

Thuvishan Rajagulasingam
Woodie Flowers Finalist Award Essay (2014)

Success can be attained through many means; such as dedication, skill, and knowledge. However, it is important for everyone to apply themselves to the best of their ability no matter what their outcome. Thuvishan Rajagulasingam lives by this philosophy and has been striving to inspire the leaders of tomorrow by participating in FIRST Robotics since 2005.

Thuvishan was a mentor even before graduating high school, and he carried those leadership qualities directly into his role as a mentor. He puts the students' learning before all else, whether it is STEM related or gaining confidence for presentations. Thuvishan takes time to thoroughly explain even complicated engineering concepts studied in university to team members such as gearboxes and load calculations. By using models, text, and analogies, he is able to adapt to all learning styles. To him, it is more important that students understand the reasoning behind tasks, as opposed to blindly following instructions. By asking students trivia questions, he improves their problem solving ability during interactive workshops. By demonstrating excellent communication skills, investing in the students, and helping them reach their full potential, he is ensuring the future success of the team.

Along with Team 1241, Thuvishan is also a mentor to the community. For instance, he ensured that all 21 participating teams at Crescent School's 2014 Quick Build built a successful chassis. He also broadens young children's interest in STEM by helping to run workshops at the Mississauga Central Library. Furthermore, he extended his involvement by participating as an active member on the GTR-East Planning Committee, participating in the UOIT Reverse Career Fair to promote FIRST to industry experts, and actively volunteering at numerous regionals. His dedication to FIRST and spreading STEM is remarkable.

Thuvishan's great leadership and communication skills led him to take on the role of THEORY6's drive coach and leading the 2013 World Championship winning alliance. Through his perseverance and confidence, the entire alliance was inspired, making the World Championships a very memorable victory. His efforts were recognized throughout the FIRST community as a gracious act of leadership and professionalism.

John Hobbins, FRC Director of Canada, says, "Thuvishan communicates with a passion that is contagious. He naturally aspires to be better, which nurtures and cultivates that same desire in all those around him." While striving for the best, each student is motivated to be as passionate for FIRST as he is, it becomes an addiction.

Thuvishan's passion for FIRST and encouragement motivates the team to constantly strive for improvement while having the confidence to undertake any task. No matter the situation, Thuvishan is always able to see the bright side. He may not be our tallest mentor, but every student on Team 1241 looks up to Little T not only as an inspirational mentor, but as an incredible friend with a big heart.