

Woodie Flowers Nominee - Our John Hobbins

As each new season unfolds, FIRST teams are faced with a brand new challenge. Within these short six weeks, a fully functional robot is designed and built from the most basic parts. This may seem like a daunting task, but all Theory6 members have faith in our mentor, Mr. Hobbins. If one word describes the relationship between the team and Mr. Hobbins, it is “trust.” We are confident that this season will be an exceptional one, because Mr. Hobbins is a mentor who inspires and encourages us by giving challenges, and being his unique self.

Besides being one of the mentors who founded Team 1241 seven years ago, Mr. Hobbins is an energetic technology teacher at our school. His love of engineering drove him to create the manufacturing course (TMJ4EO) for our district school board. He also designed the curriculum for the Specialist High Skills Major in Manufacturing, an exclusive program offered at our school and across Ontario, which provides hands-on machining experience to students. Not only has Mr. Hobbins opened a doorway for future engineers, he is also the lead teacher of Counting on You, a program that improves students’ literacy and numeracy skills. He encourages co-operation by appointing student leads for each task, letting students ask one another for assistance so that everyone has a special role on the team. Our grade 10 member, Devina, tells us, “As a girl, I was doubtful about choosing technology as a career choice, but Mr. Hobbins opened my mind to the possibilities and options that I hadn’t considered before. Technology has now become my favorite course.”

Although Mr. Hobbins has his own family to care for, he dedicates a large part of his personal life towards coaching the team. He is a father figure and the whole team connects with him. During build season, he arrives in the early hours of the morning and stays late every night to advise us while we build the robot. Anthony Sabapathy, a GM-FRC Mentor of the year, says “I do not know how John finds the time to mentor these guys. We would not be able to run a team without him.” Even with such a demanding schedule, Mr. Hobbins is an excellent multitasker. Being an experienced marathon runner, he leads a healthy lifestyle by exercising on his in-class bicycle, all the while mentoring us to the best of his abilities. Mr. Hobbins makes everyone feel welcome; no matter what our strengths or weaknesses, we have a place on this team. Together, Theory6 is a family.

Mr. Hobbins motivates and helps us face the many engineering challenges through critical thinking. He explains concepts in a very clear manner. “Every time we ask him for help, Mr. Hobbins is more than willing to share his knowledge and ideas with us,” says Phyllis, a grade nine member. During team discussions, everybody has a chance to participate and exchange thoughts. It is in this way that our robot is designed. He teaches us to think critically about unique ideas that can be used to successfully design and build the robot with innovation and efficiency. Mr. Hobbins's enthusiasm fuels our determination. Through his motivation, we abandon our doubts to focus and put our thoughts to action.

Mr. Hobbins is the foundation of Theory6. When we were asked, “What does a team need to succeed?” Vedant, a grade 11 member, answered, "Hobbins". Due to Mr. Hobbins’ efforts, we are always reminded of our original goal: to learn from each other and discover something new about ourselves along the way.