

Gandhi and Change
1241 Chairman's Essay 2010-11

Gandhi said, "Be the change you want to see in the world." If we want to succeed in changing the culture of the world and spreading the message of FIRST we have to start by changing ourselves. We have more possibilities available in each moment than we realize and it is our job to seize them and grow. It is our job to stop thinking in terms of limitations and start thinking in terms of possibilities. As our team approaches the 2011 season, we have realized that our limit is infinite.

A parent cannot leave a better legacy to the world than a well-educated family. Our family has introduced FIRST to more than three high schools in the Mississauga region and added them to the FIRST family. We have shared this rich learning experience which is our passion for robotics. It has become our mission to impact the greater community with our efforts, rather than just our school. The rookie teams use our shop and classroom facilities and work with our team of engineers and mentors to ensure they are helped with any problems as we endeavour to move the teams in a successful direction. To grow student interest in Science and Technology programs, we have built a Robotics Steering Team, to ensure that our initiatives reach the younger generation to the fullest possible extent. We started robotics teams in multiple middle schools to engage young minds with the opportunities to learn about Math, Science and Technology at an early age. Our efforts are creating a gateway for children to discover the opportunities and to help them develop their strengths and identity as they ponder the future. It is through these initiatives that we hope to impact the lives of so many children. If we nurture experiential learning environments, society may then cultivate scientists and engineers. These children will be the ones to make science and technology their passion and may ultimately achieve greatness.

Children are one third of our population and all of our future. It is our goal to ensure they are prepared for their future being provided with the necessary tools on an individual basis. A Specialist High Skills Major is a ministry-approved specialized program that allows students to focus their learning on a specific economic sector while meeting the requirements to graduate from secondary school into all possible destinations. It assists in their transition after graduation to apprenticeship training, college, university or the workplace. The Specialist High Skills Major program for Manufacturing is growing Engineers at a tremendous rate at our school. The course curriculum was developed by our team and embodies the concepts and principles fostered in FRC. Since the team began in 2004, more than fifteen of our students have graduated and attend The University of Waterloo Engineering program. Waterloo has ranked our school as the top school for accepting graduates from our robotics and mechanical engineering program. The main theme of the SHSM is Robotics. Just this year, we added Mechanical Engineering as a new pathway course to post-secondary education. A child is a beam of sunlight from the infinite and eternal, with countless possibilities. We believe that our programs provide our students with countless possibilities!

Change is inevitable; however, the transition can be smoother. By introducing young minds to future possibilities and giving them guidance, change can be reassuring. York University's Rover Team (YURT) was a key element for the students to discover their future. YURT competes in a competition design by The Mars Society. The competition is aimed to inspire students to innovate and apply their science and engineering skills to develop Mars rover prototype that will be able to perform duties on the Martian surface. YURT used our facilities to build their robot and three of our students were able to join their program. Additionally, York mentors now work with our Robotics team and are shared with our Rookie teams.

The Ontario Science Centre holds an annual event showcasing technological programs within the community. This event is open to the public and gives them an opportunity to imagine a future time, a

future career in Engineering. They are able to learn about initiatives that are making an impact within the community and in the lives of many children. We were present at the Ontario Science Centre where we informed the public about FIRST, FRC and how the community can become involved in the program. It was at this event where we created the Theory6 Fan club. We send out quarterly newsletters to the members of the club which contain critical dates and awareness of key initiatives that lead to opportunities allowing others to experience the depth and breadth of this life altering experience called Robotics. Furthermore, the members of the Fan club are invited to events held by our team in addition to invitations to visit our Robotics club where they can also bring a friend!

On February 1, our school hosted a robotics celebration day where local MPs, FIRST officials, business owners, senior school board officials, and robotic enthusiasts came to the school to learn about our program. Mark Breadner was one of the guests in the audience and he said, "Wow, this team truly exemplifies what the FIRST initiative is all about". This event will become an annual occurrence as we strive to showcase our program to everyone in our community. The Mayor of Mississauga, Hazel McCallion, also agreed to attend the Greater Toronto Regional because students from Theory6 travelled to City Hall to inform her of our event and personally invite her to the regional. Mayor McCallion and our local MP were hooked when they drove our robot at the city hall ceremony garnering large interest from the extensive crowd.

