

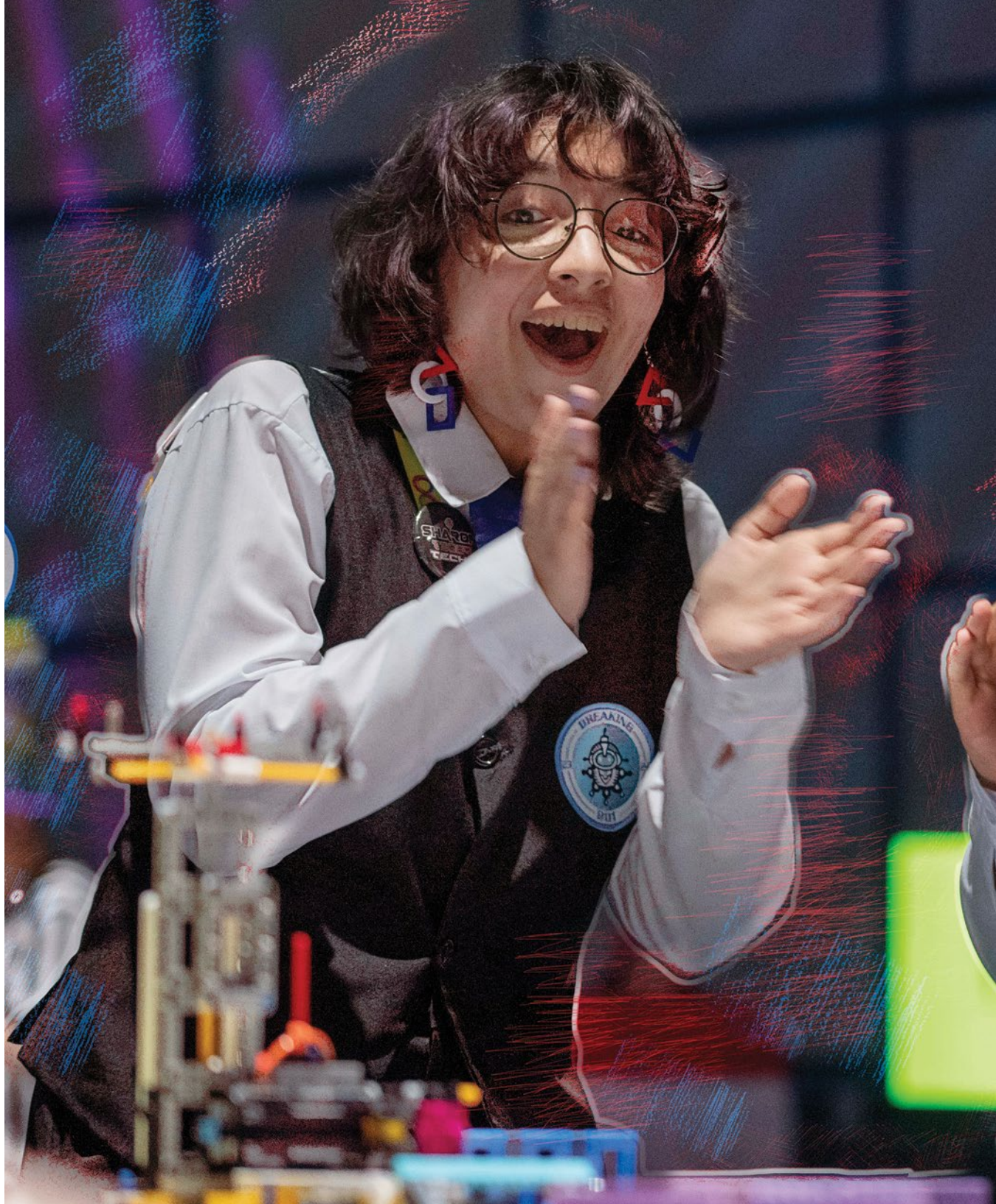
FIRST[®] IN THE SPOTLIGHT

 **FIRST** 2024 ANNUAL
IMPACT REPORT



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INTRODUCTION

Over the past 35 years, *FIRST*® has grown from a groundbreaking idea for inspiring future science and technology leaders into the **gold standard for youth robotics**.

