

Chairman's Award - Team 4125

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2019 - Team 4125

Team Number

4125

Team Name, Corporate/University Sponsors

Umatilla School District/21st Century Community Learning Center/State of Oregon/Umatilla Lion's Club/Chuckwagon Cafe/Carlson's Umatilla Drug/Umatilla Police Department/Umatilla Fire Department/Autodesk&Umatilla High School

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

Eight years ago Umatilla was not the City it is today. Confidential has improved and empowered our students with the help of STEAM. Our alumni have influenced our community by attending top universities around the country and working in STEAM related fields. We are honored that 4125 has been able to play a key role in creating a pathway for students to find and gain interest in STEAM. Thanks to FIRST we have been able to inspire and change the culture, community, and the future of our students.

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

Team Confidential started out small, and over time has become a foundation in our community and region. Over the years, we have helped local businesses with website production, social media consultation, and advertising. We began a project called Service Saturdays, which allows any student in our school to volunteer and help the community. Our team members work at our after school program teaching younger students STEAM related skills that show the students that the possibilities are endless.

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

Team Confidential works year round to expand the knowledge of STEAM at presentations, conferences, curriculum planning expos, and even in our local radio station. We have spread the word of FIRST to local businesses, and have had members intern with industry experts, introducing them to the world of FIRST. Our shared campaign, "Faces of Engineering" is devoted to encouraging girls to pursue careers in STEAM fields. Throughout all that we do, we are proud to represent the message of FIRST.

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

Because of our love of STEAM, we are dedicated to sharing the knowledge and skills we have gained from FIRST. We know that standing behind every member is an entire town supporting our FIRST teams. To honor our town's dedication we abide by a strict Code of Conduct, which requires students to volunteer, act with honor, and show others the importance of FIRST. We mentor numerous FIRST teams and work diligently to model the behavior that represents FIRST.

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

Throughout the years we've hosted conferences and given presentations, encouraging other schools to start FRC teams of their own. In 2017 we helped start Pendleton's team: 6442. They originally gained interest when we invited one of their FTC members to join us at a competition. We have enjoyed seeing teams we influenced succeeding and raising the bar higher for other teams. We continue to support them and hope that they will go on to help other schools start FIRST teams.

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

When we started out, eight years ago, FIRST was unknown throughout our region. Over time we have started FIRST programs K-12 with a large number of students participating each year in our district. In addition to the teams we have started in our town, we also helped start FLL, FTC, and an FRC team in nearby towns. As a result of our efforts, there are now several FIRST teams within our region.

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

Within our district we have students mentoring and running FLL Jr., FLL, and FTC teams. We have thirteen members teaching at the STEAM Academy of Umatilla. In addition to mentoring, we have also volunteered at FLL, FTC, and FRC competitions as well as host the Yakima SunDome event. We invite younger students from our school and other nearby schools to join us at competitions. We also have FTC members intern with our team. These interns can come to meetings and competitions to see how FRC works.

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)

We mentor many FLL Jr., FLL, and FTC teams in our district and FRC teams in our region. In 2018 we partnered with team 4980 to help them improve their Chairman's presentation. This year, we are proud of their success and see them as our top competition. Since their rookie year in 2017 we have mentored team 6442, and are happy to help them anytime. Each year we invite nearby teams to join us for kickoff. We watch the livestream and host workshops, before getting to work and launching the season.

Describe your Corporate/University Sponsors

Living in such a small town, we lack the opportunity to obtain corporate and industry donors. However, our community is very generous and recognizes our needs. They step up to support our team in any way they can. Over the past five years, we've participated in a pathway program with WSU Tri Cities. This program allows FIRST students from Umatilla, graduating with their AAOT to be automatically admitted to WSU. We are currently working on a similar pathway with EOU for computer science.

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

Our community is an important part of what our team stands for. We have received so much support from our community, in return we work hard to show our appreciation through volunteer work and community outreach. Each year, we recognize them at kick-off and robo-reveal. In addition to this, we name our robot after a different sponsor every season. This year we named our robot Harvey, after the local grocery store, Harvest Foods.

