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FIRST Impact Award - Team 5614

2024 - Team 5614

Team Number

5614

Team Nickname

Team Sycamore

Team Location

חולון, TA - Israel

Describe the impact of the *FIRST* 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 *FIRST* programs as mentors/sponsors.

By embracing FIRST values, this year 100% of our team members study technological classes and MORE than 98% learn 5-points Math. During the past 3 years we have MENTORED 3 FLL Challenge and 3 FTC teams, influencing them to volunteer in the community and MENTOR other teams. Most of our alumni become FIRST's volunteers, taking key-roles in FIRST-events and MENTOR FIRST teams. 90% of our alumni continue to study STEAM while serving in technological units in the IDF and work in STEAM based-careers.

Describe your community along with how your team addresses its unique opportunities and circumstances.

Our community includes toddlers to elderly, with and without special-needs, from unique communities, all over Israel and abroad. We are highly active with students, aiming to BUILD a generation of STEAM-LEADERS. On October 7th Israel faced a heart wrenching reality. We overcame the circumstances and RAN new projects: collecting donations for evacuated citizens and soldiers, teaching STEAM zoom classes for 2730 kids who had to stay in safe-places and held Robotics Outreach activities in shelters.

Describe the team's methods, with emphasis on the past 3 years, for spreading the FIRST message in ways that are effective, scalable, sustainable, and creative. How does your team measure results?

To spread FIRST's values to MORE people from a variety of communities, we created a method combining our "SycaBus" and "Outreach activities". Our activities, based on EV3 kits, introduce STEAM in a fun and engaging way. With the "SycaBus" we can reach hundreds in 1 activity. Moreover we are highly active on social-media to increase our exposure to the EYES OF MANY. We measure success via feedback from our associates, annually increasing the amount of sub-teams and having MORE kids joining FIRST.

Please provide specific examples of how your team members act as role models within the FIRST community with emphasis on the past 3 years.

In the past 3 years we have STARTED, MENTORED and ASSISTED 88 FIRST teams all over the globe, ensuring to act and be seen as role models, via constantly ASSISTING others and Inspiring to be active. We encourage our sub-teams to MENTOR MORE FIRST teams and join our Outreach activities. We initiate projects within FIRST, donating budget, parts, tools and sharing our knowledge in all fields, via meetings and conferences. Our team members and alumni regularly volunteer at a variety of FIRST events.

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

During the last 3 years we have STARTED and MENTORED our own 3 FTC, 3 FLL Challenge, 40 FLL Explore and 25 FLL Discover teams in our labs, transforming it into the city's robotics center. For the first time in Israel we have STARTED A NEW FIRST PROGRAM-the FLL Discover! Moreover, our team ADVOCATES Gracious Professionalism and ASSISTING other FIRST teams! We have consistently MENTORED FRC team #6741 since their rookie year. Beyond that we have ASSISTED 17 other FIRST teams in Israel and abroad.

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?

BUILDING the next generation STARTS at young ages. We reach youngsters by being highly active on social media. Via our "SycaBus" we arrived at MORE than 100 kids' centers, including educational institutes, welfare day-cares and libraries. Moreover, We donated EV3 kits to use in weekly robotics class. We initiated the "SycaClass" & "SycaSketch" projects to teach hundreds STEAM lessons for free. In 3 years we managed to expose MORE than 20000 kids to STEAM and increase the number of FIRST members.

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

Most of our partnerships aim to reach new-unique communities, who may not have the opportunity to join FIRST or learn STEAM. We cooperated with "Vitzu Youth Village" and "Orek", in order to reach children from striking families and expose them for the first time to the world of robotics. Moreover we visited 3 hospitals, to cheer patients and teach the wonders of STEAM. In addition we have worked with elderly daycares such as "Fabrigat", to meet grandparents, some of whom are holocaust survivors.