Today, *FIRST* is influencing culture and creating new generations of innovators across industries with **the only sport where every participant can go pro**.

Our transformation inspired our **arts-themed robotics season, *FIRST*® IN SHOWSM presented by Qualcomm**. During the 2023-2024 season, *FIRST* participants explored the intersection of **science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM)** and gained the community, skills, and self-confidence to build a better future.

This report **shines a spotlight** on *FIRST* programs' **best-in-show impact** and the **community bringing the *FIRST* mission to life**.

LIGHTS, CAMERA, STEAM!

This Annual Impact Report covers the period of July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024.





Chris Moore is the chief executive officer of *FIRST*



Dr. Laurie Leshin is the chair of the *FIRST* Board of Directors



Dean Kamen is the founder of *FIRST*

When connected, **science, technology, engineering, arts, and math inspire big ideas, bold action – and creativity.** That concept inspired our most imaginative season yet: ***FIRST*[®] IN SHOWSM presented by Qualcomm.** We aimed our season spotlight on the role *FIRST*-built skills play in the arts and empowered young people to bring their ideas to life.

We also aimed to reach even more young people with our life-changing robotics programs – and we did. This season, we **engaged a record number of youth participants**, with 2023-2024 participation up 17 percent from the 2022-2023 season to more than 785,000 students ([see page 22](#) for more season data).

Whether those students participate for one season or their entire grade-school journey, their active involvement in *FIRST* will have lasting effects: As data from the 10th year of the *FIRST* Longitudinal Impact Study ([see page 6](#)) demonstrates, *FIRST* participants from all backgrounds gain STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) interest and attitudes that transform into behaviors and actions beyond high school.

The impact we see in our data is exemplified in *FIRST* participants and alumni around the world (you will meet some of them in this report, [see page 16](#)). That transformational impact drives us to keep growing *FIRST* until every child, everywhere, has access to our programs.

Last year, we rolled out **four ambitious strategic priorities** to get us closer to a future with universal *FIRST* access:

1. Create a sustainable business model that maximizes growth and impact.
2. Reduce and eliminate barriers to participation.
3. Increase global awareness to drive interest in *FIRST* programs.
4. Unlock and develop our innovation capacity.

These priorities will continue to drive our organization's work in the years ahead, guided as always by our values ([see back cover](#)).

Our current and future growth would not be possible without the expansive, determined community behind the *FIRST* mission: Sponsors, donors, program delivery partners, volunteers, mentors, educators, alumni, families, and other supporters are key to ensuring the *FIRST* "show" goes on, season after season. Thank you. This report is a testament to your impact.

And if you are new to *FIRST*, welcome! We hope the words in these pages inspire you to shine your own spotlight on *FIRST*. Whether you share a story from this report with your network or advocate for robotics programs in your local schools, you will be shining light on a movement preparing young people for the future.

