

Pillars of Success
1241 Chairman's Essay 2011-12

Architects design and build foundations with supporting pillars that provide structural integrity to ensure a lasting functional creation. Similarly, Theory6 builds programs and supports communities guided by FIRST values. Our desire to impact others is the foundation of our team. Achieving goals such as capacity building in others is the belief that all team members passionately possess. Team 1241 is guided by FIRST Core Values: Inspiration, Mentorship, Co-opertition and Gracious Professionalism. We are an exemplary ambassador and advocate for FIRST. Our extensive outreach model facilitates collaboration with organizations and communities in an effort to transform the consciousness to one that seeks depth and breadth in science, technology, and engineering.

Since inception 10 years ago, our team has been creating opportunities to enable individuals to realize their capacity for growth. Driven by passion, we strive to impact the lives of thousands of individuals as they move on to succeed in fields of math, science and technology. This year we celebrate a team of 65 students, 25 actively involved returning mentors and 100 active parents. Alumni mentors recognize the importance of empowering students to seek excellence. Mentors deepen student understanding of how the FIRST experience provides refinement of lifelong leadership skills and stimulates one's Technological consciousness of the world around them.

Our team recognizes that in order to transform the consciousness of our society we must nurture and cultivate leaders by providing them with the necessary tools and growth experiences. Over the last three years, our team members have been instrumental in the creation of provincial robotics curriculum for the Specialist High Skills Major program that is now delivered by schools across Ontario. These courses are based on FIRST and they allow students to focus their learning on careers based in math, science and technology. The new curriculum: Mechanical Engineering courses are based on STEM. To generate student interest in Science and Technology, our team implemented a Robotics Steering Team. We introduced robotics programs in multiple middle schools and encouraged the use of Jr. FLL, FLL and VEX Robotics in classrooms. This accelerated learning experience equips students for a successful transition from Middle to High School. Our enthusiasm to support education at every level has garnered the interest of our school board. Over the last year we have given multiple presentations at the Peel District School Board, to school board trustees, superintendents, principles and city councils. After multiple requests during the last couple of years, John Hobbins our lead robotics mentor/teacher, has consulted on board steering teams to develop Regional Robotics programs and facilities for two new high schools. He has assisted with designing and implementing robotics into the school programs thereby spreading FIRST into the greater community.

Theory6 introduced and mentored 3 rookie FRC teams last year. Through continuous mentorship and support provided by our team, each rookie team went on to establish and maintain sustainable programs. Inspired by the success of these teams, and our passion to share the rich learning experience of FIRST, we added 4 FRC rookie teams into our large family this year and 26 VEX teams over the last three years. We also mentor and provide facilities for 4 veteran FRC teams this year, and several teams over many years. Rookie and veteran teams use our shop, classroom facilities, and work with our team of engineers and mentors to ensure that they are guided in a successful direction. We hold technical workshops every two weeks in the off season developing a collaborative network of FRC teams. Through multi-year support from our sponsors, we were also able to secure funding for each of our 7 rookie teams in the last two years and two veteran teams.

Taking our outreach initiative further, Team 1241 has started 4 FLL rookie teams. Students are actively involved in mentoring FLL schools, providing young minds the opportunity to explore concepts of STEM. Through collaboration with the FLL community, we hosted and managed an FLL Tournament and our students successfully lead this initiative. The tournament was a huge success and was attended by over 20 FLL teams, hundreds of parents, mentors, teachers, community members and school board senior administrators including our Director of Education. We also hosted a food drive during the tournament - an excellent way of giving back to the community while modelling FIRST core values. Theory6 is dedicated to spreading the FIRST experience within multiple communities. We have showcased our robots, team structure and business plan at libraries, schools, The Ontario Science Center and various community events. Yearly, we continue to build FIRST relationships with the attendees of our events through membership in our Theory6 Fan Club by sending out quarterly

newsletters which contain updates of the team's key initiatives and critical dates of upcoming events and workshops.

Media and communication has played a central role in our efforts to spread the FIRST message. As a result of our accomplishments the past few seasons, we were featured on City TV's Breakfast Television this past June. Impressed by the Theory6 spirit and our enthusiasm for FIRST, BT TV visited our school again in November and showcased our program on "Live Eye with BT" reaching out to the entire province of Ontario. We have also been featured in several local newspapers and in an OMNI News feature which was broadcast nationally!

Our large robotics parent's council has been actively working with students to create awareness of our program across our region. They are actively involved with FIRST initiatives such as Jr. FLL, FLL, FRC and community events held by Theory6. Their roles have included: judging, inspecting, event managing, field setup and transportation for other teams. We have provided drayage at our school for several teams over the last three years making it easier for them to come to the GTR from as far as Mexico! Our parents have also conducted meetings with "rookie team parents" to welcome, guide and organize their parent's council. Furthermore, Theory6 parents have helped coordinate opportunities for students to present at several Peel School Councils to raise awareness of FIRST and its impact on students.

A presentation at the Mississauga Central Library this past May sparked the interest of the local library council, who then invited us to showcase our robotics program at 'Kids at Recess', an event organized by the city to inform children and parents about local afterschool activities. To further promote STEM in our community, Theory6 quickly teamed up with the Library Council to provide workshops for children aged 5-12 at the Central Library every weekend all year long. Children are taught how to design, build and program FLL robots. Team 1241 delivers this equitable and inclusive program to the general population. Due to the positive feedback and tremendous turn out of over 100+ students every week, we are well into our second round of workshops. Our lead mentors were also invited to speak at the Ontario Library Association meeting to implement workshops and FLL teams in all libraries! After receiving numerous requests from parents to start multiple FLL programs at their son/daughter's schools, we are creating 2 Jr. FLL and 2 FLL community teams. Furthermore, we continue to communicate with several schools and parents to establish a foundation for FLL to become part of their school community.

In an effort to grow support in the City of Mississauga, the honourable Mayor of Mississauga agreed to be the guest speaker at the GTR last year. Upon witnessing FIRST in action at GTR, Mayor Hazel McCallion invited us to speak at the City Council. The City Counsellors were blown away by the impact of our initiative and agreed to a partnership. Theory6 has since been invited to various charity and community events hosted by the City showcasing robotics. Theory6 also invited Bob Delany, our MPP, to join us at the GTR last year. He subsequently delivered a statement to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario regarding FIRST and how schools in Mississauga are growing awareness for STEM. Mr. Delany has since visited our school robotics team on a few occasions to keep abreast of our rich program.

Although Theory6 is becoming a massive machine, we collectively operate from a strong foundation, it works tirelessly to help FIRST grow. Our lead mentor, Mr. John Hobbins will continue to grow the FRC program across Canada in his new role as FRC Director. Our team strives to embody the FIRST principle of Gracious Professionalism in all that we do and we strive to instil this way of thinking in everyone. It has become our mission to positively impact the greater community with our efforts of giving. October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month and every year Theory6 helps charities raise funds and create awareness for their cause by volunteering in CIBC Run for the Cure. In December, Theory6 again hosted its annual Toy Drive for the Starlight Children's Foundation, an organization dedicated to improving the lives of children with chronic and life-threatening illnesses. Through this initiative, we also sponsored a family again at Christmas by fulfilling their needs and resources.

Collectively, FIRST team 1241 is a model team who creates the conditions that Inspire passion in young minds so that we can successfully nurture and cultivate graduates of the FIRST program into citizens that are difference makers in our world. We are about providing experiences that encourage intrinsic motivation in others so that they strive to embrace and foster Community Outreach, Co-operation, Mentorship and Gracious Professionalism. We believe that our impact is changing the world!