

The Greek Theatre
1241 Chairman's Essay 2012-13

The Greek theatre was a structural foundation made up of seating for the audience members and the main stage for performances. The performers did not just put on a show for the audience; they interacted with the audience in order to truly engage them. The theatre also had five pillars that held everything together and made up the background. Similarly, FIRST Team 1241 THEORY6 has five pillars that represent the values by which the team operates. These values hold the team together, and when on stage, THEORY6 shares these values with the audience.

The first pillar of Team 1241's Greek Theatre is defined as Inspiration, for it effectively outlines the struggles and challenges that the Team overcame to continue the show. The team aims to be an inspiration to others in the hope that they will follow their instincts and create something amazing - a foundation for their sustainability with our support. Similarly, in the Greek Theatre, actors performed their art in an effort to inspire the minds of their audience. Epicurus, a Greek philosopher, summarized the experience Team 1241 underwent when he says, "The greater the difficulty, the more glory in surmounting it." The year 2012 proved to be extremely eventful in more ways than one. With the departure of John Hobbins, the team's founding mentor for nine years, the team looked for new direction under the guidance of Mr. Corey Lehman.

This year, our team had to overcome more obstacles than it ever had in previous years. In protest of the Ontario government's passing of Bill 115, the Ontario Teacher Union initiated a strike that ended all extra-curricular activities in public schools across the Peel District School Board. As the news became public, THEORY6 lost access to its shop facilities. With such a large team, the biggest challenge was finding a new home that provided us with resources to complete the necessary technical and administrative tasks. However, in spite of the struggles imposed upon the team, the students took the initiative to continue projects in their basements, garages, and backyards.

As he parted, Lead Coach Corey Lehman placed us in contact with a dean at the Sheridan College Skills & Training Center, who graciously allowed the team to use their facilities. The team officially had access to a vast Tool & Die Shop and materials and tools. Despite the long distance from their homes, students and mentors developed a weekly schedule to allow as many people as possible to spend their evenings at Sheridan.

The performers in Ancient Greece always put on plays that would leave a lasting impression. They wanted the audience to learn the moral of the story and follow those morals so that they could lead better lives. Mentorship is a key pillar in the foundation of the 1241 THEORY6 Greek Theatre because it allows us to enable other teams and their students to learn new transferable skills. This allows us to ensure the sustainability of our team while also spreading the impact of FIRST.

Albert Einstein said "If you cannot explain something simply, you don't know it well enough," and Theory6 embodies this to foster the growth of technological consciousness within the community. Team 1241 strives to create an environment in which intrinsic motivation and a passion for science and technology can be built up in youth. We give students an opportunity to be part of a program that accelerates their learning by motivating them. The team strives to implement Mentorship to all levels of robotics, from Jr. FLL to FRC teams. This is done through physical mentoring, online support, task critiquing and supplying of resources.

The Jr. FLL and FLL programs at the Mississauga Central Library were started by 1241 over three years ago and have been a huge success. This program provides students with a chance to experience robotics and work with high-school students to expand their knowledge in STEM. In addition to these community FLL teams, THEORY6 also has mentored many FLL teams based at schools in our board.

At the high school level, THEORY6 is able to provide support for multiple rookie and veteran teams. We offer them numerous services that help them grow efficiently in all aspects of their team. These services include helping them through design briefs, concepts, research and development, fabrication, and iterations. We also help them with team organization, budgeting, inventory of supplies, timelines, project management, and housing robots for competition.

Team 1241 believes that co-opertition is one of the most important aspects of the robotics experience because it teaches students a healthy sense of competition from an early age. They learn to collaborate with people and celebrate success even when it is not their own. It builds character in youth, which is something that will stay with them for the rest of their lives and serve as an organizational behavior standard of conduct in the industry and workplace.

Robot transportation causes difficulties for some teams to travel to regionals. To solve this issue, 1241 has supported other teams through drayage for many years and has now become an official drayage facility for FIRST Canada. The robot is received in advance and personally transported to the regional competitions. This gives teams the opportunity to participate in competitions away from home and it helps build stronger inter-team relationships. This year, Team 1241 will also be billeting Team 4817 from Singapore, who will be attending GTR West. Our students will not only be helping with completion related preparations but will also be showing them around our province!

Over the years, Team 1241 has strived to emulate the spirit of gracious professionalism in all their actions, administratively and technically. At the annual Oakville Symposium hosted by Team 771, our lead design mentor held a workshop on Mechanical Design and filled in for a workshop on AutoDesk Inventor. Our VEX lead mentor and student also presented a workshop on the foundation and function of the VEX Robotics Program.

At competitions, teams can be under operational challenges when problems arise with their robot, and as a team that has been through this many times, we can recognize the problem and came up with a way to effectively solve it. THEORY6 has its very own "Geek Squad" that goes to different pits during regional competitions and asks if the teams need any technical assistance. A parallel for our geek squad can be seen in the Greek theatre because some members of the performance were volunteers who wanted to help support the play and entertain the audience. These volunteers were called a chorus. They participated to help the audience understand the play better, and they usually narrated the performance.

The latest pillar that THEORY6 has adopted is Inclusiveness. FIRST Robotics is not just an extracurricular program; it is a learning experience and beneficial to everyone who is a part of it. 1241 strongly believes that the more involved one is with the different aspects of the team, the

more one learns, grows, and develops abilities that will carry them to success. In lieu of this, 1241 added the final pillar and started building on internal and external inclusiveness in order to benefit as many people as possible. We include our sponsors in our endeavors and are in constant contact with them. Once we finalized a design, we wrote and sent each of our mentors a copy of a design report. General Motors, our founding sponsor, chose 1241 to be one of the first teams they mentored in FIRST and has now become a member of the FIRST Executive Advisory Board.

The achievement that THEORY6 considers its most prestigious is the Library initiative. This initiative is in collaboration with the Mississauga Central Library, and aims to provide a free drop in program for anybody aged 5-12. The program is built to accommodate the massive turnout which is sometimes over 100 students in each workshop. The greatest part is that it incorporates all five of our outlined pillars for success. It is built to mentor and inspire students to become involved in the field of STEM, they are taught to compete with others, while working with them to create the best robots possible. We also offer this program for others to run; it is posted on the FIRST Canada website as a workshop, so that any team can access. Our team recently presented our library robotics curriculum to the Ontario Library Association - all of the members wanted to incorporate robotics into their daily operations and were given information to contact the closest FIRST team in their area to get the program in their library. The steering committee for this project is spearheaded by 1241 to ensure that we can develop a process to bring the program to all by giving FRC teams and libraries in Ontario the capacity and ability to understand and execute these workshops. By expanding the program, we provide opportunities for more youth to become involved with FIRST and be included in this amazing program.

The play that is performed on the stage is only half of the reason why the Greek theatre is so inspirational and historically significant. The shows were interesting, but the true success of the Greek theatre comes from the way in which the plays were performed. The actors performed extremely well and always left the audience with something to think about. They included the audience in the performance to ensure a multidimensional performance, and to allow the audience to leave with new skills. This embodies the goals of FIRST Team 1241; the team has learned so much over the past ten years, and the time has come for the knowledge to be spread across the community to garner greater achievements in science and technology. Gaining skills and experience from the world around you changes you and builds character, but passing on those skills is what creates a legacy that can be remembered long after you are gone and this legacy is what 1241 strives for.