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

Our team promotes GENDER EQUALITY starting with our own team which is composed of 45% girls. In addition we have been working with AliceCode association, together we inspired 250 young girls to the STEAM world. Moreover we create EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITIES by RUNNING Outreach activities in low socioeconomic schools and welfare day-care. We promote SECTOR DIVERSITY and INCLUSION by reaching on the one hand the Arab school "Hasan Arafa" and on the other hand "Kfar Chabad" and FIRST Orthodox events.

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

We always have our eyes forward! We write a business plan to ensure our long-term sustainability and plan a deployment of resources to preserve our activity and growth. We MENTOR sub-teams, exposing them to the FIRST's mission and giving them the opportunity to join our team. This way we preserve the Sycamore's spirit! Every year we train new team members to run projects efficiently. Moreover we make sure to attach our alumni to our activities in order to gain their knowledge and experience.

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

Sponsors are a major part of our team's success. Our team has a crew aimed at embracing new strategies for sponsor's management and recruitment. In order to recruit new sponsors we write a business plan, which is sent annually to potential sponsors. With the goal of retaining our current sponsors and keeping them engaged, we send them "Updating Letters" and invite them to the team's activities and competitions. Moreover, we never forget to thank our sponsors in our Kikoff and GALA events.

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

Time flies in a blink of an eye, thus it has to be managed properly. As students we are not available at all times and our time-management can be demonstrated to a race. Moreover because of the war in Israel we were limited to when and where we could work. So to accomplish all of our goals we had to be well planned ahead! We launched "MARCOM & community days"-reserving a time to promote our activities. We also started documenting our work in a shared calendar, this way everyone knows what is up.

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

One of our large stones is developing the FIRST community in Israel. In order to do so, we initiated a new program of FIRST in Israel-the FLL Discover. After seeing the program RUNS abroad we realized it is crucial to bring it to Israel, in order to educate younger kids to FIRST values and STEAM. Moreover we met with the commanders of 3 big IDF units, to ensure recruitment of FIRST students to STEAM roles in the IDF, recruit new volunteers from the IDF to FIRST and START the new FTC team #23704.

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.

We came to the realization that the world of STEAM is not accessible for kids with special needs. Therefore we took upon ourselves to abridge this gap and build innovative robotics activities, "SycaUnique", that suit even kids with motorical disabilities. In order to reach our target audience we cooperate with the "Krembo Wings" movement, 57 kindergartens, "AKIM" organization, "AMAL" and "Beit Eckstein" schools. Over all we managed to expose to STEAM MORE than 1000 kids with special needs!

Judge Feedback

Who/When	Feedback

Dear judges, thank you for the opportunity, however we prefer not to use it.

An area the team has an opportunity to improve.

Something that really impressed the judges.

Essay

IMPACT /ˈimˌpak(t)/ is defined as having a strong effect on someone or something, yet it is only one definition out of many MORE. During the past 3 years our team has IMPACTED MORE people from MORE communities, seeking for the true meaning of IMPACT.

We are Team Sycamore 5614 from Katzir Gymnasium, Holon, Israel. Our team, composed of 42 students, aims to inspire others while bringing FIRST into their lives. Since our foundation in 2015, our team has grown into a huge family. We are achieving our goals through implementing our main values: MORE Inspiration, MORE Technology and MORE Commitment. Following our motto "Learn by doing, Lead by teaching", we BUILD, CREATE and SUSTAIN a generation of LEADERS. Our vision is to IMPACT others by spreading STEAM and FIRST 's values in a fun engaging way.