Sincerely,

Chris, Laurie, and Dean

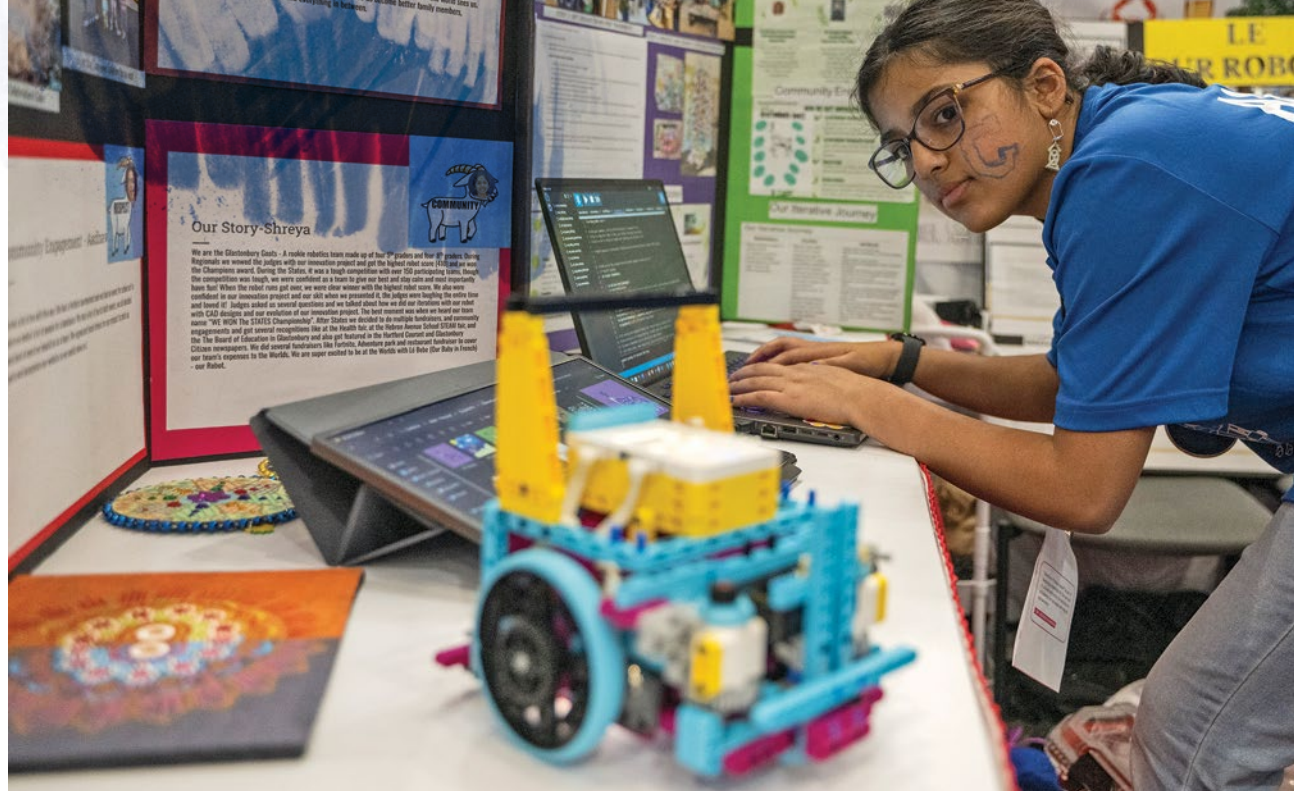
FIRST LONGITUDINAL IMPACT

FIRST LONGITUDINAL STUDY – 10 YEAR REPORT

FIRST is committed to conducting long-term academic research to understand the impact of its programs. The unique FIRST Longitudinal Impact Study, conducted by Brandeis University, followed a group of U.S.-based FIRST participants and a similar comparison group over 10 years. The final report, released in 2024, summarizes a decade of findings and also includes new data comparing FIRST students with a national data set from the National Center for Education Statistics. **The results show FIRST is having a proven long-term impact on participating students, extending into college and careers.**