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

FIRST is a program for students who want to be a part of something great. It inspires dreamers to work within a community. As a FIRST member, you learn what it means to be involved in something greater than yourself. Your eyes are opened to an array of opportunities you never thought were imaginable. Students are given the opportunity to earn scholarships, gain new life skills, and explore jobs within STEAM fields.

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

What makes us unique is that our team has been student ran from the beginning. Our coaches understand that this program is an opportunity for us to learn and grow. Members work diligently each year to improve the team and community. We learn real life skills while making lifelong connections through our involvement in FIRST. As members gain confidence they move up the ladder towards brighter futures. Thanks to FIRST we have gained opportunities never before seen in our community.

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

Alexander Rafael Gutierrez

Essay

Deep Space is a perfect name for the 2019 mission. FIRST helps all students blast off to brighter futures. Team Confidential is proud to see students launch their lives from the foundation of FIRST. In our eighth mission we realize that taking off is the easy part. A new team is exciting and fun. Maintaining dedication, support and enthusiasm for eight years is difficult but Team Confidential is proof that no challenge is too strenuous.

The founding members of 4125 were exploring unknown territories. Now team members grow up in the Confidential family with STEAM. Team members build skills as they advance from one FIRST program to the next. Freshman Film Division member Alejandro was taught by original FRC students while in FLL at Elementary School. In middle school Confidential members were coaching his FTC teams.

Team Confidential started off as a novelty, now it's a core part of our community. Our first years were a meteor shower of fundraising. From yard sales to can drives, our community rose to the occasion so they could help our team make it to the next phase of competition. Those events are now staple events. Friends collect cans and save items for our annual yard sale, fabulous crafters in town crochet blankets and create quilts for us to raffle at our potato bar. It's now common for donors to call us to ask what they can do to help.

To thank the community we volunteer. From 2015 to 2018, Confidential contributed over 13,000 hours of service. This year we began Service Saturdays. Community members request our help through Facebook messenger, our email, or stopping by the shop. At least one Saturday per month we prioritize requests, divide our team as needed, recruit other volunteers, and get to work. From assisting a breast cancer survivor with yard work to helping sort food for holiday baskets to families in need, we've been called upon to serve. In addition to our work in Umatilla, we serve the broader FIRST community by helping run the Tri-Cities FLL tournament and the Pendleton FTC tournaments. We love giving back to others and showing them the values of FIRST in action.

A key to cultural transformation is a shared understanding of values. Our Alumni frequently share with us how their professional experiences have been enhanced by the communication and conduct expectations they learned on Team 4125. We have a Code of Conduct based on the principles of gracious professionalism that we follow and monitor through self-evaluation and team-lead feedback. The Code defines how members of Confidential represent themselves and the team. We know that changing culture means starting with ourselves and working our way out. We focus on improving each other during team activities, and encourage our members to be involved in many clubs and sports to share the ideals of our code. Team Confidential members infiltrate clubs and can be found in cheerleading, Key Club, football, and so much more. Team 4125 members have an average weighted GPA of 3.61 and have earned over 725 college credits.

In 2012, too few students from Umatilla went on to college. Team 4125's members push themselves to succeed and spread success. Our high school's earliest students to graduate with their Associate's Degrees were FRC students. Their successes inspired others to look at broader college options and at the UHS "Signing Day" ceremony last spring, 82.7% of seniors had been accepted into a college, trade school, or enlisted in the military. Our team's alumni are currently studying at top universities and many have gone on to pursue STEAM fields.

In Oregon, Umatilla schools serve one of the poorest student populations and has the second highest percentage of English Language Learners. Business development continues to be a challenge in our region; however, Amazon has added data centers and we are hoping to forge partnerships with them. They are coming to visit us at the end of February to talk about potential opportunities and we cannot wait to bring them into the Confidential family. Team 4125 remains committed to the STEAM Academy of Umatilla (SAU) after-school program. We were thrilled to receive a continuation grant this past summer, guaranteeing programming for another 5 years. Thirteen of our members currently teach at the SAU. We coach FLL Jr, FLL, FTC, and also teach a variety of STEAM classes. Once, this program was unique and new. Now, after-school programming is considered an essential part of our educational system. Over 700 students attend the SAU each year, and the ripple effect of their involvement will continue for years to come. We are proud to know we played a part in the origination of this program and celebrate our team's commitment is key to its current and future success.

