

FIRST Impact Award - Team 3284

2024 - Team 3284
Team Number
3284
Team Nickname
Camdenton LASER 3284
Team Location
Camdenton, MO - USA
Describe the impact of the <i>FIRST</i> program on team participants within the last 3 years. This can include but is not limited to percentages of those graduating high school, attending college, in STEM careers, and in <i>FIRST</i> programs as mentors/sponsors.
LASER is proud of the outcome of those who have been involved in the program. Over the past 3 years, while also having a 100% graduation rate, all graduates are pursuing STEM fields. 3284 also works to provide a safe and welcoming environment to those we meet. 3284 has certifications in CPR, AED, OSHA-10, and FIRST Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. LASER provides students with marketable skills to be successful in the STEM workforce.
Describe your community along with how your team addresses its unique opportunities and circumstances.
LASER's hometown of rural Camdenton MO presents unique opportunities and adversities such as a lack of industry. 3284 has recognized these circumstances and the absence of FIRST in our community. By opening up our team to include lake-area students instead of only Camdenton High School students, we have provided STEAM opportunities for those around us. LASER also hosts 4 annual summer camps, increasing STEAM engagement and excitement for our local youth.
Describe the team's methods, with emphasis on the past 3 years, for spreading the <i>FIRST</i> message in ways that are effective, scalable, sustainable, and creative. How does your team measure results?
Within our outreach and community initiatives, our results are measured by the lives we touch. FIRST Flowers, an initiative inspired by Dr. Woodie Flowers, aligns with our Sunshine for Seniors movement. At such events, 3284 delivers flowers and hand-made cards to brighten the days of cancer patients and senior citizens. LASER also partners with a foster care organization and the children's cancer ward for #BuildItFIRST where 3284 creates Lego kits with challenge cards to spark STEAM interest.
Please provide specific examples of how your team members act as role models within the <i>FIRST</i> community with emphasis on the past 3 years.
From publishing resources to starting the #WalkLikeWoodie movement, 3284 works to foster opportunities and share FIRST throughout the world. 3284 updates our own Code of Ethics each year and shares it with the FIRST community. LASER also mentors 40 teams ranging from FLL Discover to

Challenge and 3 FTC teams. Working within this FIRST district pipeline, 3284 runs STEAM summer camps, the Mother-Daughter STEM camp, and provides STEAM lessons for elementary students.

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

LASER has been at continuous full volume in the past 3 years, starting 55 teams, assisting 102, and mentoring 49. This includes an FLL Challenge team on the Ute Mountain Ute reservation and an FRC rookie team #9428 Springfield Robotics. We invited #9428 to our kickoff and will continue to mentor them throughout their rookie season. At every competition LASER attends, 3284 invites all teams to join our initiative Operation Clean Sweep for any parts, tools, or hygiene supplies they need.

Beyond starting teams, what initiatives have you done to help inspire young people to be science and technology leaders and innovators? What results have you seen from your efforts in the past 3 years?

LASER inspires young people to be leaders in the STEAM community. To encourage younger generations to pursue STEAM in their futures, 3284 runs two five-day-long STEAM camps and teaches STEAM stations at Dogwood Elementary. Camdenton teachers state that students show interest in what they learn during these camps and ask to do similar activities in class. These events and mentoring nurture our K-12 FIRST Pipeline, their problem-solving skills, their soft skills & their interest in STEAM careers.

Describe the partnerships you've created with other organizations (teams, sponsors, educational institutions, philanthropic entities, etc.) and what you have accomplished together with emphasis on the past 3 years

LASER has collaborated with organizations such as HOSA, AG, sports teams, and our school board to support our community. Through these connections, we have established regular plant donations and fundraisers with community members such as our Trivia Night where we hold a silent auction provided for by pro-sports teams and catered for by a local restaurant. We have also collaborated with team 1939 to participate in Go Baby Go! to help children with impaired mobility.

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

To encourage girls to participate in STEM, LASER is involved with programs like FIRST Ladies and hosts an annual Mother-Daughter STEM camp. All of 3284 also takes the FIRST Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Training every year to ensure all team members feel welcome and supported. Additionally, we guide students in our Special Education Life Skills program through an FLL experience to guarantee that they feel included in LASER and FIRST.

Explain how you ensure your team and the initiatives you have created will continue to run effectively for the foreseeable future

LASER has ensured its initiatives will continue to run effectively into the future and takes steps to mentor new members. 3284 uses a "Mini-Me" program where experienced members of LASER mentor people new to our team. This provides an opportunity for our younger members to become our future mentors who will also participate in this program. LASER has created our own FIRST Pipeline, including 44 teams, starting at Pre-K, who are nurtured through all FIRST progressions up to FRC.

Describe your team's innovative strategies to recruit, retain, and engage your sponsors within the past 3 years

LASER hosts a sponsor dinner which invites sponsors to a provided meal and establishes relationships with community members. Here, we showcase all K-12 progressions of LASER so sponsors see the impact of their support. 3284 goes into our community to speak with potential sponsors in person and to collaborate with them on specific events. For example, our Mother Daughter STEAM camp is themed differently every summer and we seek sponsors to support this event whose careers align with the themes.