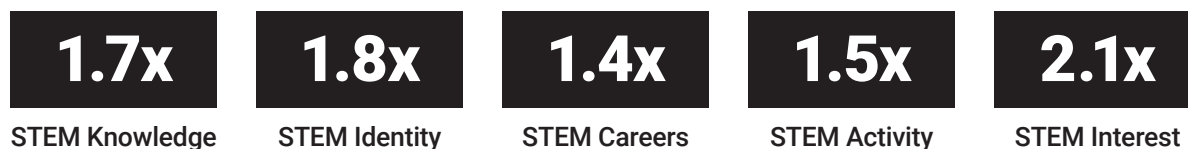
Key Findings

- STEM interest and attitudes are transforming into behaviors and actions beyond high school, where **the majority of FIRST participants are majoring in STEM.**
- STEM-related gains are **even more significant for female participants in FIRST** than male participants, opening pathways into male-dominated fields.
- Participants from groups historically underrepresented in STEM are having positive gains in STEM outcomes and impact. This holds true for participants from economically disadvantaged families, from urban and rural areas, and who identify as African American, Latinx, or Native American.
- In college and their early careers, FIRST participants are **significantly more likely to engage with STEM** than their national matched counterparts. The **stronger impacts for female FIRST participants** are also supported by these analyses.
- Early career indicators show that FIRST participants are significantly more likely to be employed in a STEM field as compared to the national data set.



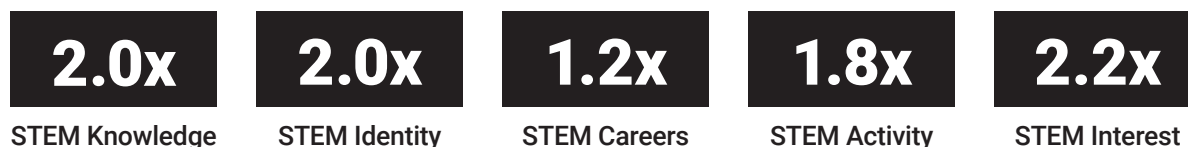
An Increase in STEM-Related Attitudes

Ten years after enrollment in the study, FIRST students and alumni are still roughly two times more likely to show an increase in STEM-related attitudes than comparison group students.



Higher Levels in STEM Outcomes for Female FIRST Students

At 10 years, female FIRST students and alumni are more likely to show significantly higher levels in STEM outcomes than comparison female students.



Detailed information can be found at www.firstinspires.org/impact

Pursuing College Pathways in STEM

By their fourth year of college, *FIRST* alumni are significantly more likely to pursue college pathways into engineering and computer science than comparison students. They are more likely to be interested in majoring in computer science, engineering, and robotics; to take computer science and engineering courses; and to declare a major in computer science or engineering.

Major in STEM

FIRST ALUMNI

83%

COMPARISON GROUP

61%

Major in engineering or computer science

FIRST ALUMNI

61%

COMPARISON GROUP

26%

More likely to take engineering courses or computer science courses

ENGINEERING

2.0x

COMPUTER SCIENCE

2.7x

More likely to major in engineering or computer science

ENGINEERING

2.0x

COMPUTER SCIENCE

2.1x

"FIRST HELPED ME BECOME INTERESTED IN STEM; I PURSUED BECOMING A SOFTWARE ENGINEER IN COLLEGE AND AM NOW WORKING AT A HEALTHCARE COMPANY USING SOME OF THE THINGS I EXPERIENCED IN FIRST." – *FIRST* alum



Building Pathways for Groups Historically Underrepresented in STEM

Underrepresented racial and ethnic groups in *FIRST* are significantly more likely to major in computer science or engineering.

Major in STEM

UNDERREPRESENTED RACIAL/ETHNIC *FIRST* ALUMNI

82%

COMPARISON GROUP

57%

Major in engineering or computer science

UNDERREPRESENTED RACIAL/ETHNIC *FIRST* ALUMNI

58%

COMPARISON GROUP

27%

By their fourth year of college, female *FIRST* alumni are more likely to pursue STEM pathways.

