

Chairman's Award - Team 4707

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2019 - Team 4707

Team Number

4707

Team Name, Corporate/University Sponsors

Banco BHD Leon/The Bold look of Kohler /Asociación La Nacional de Ahorros y Préstamos /Llodrá Industrial/La Casita de Yago/LMC Constructora/Fundación Blandino/Dale Carnegie Dominicana/Seguros Universal/Todo Herrajes/Artexotique/Parque Cibernetico de Santo Domingo/Xerbit&Comunidad Educativa Lux Mundi

Briefly describe the impact of the *FIRST* program on team participants with special emphasis on the 2018/2019 year and the preceding two to five years

The FIRST program has become a crucial part of many team members' lives. The current season has emphasized the passion not only for robotics but marketing and business too. We are taught various skills that help us grow as human beings and professionals. The FORCE stays with each and every one of us. Having our own workshop has made the sense of responsibility stronger and the team has become more driven and hardworking.

Describe the impact of the *FIRST* program on your community with special emphasis on the 2018/2019 year and the preceding two to five years

The FIRST program has resulted in a significant amount of awareness in our community regarding STEM related careers and robotics. Our team saw an influx of new members this season as a result of this growth. Our community considers the FIRST program to be of great priority, breeding students to have an interest in robotics and core values starting even at the elementary level. This year we brought FLL Jr. to the country; even our youngest members are developing a passion for the area.

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

Team FORCE specifically directs its efforts to reach out to marginal communities to give them opportunities they wouldn't be able to enjoy. This includes visiting public schools and giving presentations about FIRST; with classes full of interactive STEM activities. Explanations are given dynamically and comprehensively, and we always try encouraging listeners to actively participate. We also wrote and illustrated a kids book and started a YouTube series about tips for FRC and FLL teams.

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

Most of TeamFORCE members are FLL mentors and volunteer for the International Championship. Inspiring team newcomers to also seek this level of outreach. The team's work ethic and positive attitude is also contagious. Reaching new members of FIRST and familiarizing them with the program. Alumni are always kind, they keep in touch and offer their help when needed. Furthermore, all team members are motivated to serve our community. For example, volunteering at foundations and fundraisers

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

Our team has developed a prominent role in social media, which has had a direct impact on spreading FIRST. In 2018 we helped team Freedom 7231 to start its journey. This year team 7717, Steam Punks was formed, and from the start we have been alongside them from marketing meetings to building. Also, our team captain had the opportunity to meet with a STEM center in Jordan and its working with them towards forming the first FRC team in that country.

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

Our team is actively involved in the process of creating new FLL teams for the community. We start by reaching out to our school and speaking with teachers who can help make new teams a reality. Once we ensure that there's enough interest, a new team can be readily formed. This process has led to the creation of over a dozen FLL teams for the country, with more on the way. Furthermore, this year we also formed a FLL Jr. team.

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

Team FORCE makes sure to provide continued assistance for other teams within the community by providing classes for the students of FLL and organizing meetings with the purpose of staying up to date with these teams' progress. We ensure that the foundation and core values of FIRST's programs are established for these newer teams, while we also make sure they are provided with adequate materials and resources.

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)

Team FORCE members play an active role in the development of our community's FLL teams. Our mentoring strategy focuses on teaching rookie teams about core values and the importance of healthy competition and cooperation. We ensure that members of FLL acquire skills that will help them be better problem solvers in the future, capable of planning ahead and strategizing.

Describe your Corporate/University Sponsors

Most of our mentors are professors at STEM universities and work on the field. They are so committed that no matter how late or how early, they are always willing to volunteer their time to our team. Our sponsors include banks such as BHD, who has been contributing for over 4 years. Additionally, we have KOHLER, XERBIT, and local insurance companies, including ARS Humano. Our mentors and sponsors understand FIRST ideals and are committed to support our efforts.

Describe the strength of your partnership with your sponsors with special emphasis on the 2018/2019 year and the preceding two to five years

All of our funding comes from our sponsors. Our sponsorship program is divided on levels depending on the amount of financial support they give us. They provide significant monetary support, alongside assorted merchandise, food, materials and tools to work. Our sponsor Fix Cargo assisted us in shipping our robot in and out of the country for last year's regional competition. KOHLER and CCN helped us build our workshop; they not provided most of the tools but supported us throughout the season.

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

FIRST is a community that works together for the same purpose. Inspire the youth to view STEM through a more interactive lens; by organizing educational competitions. Its objective is to ensure that the new generation is capable of creating, manipulating and controlling the new technologies. Members are always eager to share new ideas and expand the reach of the program's ideals. FIRST competitions motivate students to think creatively, finding new ways to tackle established problems.

Briefly describe other matters of interest to the *FIRST* judges, if any**Team Captain/Student Representative that has double-checked this submission.**

Ana Rodríguez

Essay

We say "we got the FORCE", but as our team creators once said: "What use is a FORCE, if it's not passed on?" If it's not shared with our country, shared with the next generations, shared with world!

Our story starts six years ago, when a group of twenty students and amazing mentors took a leap of faith. We wanted to create a robotics club in a school that was focused on sports and art, in a country where STEM is not popular. One year later, our club grew to forty members. That year, we attended our first regionals, participated on several fairs, conducted many interviews, and gained the support and love of the community. Today Team FORCE is managed by us, the new generation. The founders of the team successfully passed the Force on to us, and left us only one thing to do; make it stronger.

