



FIRST For All

Workshop #3 - Retaining & Recruiting Girls in Robotics

Insights from the Chat - 1/11/24

Many of the suggestions for retaining and recruiting girls on robotics teams were shared during the live discussion with our panelists and are not captured here in the notes.

The below insights were those that were shared in the chat from participants:

- Replace yourself and your legacy will live on. You can leave a bit of yourself behind to impact many others.
- Do not be afraid to be out of the norm and get a bit messy.
- Offer girl-shaped shirts along with the boys t-shirts!
- Encourage girls who you recruit to bring a friend - there's safety in numbers.
- Make sure there are girls at the recruitment table if you have one!
- One great way to include girls is having female leadership so younger girls have someone to look up to and know that they will not be alone in this new community! Having certain members they can go to in a male dominated environment, including female mentors!
- I will be bringing up the Taylor Swift in the robot reveal video to my team!
- On little things— think about gendered language we often use to address groups. Hey guys! vs hey y'all! FreshMEN vs first-years or grade 9
- A lot of the time girls feel intimidated to join teams because of how competitive the other members make the team feel. It's what kept me away from robotics for a really long time. Don't make the environment feel suffocating!
- Something that has helped us recruit a lot of the people on our team, especially girls, is advertising that robotics fits almost every interest, weather it is graphic design, film making, math, engineering, and so many more things

- During worktime, assign everyone a task--don't make people navigate a new environment all for themselves]
- This isn't only for girls, but for also getting diversity in skills and talents, we present about our robotics program to our classes like computer science, and our business team presents to the art classes and digital media design.
- I feel like a good idea would be dedicating one or two days each month to girls being the ones who do everything, with others shadowing them to be near if they have a question or do not know what to do. It would be a great learning opportunity for girls to find out more about things such as mechanics or programming, even if they usually work on Impact or PR. As well as providing a place and time for girls and boys to get to know one another. Overall, it will give girls a chance to have a safe space to do things outside of their comfort zones without feeling bad about it.
- For recruitment we try to help girls build a relationship with STEM, specifically women being in STEM, as early as possible. This is mostly done through our WISE events, where female members of our team do activities with young girls at a public library. To retain girls on the team, we have bonding nights to strengthen connections between girls. This helps us build comradery and a safe place for new members.
- Girls love to solve problems and make things better. Present that evidence to them and give them a chance to understand that they can solve problems.