Major in STEM

FEMALE *FIRST* ALUMNI

75%

COMPARISON GROUP

50%

Major in engineering or computer science

FEMALE *FIRST* ALUMNI

51%

COMPARISON GROUP

16%

More likely to take engineering courses or computer science courses

ENGINEERING

3.5x

COMPUTER SCIENCE

2.5x

More likely to major in engineering or computer science

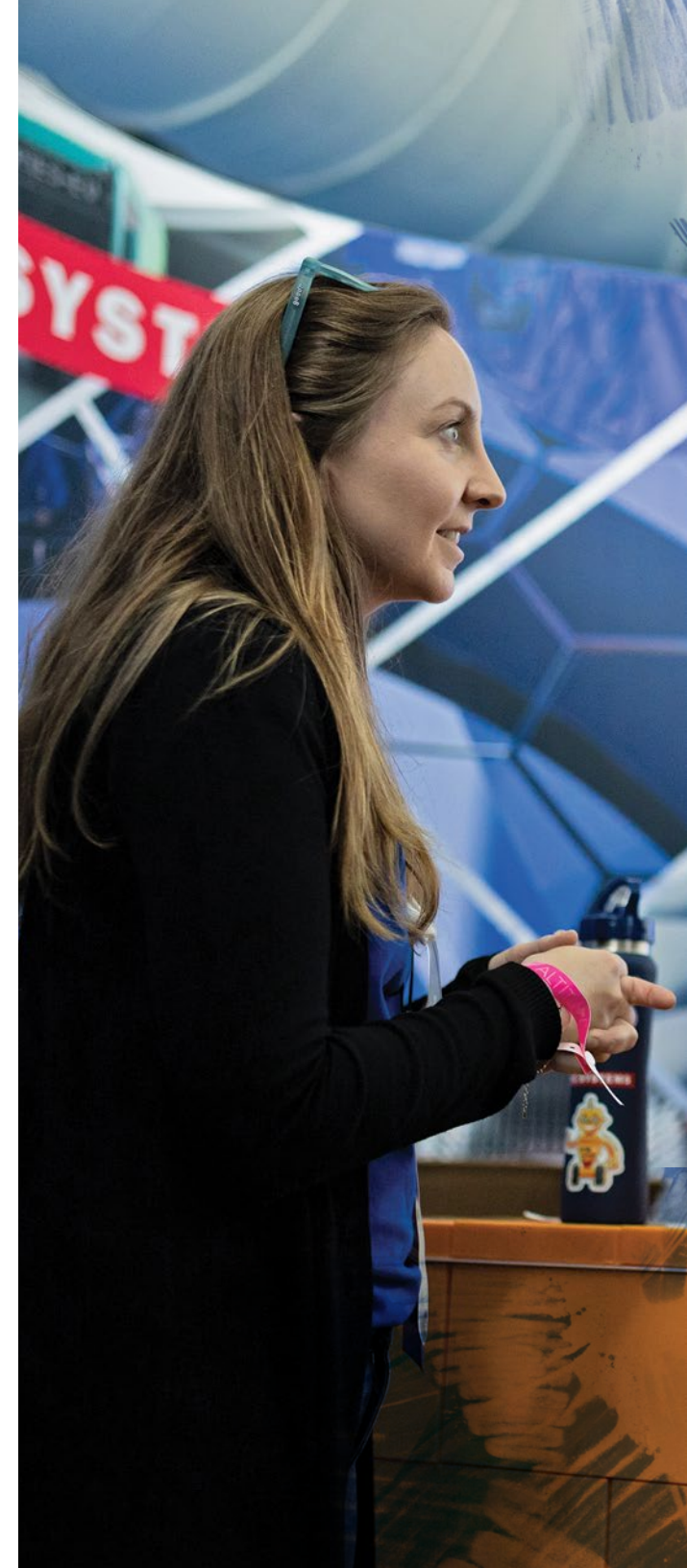
ENGINEERING

3.1x

COMPUTER SCIENCE

1.9x

"I NOW WORK IN AEROSPACE. I DON'T THINK I WOULD'VE HAD THE COURAGE TO ENTER SUCH A MALE-DOMINATED FIELD HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR MY *FIRST* EXPERIENCE IN HIGH SCHOOL." – *FIRST* alum





Persisting into STEM Employment

FIRST alumni are significantly more likely to have employment in a STEM field and have **higher incomes than the study comparison group** and the national comparison group.

