility, and tools. To keep the FTC members inspired, we invite them to various informational meetings about the nitty-gritty of FRC, like explaining the basics of Chairman's, inviting them to come along to the Midwest regional, setting up a space for them to demonstrate their robots at our annual Robotics Extravaganza, and asking them to join Gear it Forward as a full member in the next season. They certainly won't feel out of place when they join 2338; many of the students have fostered friendships with their FRC student mentors. It was important when we selected FTC mentors that they not only were knowledgeable, but approachable, sociable, and friendly to make the FTC students feel part of our cohesive family. The bonds between our mentors and FTC students only adds to the synergy our team creates with our events, teams we cooperate with, and our community.

Gear it Forward makes a large effort to become one with the community and businesses around us. We attend many year-round events within the school district such as Future Wolves and Future Panthers nights, football scrimmages, homecoming parades, Montgomery Fest, packing 53,136 meals at Feed My Starving Children and judging science fairs at multiple elementary schools. The planning committee for Lucent Technology's "Take our Daughters and Sons to Work Day" invited Gear it Forward to be the keynote presenters at their event. Team members demonstrated robots and spoke about how attendees can get involved in FIRST. Over 500 family members were in attendance. We ensure that the community and our team work in perfect harmony to emphasize the importance of STEM to guarantee future generations of FIRST students.

Essay - page 2

Innovation does not just apply to technology for 2338. We do our best to communicate FIRST to the public in many creative ways. After our successful season in 2015, our team leveraged connections to appear on FOX News Chicago. We demonstrated our robot, Phantom, and explained to the approximately 93,750 viewers what our team does and what FIRST is all about. This experience was important to reach an audience that is not usually exposed to robotics and FIRST.

This coming summer will be Gear it Forward's 3rd Annual Kane County Cougars FIRST Robotics night. After only our first year partnering with the minor league team, the audience numbers grew from approximately 2000 to an astonishing 6169 people. All local FRC teams are invited to this event where games are played, robots are driven, a t-shirt cannon made in off season is shot and a robot runs the bases at the end of the game; it is a great time for people of all ages.

Gear it Forward is also hosting our 3rd Annual Robotics Extravaganza on February 20th, which is a week zero scrimmage for all local FRC teams before the robots are bagged and tagged. Representatives from the school district as well as the local and state governments attend this event spreading the impact of Gear it Forward not only to our local community but statewide. We look forward to seeing all of our Gears in Training (the Jr. FLL and FLL teams) yet again for an amazing demonstration. 2338 is also excited to announce a new exhibit at this year's extravaganza; a scrimmage for our three rookie FTC teams. They accomplished many great feats during this season including a friendly match between two of them for the Winning Alliance and Finalist Alliance titles.

On December 13th, 2015, Gear it Forward hosted a FLL qualifier for the second time at Oswego East High school, holding 72% of the positions such as design judges, referees, project judges, and other various volunteer spots. 2338 also sent several volunteers to a neighboring FLL Qualifier to help their event run smoothly.

2338 strives to be leaders within our team and our community. 26% of our team is composed of siblings. This is due to the successful partnership between 2338 and it's families. The younger counterparts of our current members are inspired to join our collaborative family. Julia said, "I joined because of my sister's journey with 2338. She's had a great learning experience and a fun, enjoyable time." Many other siblings share similar experiences and we hope to continue this bond with families for years to come.

All of our accomplishments could not have been done without the help of our sponsors. Sponsors consist of CUSD

308, Caterpillar, Field System Machining, Paramount Fence, Rogers Corporation, Innoquest, Share Machine, and our most recent sponsors Navistar and TE Connectivity. Our sponsors provide us with facilities, mentors, transportation, materials, and funding. With this we have been able to keep expanding our team over the years and spread the word of FIRST.

We show our gratitude to our amazing sponsors by giving different levels; Copper, Bronze, Silver, Gold, and the highest level, Titanium. The different levels provide the sponsors with various opportunities for recognition. For one of our most recent sponsors, Navistar, we held an end of the season wrapup to present them their Chairman's trophy and the CEO, Troy Clark was in attendance. Afterwards, Navistar recommended we apply for a grant from one of their suppliers TE Connectivity. We applied and received the \$5000 grant and created a stronger synergy between 2338 and the fortune 500 company.

2338 is not just an FRC team from the town of Oswego, but a greater impact than the sum of all it's smaller parts. Gear it Forward's mission is to continue to create synergy with the community and within itself. As a team, we strive to empower generations with what we have learned to love and have a passion for; robots.