Since our beginning, we've granted scholarships to five outstanding students from The Politécnico San Jose Fe y Alegria, a low income public school which we support through an outreach program. We continue to create strong friendships through this partnership, while learning and growing together. Pedro and Julian, who were seniors of the Politecnico, are a great example. They joined this family two years ago, and are now studying in the most prestigious STEM university in the Dominican Republic. Our relationship is not only still intact, but better than ever. Most of our alumni are still part of the team as mentors and strong supporters.

This year our team experienced full growth. After seven years we finally have our own classroom and workshop, which we personally assembled at our school. We have new accomplished mentors and enjoy lectures from programming to project managing. We also completed a total of 90 hours of practice and training on multiple STEM areas, such as Java programming, hardware, transmissions, computer assisted design, project management, electrical engineering, and safety. After receiving so much support, we wanted to give back. This is why we decided to help our community in every way possible.

Our main focus is STEM, but this season we also volunteered at multiple NGOs for children in need. We worked with Fundación Pediátrica, a day-care for working and student moms, and FACCI, an organization battling children's cancer. We worked with FACCI for 40 hours and not only gave 35 kids a glimpse into the robotics world, but also helped the staff with everything we could, from cleaning to teaching. We also brought FLL equipment to create STEM classes for 12 kids at Casa de la Providencia, a public school. Passionate members volunteered for a fundraiser that was broadcasted nationwide and collected 1.8 million Dominican pesos to build homes for the underprivileged. Christmas is all about giving. We visited a retirement home where we danced, shared a meal, and celebrated the most wonderful time of the year. We also decided to share this joy with kids from a marginalized neighborhood. Because these students do not receive gifts, Team 4707 played Santa and brought them presents.

Our software captain, Alexandra, started a foundation called STEM Para Nosotras. This female led group aims to teach girls about the world of STEM. We took a trip Jarabacoa, a beautiful mountain town to visit a residence for girls with at risk of difficult home situation. By teaching these 92 children about circuits and electrical engineering using interactive activities, we helped them understand that they too can have careers related to this field.

Team FORCE also collaborated with Ecoequipo, an extracurricular club started by one of our members that focuses on helping the environment by adapting and educating its community about being eco-friendly. With Ecoequipo, we volunteered by releasing turtles, building trash cans out of recycled bottles, and creating a recycling program at our school. This experience was awesome, because it gave us the opportunity to make a change by putting our mechanical knowledge to the test.

We take a lot of pride in our FLL programs. The majority of our current members have started and mentored six teams with 60 students, helped with past FLL Caribbean Tournaments and are active FLL volunteers. We continue to show dedication to the program. This year we helped create one FLL Jr. team in our school. It has been a challenge, but the joy and interest that it has sparked for the children makes it all worth it. As a team, our main goal is to expand the FIRST community as much as we can and show others how amazing STEM truly is.

This year we also formed and guided our friends from the rookie team 7717, Steam Punks. This is the fourth FRC team in the Dominican Republic and we worked together before and during the building season. We hosted brainstorming sessions, planned strategies, tutored them in programming, and organized marketing.

The team has had a lot of new projects during the past months that the public has been able to use. Examples of the Spanish resources we created are our step by step programming guide, our Robotics for kids' book, and our YouTube series. There are also many projects we are still working on, like a STEM Summer camp for the children's of our school's maintenance staff.

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Our participation on the National Book Fair, Vice-Presidency Girls in ICT, and The Entrepreneurs Fair, have become a tradition for us. These events allow the team to reach approximately two thousand Dominicans. We also appear on national TV programs and in interviews by local newspapers and magazines. With the help of media, we have spread our message and the FIRST ideals to about ten thousand people who now recognize the importance of STEM in the progress of our nation. Since we have been doing this for the past few years, we decided that it was time for an upgrade.

The FORCE is expanding to the whole world. We partnered with team 6429, 4thdimension from Turkey. The project was to translate STEM booklets to Spanish, so students from all Hispanic countries could incorporate them into their teams and schools. During the Summer, our captain, Ana Patricia, had the opportunity to visit Amman, Jordan. There, she conducted research about the STEM knowledge in that part of the world. She learned that there were FLL teams but no FRC, so she contacted STEAM Center (is this a name of a school????). Here, she met Miss Farah Hourani and the Steamers, a recognized FLL team. Ana spoke to them about FRC and her experience; the kids were amazed by it. Next summer our captain is going back to help them form the first FRC team in Jordan. She also had a meeting with members of UNICEF Jordan. Where she presented the mission and benefits of FIRST. We hope that they can support the blooming teams, and also promote STEM to their community and refugee camps.

FIRST has been more than just a project. It has been a place to grow and learn, a way to have fun, to find our passion and meet people that share it with us, to overcome fears and obstacles. It gave us the opportunity to prove that we are able to do anything we set our mind to and to represent our country internationally with pride and joy. Team FORCE has been a spark for a technological revolution and has changed lives in the the Dominican people. Our alumni are living proof of this. Ten years ago, studying abroad was almost impossible and no locals showed interest in STEM majors. Currently, most of our graduates are majoring in STEM not only in the Dominican Republic but around the globe.