Current employment in a STEM field

FIRST ALUMNI

63%

COMPARISON GROUP

42%

Average salaries

FIRST ALUMNI

\$53,500

COMPARISON GROUP

\$44,000

NATIONAL COMPARISON GROUP

\$44,500

Compared to a matched group of national young adults, **female FIRST participants** are more likely to work in STEM and earn significantly more.

Average salaries

FEMALE FIRST ALUMNI

\$62,000

COMPARISON GROUP

\$43,000

SOURCE: FIRST Longitudinal Study: 10 Year Final Report, Brandeis University, 2024

The study included 551 FIRST students and 371 comparison group students. The comparison group included students who did not participate in FIRST programs but were enrolled in science and math classes at the same schools. All students received a baseline survey and follow-up surveys each year. Overall, 72 percent of students remained in the study at year 10.

FIRST PROGRAMS

A SUITE OF HANDS-ON, STEM LEARNING PROGRAMS

FIRST combines the rigor of STEM learning with the fun and excitement of traditional sports and the inspiration that comes from community. Participants benefit from a suite of programs that have a proven impact on learning, interest, and skill-building inside and outside of the classroom.

→ Children can join any *FIRST* program based on age or grade level. Ages may vary by region.

FIRST® LEGO® League Divisions

Through a partnership with LEGO® Education, *FIRST*® LEGO® League guides youth through STEM learning and exploration at an early age. From Discover to Explore and then to Challenge, students will understand the basics of STEM and apply their skills in an exciting competition while gaining productive learning habits, confidence, and teamwork skills along the way.

**FIRST
LEGO
LEAGUE**

DISCOVER

AGES
4-6

GRADES
PreK-1

FIRST LEGO LEAGUE DISCOVER

This playful introductory STEM program ignites children's natural curiosity and builds their habits of learning with hands-on activities in the classroom and at home using LEGO® DUPLO® bricks.

**FIRST
LEGO
LEAGUE**

EXPLORE

AGES
6-10

GRADES
2-4

FIRST LEGO LEAGUE EXPLORE

Teams of students focus on the fundamentals of engineering as they explore real-world problems, learn to design and code, and create unique solutions made with LEGO bricks and powered by LEGO® Education SPIKE™ Essential.

**FIRST
LEGO
LEAGUE**

CHALLENGE

AGES
9-16

GRADES
4-8

FIRST LEGO LEAGUE CHALLENGE

Teams of students engage in research, problem solving, coding, and engineering – building and programming a LEGO® Education SPIKE™ Prime robot that navigates the missions of a robot game. They also participate in a research project to identify and solve a relevant real-world problem.



Grades PreK-8 · Ages 4-16

FIRST LEGO LEAGUE

Young Innovators Using Skills and Imagination to Solve Problems as a Team

THE CHALLENGE

Through a guided, global robotics program, students are introduced to STEM learning and exploration at an early age. Children can begin with Discover (ages 4-6) and progress through Explore (ages 6-10) and Challenge (ages 9-16), or join at any division based on their age or grade level.

THE JOURNEY

Children build habits of learning, confidence, and teamwork skills and create unique solutions using LEGO® Education materials as they explore an engaging, themed challenge. Teams come together at events to showcase what they learned and compete.

THE OUTCOME

Students gain real-world problem-solving experiences that inspire them to experiment and grow their critical thinking, coding, and design skills while building confidence, growing their knowledge, and developing habits of learning.



Grades 7-12 · Ages 12-18

FIRST TECH CHALLENGE

It's Way More Than Building Robots

THE CHALLENGE

Students work together with their mentors to design and build robots to compete in a dynamic and exciting challenge released every September. Using blocks-based or text-based coding and custom fabrication with 3D printing, teams program classroom-scale robots to follow autonomous commands before student drivers take control in two-on-two matches.