At the Peel School Board head office, our team gave a 45 minute presentation to school board superintendents, 32 high schools, multiple partners such as General Motors, and several other possible partners. The day was focused on developing and sustaining partnerships. Our team presented key strategies and insights for other high schools and teams to improve their sponsorship base. Furthermore, our Mentor, John Hobbins, travelled to Washington, DC to attend the Innovations Summit which focussed on STEM and 'Project Lead the Way'. Project lead the way is a STEM program that will be coming to Canada and our Mechanical Engineering class has adopted the program in addition to presenting PLTW to the school board for approval for all schools in our region! At the science and technology fair, also in Washington, Mr. Hobbins collaborated with several Universities about partnering with Canadian teams to enhance the learning experience in our classrooms through innovative strategies that engage and connect our classrooms electronically. Targeted initiatives like these, lead to the growth of the FIRST family and give Canadian students in the FIRST program the chance to go to school in other countries.

The Peel District School Board has been a proud supporter in the initiative to bring women into the field of technology. March 8, 2011 is International Women's Day, our mentor and a four year veteran of our FRC team, Simrat Sodhi, has been asked to be on the panel of influential females. The Peel District School Board in collaboration with The Learning Partnership and the CIO Association of Canada will be hosting a live webcast celebrating women in science and technology careers. She will be joined by leaders in the field of engineering and business who will answer questions and tell their tales to Peel Schools. This will also be broadcasted nationally to show that females are able to continue in a field that is thought to be dominated by males. OMNI News has also featured us in their program, which will be showcased nationally and may also be forwarded to the CBC, who will broadcast it on their channel as well. Both the Middle School and High School teams were interviewed and filmed to be showcased across Canada. OMNI News will be premiering the two-part series on Sunday February 13/20 at 4pm.

Each of us is a being in ourselves and a being in society, each of us needs to understand ourselves and understand others, take care of others while Spreading the message of FIRST to the community has always been our mission, but helping the community with their initiatives is just as significant. The chance to help other multiple teams has been an opportunity our team couldn't decline. October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month and we spent the month of October helping local charities raise money for research and to increase awareness about the disease. Our team held a 'pink'

bake sale and a 'tie-one-on' event. During the bake sale some team members participated in making and selling of delicious pink treats for the students and faculty in the morning as well as after school. During the 'tie-one-on' event a small group of students stood by each entrance of the school with pink ribbons that were tied on to students' handbags, backpacks and arms, who in turn wore them to show their support as well their acknowledgement of the Breast cancer awareness related activities. The day was a wonderful vision of pink. Members of the team also volunteered at other charity events held by other institutions throughout the month. December is the month of giving and that is exactly what Theory6 did! Christmas can create an extra burden, especially for families with children. This year we decided to sponsor 2 families for the holidays. We supported Kevin's Family this past holiday season. Kevin is a friendly and curious little boy who was diagnosed with Leukemia. Kevin spends a lot of time at the hospital going through treatment or waiting to get into clinic to see the doctor. With the help of Team 1241, Kevin and his family received every gift listed by his family. The team also generously donated new unwrapped toys to the Starlight Children's Foundation Canada that has been dedicated to improving the quality of life for children with chronic and life-threatening illnesses.

Our team is aware that the FIRST experience is much more than building a robot; its building children's dreams, building more schools with dynamic engineering programs, building communities of young and old collaborative minds who experience wonderment – the thrill of it all – The FIRST experience is differentiated success for all! This experience goes far beyond the walls of our schools, rather: there are now boundaries to what one can do and achieve through the FIRST experience. Theory6 has realized that the possibilities are endless and the limit is infinite in our quest to impact the world around us. Our journey to the impossible has begun and by partnering with mankind we will change the world. We want generations beyond us to remember the possibilities.