In order to ACHIEVE our lifelong-vision we use a few METHODS: We develop the FIRST community by STARTING, ASSISTING and MENTORING teams from all 5 FIRST programs-from FRC to launching a new program in Israel, the FLL Discover. Besides that, we inspire new people to STEAM by developing the combination of our "SycaBus" and "Outreach" activities. Our activities are based on EV3 kits, introducing STEAM in a fun and educational way. The "SycaBus", a branded bus, allows us to expose MORE people to our Outreach activities, all over Israel. The "SycaBus" is MORE than just a bus! Thanks to this method, we can reach farther communities and hundreds of people-ALL in ONE activity! Our activities suit toddlers to elderly, with and without special needs, making it possible for EVERYONE to taste the world of STEAM. Beyond Israel, we teach others how to implement our OUTREACH SYSTEM in their communities.

IMPACT on FIRST Community We constantly aspire to expand the FIRST community by STARTING and MENTORING 40 FLL Explore, 3 FLL Challenge and 3 FTC teams. We also MENTOR the FRC team #6741 since their rookie year. This year we have launched a new FIRST program, STARTING and MENTORING 25 FLL Discover teams, a layout which was never performed before in Israel! Also, we frequently ASSIST 17 teams from Israel and abroad. This year we met the IDF's Air Force recruitment supervisor, 8200 Unit representatives and the Technology Maintenance Crops commanders in order to ensure recruitment of FIRST students to STEAM roles in the IDF. Thanks to the cooperation with the Technology Maintenance Crops we STARTED the new FTC team #23704. Our team members constantly volunteer in FIRST events-we volunteer in almost every official Israeli event and initiate unofficial events such as FLL Challenge festivals, supported by the city's municipality. Moreover, we helped with FIRST 's projects such as translating and editing the FLL Challenge "Robot game Video" and HOSTING the "Israeli Scouts" ambassadors. We implement "Learn by doing, Lead by teaching" by sharing our knowledge in FIRST and beyond. We HOST, RUN and lecture in conferences like "MAC", "Refresh", "FIRST Seminar" and "Mentors' Seminar". We represented FIRST in the "Israel Aviation Conference" and in the "Tel Aviv Engineering Faculty Conference", to recruit new volunteers to FIRST.

STEAM Education We aspire to BUILD a new generation of STEAM-LEADERS. Thus we actively engage with the younger generation, teaching the core values of FIRST. Our commitment is shown in frequent visits to 64 kindergartens, 24 schools, 22 day-cares, 5 libraries and Tel-Aviv University, reaching out to

INSPIRE the young minds. Noteworthy examples are the activities in "Eshkol Ganim Yahalom" kindergarten and "Yashyaho" school. There we exposed MORE than 600 kids for the first time to the wonders of STEAM! Their excitement made us realize that we had to ensure their learning and enjoyment extends beyond our visits. Therefore we donated EV3 kits and guidance to all-time use in classes. Every year we HOST "Open-Evenings" to introduce 6th and 9th graders to the opportunity of learning STEAM in middle & high-school. We met MORE than 1500 students, exposed them to the world of STEAM and opened them a window to an empowering experience. We cooperated with the "Atchala Center" for the "Talking books" project, in which students from 13 different schools participated. The project encourages book-reading, involving technological facilities such as stop-motion video filming and editing. In addition, We initiated the "SycaClass" program to help students learn STEAM. During the project our team members taught 481 lessons in free private lessons. Our team launched the "SycaSketch" project, a YouTube series that enables learning the foundation of CAD in SolidWorks in 6 lessons. The videos have MORE than 1600 views and are contributed to FTC, FRC and mechanical engineering students around the world.

Elderly with Young MINDS Except for educating the young generation for FIRST , we constantly reach the older generations in order to increase the knowledge about STEAM. We worked with 2 elderly centers, where we met grandparents, some of whom are Holocaust survivors. In our visits we presented FIRST, our robot, conducted our Outreach activities and helped the elderly with their technological gadgets. This way we alighted them about FIRST and even recruited their families as new students in FIRST.