THE JOURNEY

Teams compete at local and regional events, qualifying up to the *FIRST* Championship. They earn awards based on their teamwork, creativity, innovation, and the engineering design process.

THE OUTCOME

On and off the field, students develop STEM skills, engage in community outreach, practice engineering innovation, and build confidence to help them succeed. High school students have access to education and career discovery opportunities, connections to scholarships and employers, and a place in the *FIRST* community for life.



Grades 9-12 · Ages 14-18

FIRST ROBOTICS COMPETITION

An Exciting Sport Built Around the World of STEM

THE CHALLENGE

Starting with a Kit of Parts, teams design, program, and build industrial-sized robots to play an action-packed game, released in January. They compete on a themed field as part of a three-team alliance. In 360-degree learning, each team also creates a team identity, raises funds to meet its goals, and advances appreciation for STEM in its community.

THE JOURNEY

At district and regional events, cheering crowds root for qualifying teams as students compete with their robots for prestigious awards and a coveted spot at the *FIRST* Championship.

THE OUTCOME

As students learn real-world engineering concepts, they build their confidence and workforce skills, and connect with professional team mentors and sponsors who can help them succeed. Participants and alumni have access to education and career discovery opportunities, connections to scholarships and employers, and a place in the *FIRST* community for life.

SHINING BRIGHT: SCHOOL DISTRICTS

SCHOOL DISTRICTS USE *FIRST* TO DRIVE YOUTH STEM ENGAGEMENT

Educators play enormous roles in helping to shape today's young people into innovators and changemakers. In the U.S., leaders from school districts large and small are tapping into the power of *FIRST* to drive positive outcomes across student academics, personal development, and connection to community.

Uncovering STEM Opportunity

Across the **more than 13,000** U.S. public school districts, two things are true: There is no one-size-fits-all approach to STEM education, and there is ample opportunity to boost student STEM learning engagement. Educators and administrators turn to *FIRST* (a movement that has been building for over 35 years) because it's proven to boost student engagement and prepare them for greater success in the classroom and workforce (see impact on [page 6](#)).

FIRST knows every public school district is unique, and the organization works closely with administrators to uncover how youth robotics aligns with their goals. Key to the strategy: *FIRST* meets schools where they are with resources and support. Together, they determine how to implement programs impactfully, sustainably, and with potential to scale so students and educators are set up to meet their long-term goals.

Equipping Districts and Educators for Success

Districts implement *FIRST* in many ways, but success starts with an exploration of goals, infrastructure, and sustainability. *FIRST* provides administrators an in-depth framework that defines practices for use within its global community, all articulated through *FIRST* Core Values.

FIRST offers **professional development** designed to help educators and mentors strengthen facilitation skills, build capacity, and gain experience with all aspects of each *FIRST* program. Sessions are led by certified trainers and designed to help educators facilitate project-based learning environments through active student engagement; grow their knowledge of STEM and playful learning teaching methods; and practice student elements of *FIRST* programs and best practices for implementation.

FIRST and its sponsors offer a variety of grants, and many of them support Title I schools, a U.S. federal funding definition for schools that have a high percentage of children from low-income families. These grants help fund different implementation options across regions, connecting *FIRST* with educators and administrators to design effective strategies that meet the needs of students.



Enabling outcomes with professional development

93%

of teachers felt somewhat confident running a *FIRST* LEGO League program in their classroom after training, vs. 43% beforehand

97%

of teachers felt they know about the engineering process after *FIRST* training, vs. 65% beforehand




COMPTON UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT: Building a Sustainable Pipeline in LA

Compton Unified School District, which serves 18,000 students in the south-central region of Los Angeles County, California, recognizes student need for career exposure and mentorship. The Title I district applied for *FIRST* grants to help build a robotics pipeline from PreK through high school rooted in hands-on learning, teamwork, problem-solving, and leadership.