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

One area that LASER strives to improve in is more active connections with other FRC teams across the globe. In order to address this, we reach out to local teams to participate in MOAC during MO STEM Day at the Capitol. We also participate in Zoom meetings with both US and international teams. Additionally, 3284 created a shop video for a PrepaTec team highlighting our machinery. LASER has been invited to participate in the STEM Global Exchange, allowing us to share our experiences with others.

Describe your team's goals to fulfill the mission of *FIRST* and the progress you have made towards those goals.

LASER creates numerous opportunities for young generations to interact with STEAM. Over the summer, we host camps for elementary students as well as a Mother-Daughter camp that teaches STEAM principles to young people. When LASER travels to the MO Capitol, we also host multiple younger FIRST teams and advocate for the benefits of STEAM for these kids at MOAC. Our team also has had 100% of our alumni pursue STEAM careers after graduation.

Briefly describe other matters of interest to the *FIRST* Judges, including items that may not fit into the above topics. The judges are interested in learning about aspects of your team that may be unique or particularly noteworthy.

LASER has started initiatives which we use to spread positivity throughout FIRST. This year, 3284 created Caring for Our Community, an initiative in which we support a different organization each year. We are sending care packages to our local domestic violence shelter for the 2024 season. LASER also created Operation Clean Sweep to promote Coopertition and between teams. #WalkLikeWoodie was also created by 3284 and adopted by FIRST due to its virality and impact on the FIRST community.

Judge Feedback

Who/When	Feedback
<p>Mar 22, 2024 09:55:25 PM EST</p> <p>Essay</p>	<p>What suggestions do you have for how we can improve as a team?</p> <p>An area the team has an opportunity to improve.</p> <p>Something that really impressed the judges.</p>

The impact that a team makes is not measured by numbers, but by what we can build with others. LASER started with humble footprints, & constructs roads through our state & forges a highway around our nation & the world. We work towards embodying the FIRST Core Values to create environments of growth, acceptance, & trailblazing. LASER drives change in the world because our road to success is always under construction.

Our Footprints The footprints we create at Camden High School (CHS) allow us to reach beyond our team to provide STEAM opportunities & community aid in a rural area with limited industry. Camden has a population of slightly over 4k, less than a quarter of whom have pursued college degrees. To support students' educational goals, LASER emphasizes continuing education & 100% of our alumni have pursued STEAM at an advanced level. LASER strives to ensure a safe & positive environment. As safety is critical to 3284, our team mandates certifications in CPR, AED & OSHA-10 general industry training. We also require team members to be FIRST, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion trained to emphasize these values. Encouraging all students in our district to be involved with FIRST, LASER has created FIRST-approved FLL experiences for students in the CHS special education program. Our footsteps with organizations in & beyond our school combine to create success for our district. LASER increases awareness of FIRST in lake-area schools. We participate in the CHS homecoming parade, demonstrate at Meet The Teacher night, invite NHS members to assist with our events & are featured in the district newsletter. To uplift others, we partner annually with CHS's AG department by gifting their homegrown poinsettias to our cancer center. Branching out into new fundraising opportunities, LASER hosts food trucks on campus during sports tournaments to collaborate with teams & raise funds for all. Our school's broadcasting program highlights LASER's monthly lemonade stand, a small business that partners with us to fundraise. LASER realizes the importance of building excitement for STEAM in students & has been honored as a FIRST Class School, recognizing LASER for having all FIRST progressions preK-12. By serving as mentors for our 43 younger teams & hosting 10 summer camps, 3284 sustains this FIRST pipeline. Furthering the mission to increase excitement, 3284 crafted & taught stations implementing real-life applications of STEAM into a 2nd-grade curriculum.

The Paths As footprints evolve into paths, we increase access to FIRST & STEAM in our community. Schools near us lack FIRST opportunities. To share our FIRST path with these districts, we demonstrate our robot & outreach to students at Meet the Teacher nights & during school hours to include their students in our team. Encouraging young girls to create their own path in STEAM fields, 3284 hosts an annual themed Mother-Daughter event in tandem with relevant sponsors. Here, participants engage in a LASER-created lesson & apply STEAM principles to build a related mechanism & compete in a tournament. Though we lack industry, we have established a mutually beneficial relationship with our economy through fundraising. We support events & our program by aiding different organizations that host fundraisers such as a haunted house and buoy painting for a boating event. Annually running our Christmas tree lot, LASER has created a sustainable fundraiser that supports lake businesses, shows FIRST to 500k people & supports our program. Trivia Night is another major fundraiser for LASER. Our local businesses support this event through their generous donations of dinner, raffle & silent auction items. Involving ourselves in our community, LASER establishes personal connections by going to local businesses. We celebrate & engage with these sponsors at an annual dinner. Here, we invite them to speak with students of all ages to understand our program. They are treated to a meal where we highlight LASER & show them how integral they are to our team. After this event, we host a meeting with key sponsors to see how to make adjustments to improve the next year's event. The path in our community is highlighted by local media to raise awareness of FIRST & LASER. 3284 has been featured in lake-area newspapers which highlight all aspects & levels of our program. Team members have also