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Our team's lift off began due to our superintendent's testimony at a Senate hearing. After, U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley played a role in helping us begin. We have worked to maintain positive relationships with local, state and national leadership. We have met with Senator Merkley annually since 2012, in Umatilla and have had team members travel to Washington DC. This past year, we hosted U.S. Senator Ron Wyden in Umatilla and he recognized Team Confidential for our influence on STEAM in the region. While he was here, we set up presentations from our various FIRST programs so he could see the progression of FLL Jr, FLL, FTC and FRC. In 2018, we took a bus full of SAU students to advocate for after-school funding in Salem. It was fun to see our FLL students proudly discussing FIRST and driving their robots around the State Capitol with legislators. Locally, our team members worked with our city council to form the Youth Advisory Council. We attend city council meetings and work to bring youth voice to decisions that impact our city. We understand and appreciate the impact FIRST has had on our lives. We know that advocacy is the best way to ensure that others can experience FIRST and we are proud to share our voices with legislators across the nation.

Just as legislative advocacy is crucial, so too is making sure the general public knows of FIRST. We have found that gracious professionalism is a great way to connect with others and offering our help is a natural way to show this trait. We help businesses with their websites, social media accounts, and video creation. In 2018, the Oregon School Boards Association asked us to create a video detailing how to make GRADitude videos to help graduating seniors show their appreciation for people who've impacted their lives. GRADitude is an important part of gracious professionalism, and the team was happy to help them. This year, the association has asked us to create videos encouraging students to speak out about boundary invasion. We're honored to help once again and hope our efforts will keep students safe.

When we first began, the Metal Beavers reached out to us and lent a hand. We appreciated that assistance and strive to help others. When Team 4980 began, we developed a relationship with them. They initiated a great campaign showing photos of girls in STEAM and we reached out to help them expand the idea through our partnership, "Faces of Engineering" to help support inclusivity in engineering. Last year, we helped them practice for Chairman's and worked on their script with them so they could better communicate the amazing progress they've made. We look forward to the day we can celebrate with them as they are announced as a winning Chairman's team. Locally, we helped start Pendleton's team, "The Modern Americans." We invited one of their FTC students to travel with us, and helped his team write grants so they could secure funding to start their team. We continue to help them as needed and enjoy cheering for their success. We invite the Union Wildcats and the Modern Americans to our shop for a breakfast kick-off party each year. We strategize and create basic starting designs for all our robots. Starting each season with other teams reminds us of the importance of being a resource for each other.

When Team 4125 began, there were only a handful of FLL teams in Eastern Oregon, and only one other FRC team. FTC and FLL Jr were essentially unknown. After seeing the positive changes access to FIRST had on our community, we worked to share the opportunity so new teams could form. We teamed up with our local Educational Service District and STEM Hub to offer training, led by students, to teachers throughout the region so they could start teams. We volunteer at all the FTC events in Pendleton so they have the manpower needed to host events in a central area for our region. Now, there are FLL and/or FTC teams in the majority of Umatilla County schools and we love seeing FIRST growth. Locally, we directly support four FLL Jr, 14 FLL, and 11 FTC teams. Student leadership is an essential part of our team. It is our responsibility to plan ahead to ensure continued prosperity so we have a succession plan that will continue to honor the community, and the founding team members, long into the future. It is amazing to think of how much our community has changed due to FIRST. We are thankful for those who came before us to help influence our town's culture.

As the memories of the past five years fly by like comets, we realize that making culture change is not just a single action, it is a mix of actions large and small. It has taken hundreds of interactions including robotics camps at the county fair, helping with the annual Landing Days and Harvest Festivals, serving as STEM Ambassadors for the GoSTEM Hub, working with the ESD to create the Tech-Intern program, and infiltrating clubs and sports. It has also taken regular commitment to our major responsibilities- teaching younger students, helping at FIRST events and giving back to our community. Robotics is the center of our universe. We are grateful for every opportunity we've been given thanks to FIRST and we are proud that we are Confidential.