Promoting Equality Our team believes in Equality, especially for STEAM education. Thus we emphasize reaching unique communities, who may not have the opportunity to learn STEAM. We RAN our Outreach activities in diverse sectors by reaching "Kfar Chabad", a village of the orthodox jewish community and the arab elementary school "Hasan Arafa". We reach communities who may have financial difficulties, such as newcomers from Ukraine and kids from striking families in "Vitzu Youth Village". Also, we conducted activities at 22 Welfare day-care, IMPACTING 660 children. We extended our initiatives to 12 schools and libraries in low socioeconomic areas. We have united with "Sihakta Ota", a non-profit organization devoted to selling second-hand games, using the profits to SUPPORT families in need. Our efforts were showcased at a festival, where we raised MORE than 8000₪, reached MORE than 350 people and exposed them to STEAM. Moreover, our team SUPPORTS single-parents, by offering a major discount for enrolling their children in our sub-teams. We initiated and RUN festivals in "Schneider", "Wolfson" and "Shiba" hospitals, aiming to spread light and joy to MORE than 500 kids who deal with harsh health conditions. Unfortunately there were patients who could not get out of bed, so we created STEAM-gift-boxes containing unique activities, making STEAM accessible to almost every medical state. Moreover, we cooperated with the "Save A Child's Heart" organization to expose kids from developing nations to robotics.

STEAM for Special Needs 3 years ago we came up with the "Robot Wings" project, to make robotics accessible for people with motorical disabilities. As part of the project we made special adjustments to Robotics activities which had never been seen before! Our activities were extremely successful! We RUN activities in 10 "Krembo Wings" branches to MORE than 200 trainees with disabilities. We also guided them and other FIRST teams over the world to self-build our activities via kits we pre-created. This year we initiated the "SycaUnique" project in 57 kindergartens that integrate kids with special needs. The project includes new accessible Outreach activities and scientific experiments. During the activities we received positive feedback, saying:"The kids were amazed by the activities which were suitable for their

different levels of functioning". We cooperated with "AKIM", the Israeli national organization for people with intellectual disability, "AMAL" and "Beit Eckstein" schools for kids with autism and special needs. In those collaborations we uncover the fascinating world of STEAM to 330 kids with special needs. Over the past 3 years we have MANAGED to ADJUST the world of STEAM to 1080 PEOPLE with DIFFERENT KINDS of DISABILITIES.

#FIRST Like A Girl Only 23% of the High-Tech companies in Israel are led by women-an unacceptable datum! We believe it is crucial to empower girls in the STEAM World! Hence, 45% of our team members are girls. This year we were honored to be recognized by the "She Did It" project for breaking the glass ceiling, creating opportunities and involving women in STEAM. "AliceCode" association aims to train young girls for coding based careers in the High-Tech field. We cooperated with them via hackathons to expose MORE than 450 girls to coding and robotics. Moreover we worked with "Orek" to expose women and their children to STEAM. The "Orek" community includes families who can not reach STEAM education by themselves. The collaboration was successful, shown by the CEO's Thank-you letter:"the activities Sycamore conducted made families in "Orek" feel empowered, valuable and independent".

"Swords of Iron" On October 7th a war broke out in Israel. Under those harsh circumstances we managed to come out with 5 new projects: Israeli citizens were evacuated from their homes, so to uplift their mood we collected donations of books and games to MORE than 1000 evacuated citizens. In addition, we visited 6 centers with our "SycaBus" and Outreach activities. Students were forced to study via ZOOM at home. Therefore, we initiated the "Virtual Hug" project, aiming to teach science and technology virtually, using fun science experiments. We reached 2730 kids all over Israel. In order to SUPPORT the soldiers we RUN a donation festival, where we collected MORE than 16000₪ to Division 80. In addition we printed knee protectors in 3D to ease doctors who take care of soldiers in the war-field.

Rewind to the beginning of the essay, the word "IMPACT" has a lot of definitions. Through 326 Outreach activities, 4811 STEAM lessons and about 115000 hours of volunteering in FIRST, we reached 21935 people-aiming to define what "IMPACT" is!;

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