been featured frequently at a local radio station, KRMS, to talk about outreach projects & our team's robot to 24k listeners. 3284's outreach has also been featured on the television station KY3, reaching 540k viewers. LASER constructs paths for people in our community to walk alongside us. Team members partner with the community in many ways such as caroling at nursing homes & participating in Shop with a Cop. Our #BuildItFIRST initiative repurposes & donates LEGO™ kits to local groups such as domestic violence shelters & hospitals. Challenge cards are included in these kits to create STEAM problems for students to address through building creative solutions. In 2020, LASER launched our FIRST Flowers initiative. We have donated 1k handmade bouquets & cards to nursing homes & our cancer center. Due to FIRST Flowers' impact, we started the initiative Sunshine for Seniors to further address the needs of nursing homes in our area. 3284 celebrates holidays by creating gift bags to brighten days. LASER looks for new ways to meet the needs of our area. Caring for Our Community was launched to highlight different local needs each year & aid them as needed; this year focusing on our community's domestic violence shelter.

The Roads The paths to success that we create foster growth within communities beyond our own. As roads develop from these paths, we promote FIRST's message by collaborating with teams across MO. To offer children with impaired mobility opportunities to become independent, 3284 partners with 1939 through Go Baby Go! to build modified ride-on cars. Over the summer, ladies of LASER went to a Boeing event in St. Louis to form connections with other women in STEAM fields. This day held stations including building aerodynamic planes to implement STEAM principles. Additionally, 3284 showcases FIRST to over 24k people through demonstrations of our progressions at the State Fair & Ozark Maker Faire. 3284 assists others in building their own roads to success. We meet with other teams to encourage their participation in FIRST & share our knowledge. Coming from new coaching staff in 2020, LASER uses our experience to assist 1763, who is now in a similar position. 3284 also hosted 9428 at our kickoff event where we collaborated with them & offered guidance on different aspects of an FRC team. We showcase LASER to businesses, MO residents & legislators at MO STEM Day at the Capitol, an event we organize. Capitol Cup is an event where we run an FLL Challenge competition inside the Capitol building. Working with legislators, 3284 also championed a bill requiring mental health awareness training for all MO high school students. Additionally, we work with legislators to pass a bipartisan proclamation & resolution to name the first week in March as STEM Week in MO. Due to this, our team was featured on MO Net, reaching 28k people. Collaborating with other teams, we also host a MO Advocacy Conference to promote STEAM partnerships with legislators.

The Highways Merging roads creates a highway of sustainable partnerships across the FIRST community as LASER aims for success. Operation Clean Sweep, a 3284 initiative, provides robot, first-aid, & hygiene materials to all teams. Upon arrival at competitions, LASER communicates with all teams about this initiative & directs them to our pit. At a World Championship, we collaborated with team 5985 in testing & using a scouting app they developed, which allowed all teams participating to engage in Coopertition. LASER is also participating in 1868's Menstrual Equity initiative by providing feminine hygiene products for the regionals we are attending. Through FIRST, LASER continues to help forge a highway for international teams so that they can expand & assist their understanding of FIRST. 3284 produced a shop tour video to share with a Mexico PrepaTec team & other teams to guide them in setting up their own facilities. Our experience from starting 55, mentoring 49, & assisting 103 teams has given us the tools to start teams in locations such as the Ute Mountain Ute Native American Reservation. Joining Zoom meetings in which we discuss our team's outreach, organization, & robot shares our knowledge with teams in Turkey, Brazil, Mexico, & the KC STEM Alliance Global Exchange. Advancements in conferencing & social media allow LASER to work with teams globally. LASER has

created & maintained a partnership with REV Robotics. We have been included in both a newsletter & press release that was sent out to all #TeamREV teams & posted on social media. 3284 has also been featured in 4400's Inspiring Ourselves, Inspiring Others #OMGRobots magazine which showcased our team. LASER also created the #WalkLikeWoodie hashtag to honor Dr. Flowers' legacy of positivity by serving as a reminder to uphold Gracious Professionalism to over 17 million people globally. Continually using Zoom, we build friendships with young girls in an orphanage in Cameroon. LASER fosters these relationships & sends STEAM lessons to these girls through our partnership with the organization African Sky.

The Global Network The longevity of LASER grants us the opportunity to reflect upon our efforts & continue to share the ethos of FIRST. Tying a shoe, taking the first steps, & using the FIRST mission to inspire others globally is the heart of LASER. Footprints made by 3284 today leave avenues for STEAM leaders to expand upon groundwork & create the future of a world immersed in the power of discovery & innovation. How will you construct your road to success?;