“Being in Los Angeles, there are plenty of STEM opportunities, especially in entertainment and arts roles not traditionally thought of as being technology jobs,” said Alvaro Brito, an educator who oversaw the district’s *FIRST* program for several years. “The parents in the district are mostly working class and often juggle two to three jobs. If schools don’t provide opportunities that nudge students into STEM, plus mentorship and exposure to STEM careers, many students will never experience these fields.”

The district has worked closely with *FIRST* to ensure it has the tools to be successful, including collaborating on a professional development program for teachers, recommendations for sponsor support, and a growth strategy to scale the program year over year. *FIRST* supporters, including The Boeing Company, The LEGO Foundation, Walt Disney Foundation, and i.am/Angel foundation, have provided operational funds, mentors, and other support.

Today, the district is a STEM leader in the Los Angeles area: More than 750 students from Compton USD’s 36 schools participate in *FIRST* both inside the classroom and after school, and over 50 percent of the district’s high school *FIRST* participants have gone on to study or work in STEM. Students have also shown improvements in math



scores, in-school attendance, and engagement, as well as in valuable life skills such as perseverance, communication, and confidence.

The district’s showpiece is its annual *FIRST* festival, which convenes all Compton USD pipeline teams spanning all *FIRST* LEGO League divisions and *FIRST* Tech Challenge. Its 2024 festival hosted roughly 1,000 students and 700 parents and allowed students to engage with industry professionals, the district to recruit more young people into robotics, and the community to celebrate students’ hard work and achievement.

“These gatherings are opportunities to let our community know how we’re preparing their kids for jobs of the future – including those at companies in our own backyard,” said Michele Dawson, senior director of innovation and technology at Compton USD. “It can take courage to invest in programs like *FIRST* that will change students’ lives. Our approach is successful because it’s intentional: It considers the opportunity gap we’re trying to close, what our students need to be successful, and how administrators can make implementation easier for our teachers and coaches.”

“...IF SCHOOLS DON’T PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES THAT NUDGE STUDENTS INTO STEM, PLUS MENTORSHIP AND EXPOSURE TO STEM CAREERS, MANY STUDENTS WILL NEVER EXPERIENCE THESE FIELDS.”

– Alvaro Brito, educator



VOLUSIA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT: Creating Well-Rounded Students in Florida

Volusia County School District in Florida has transformed its approach to STEM education through a partnership with *FIRST*, fostering a dynamic learning environment that spans from elementary to high school. By offering roughly 600 students a combination of in-classroom robotics and competitive after-school teams, the Title I district's approach provides the chance to opt into robotics while providing passionate students opportunities for deeper engagement, STEM career modeling, peer-to-peer mentorship, and much more.

Kim Stears and Amy Monahan both knew the power of *FIRST*: Kim, career and technical education teacher, was a district *FIRST* alum, and Amy,

Volusia's STEM specialist, was a *FIRST* coach and parent. Amy and Kim teamed up to build a pipeline that would pull in the district's youngest students and push them through the pipeline, leveraging The LEGO Foundation and Department of Defense grants to grow *FIRST* programs.

Volusia introduced *FIRST* Class Packs, a flexible implementation option to run *FIRST* LEGO League during the school day. To build the pipeline, Amy met with industry leaders and community business partners to develop an intensive high school course modeled to allow students to experience what it is like to have a career in STEM and build valuable workplace skills. Students can earn an elective credit for participating in *FIRST* Robotics Competition as part of the program, and those who want to

compete can also do so through the district's after-school *FIRST* Tech Challenge team.

Kim and Amy's hard work is paying off: The students who participate in Kim's program recently performed about twice as well as their non-*FIRST* peers in state testing. They also appreciate *FIRST* programs' impact on students who were seen as being disconnected: They credit *FIRST* with improving engagement and influencing positive actions. "*FIRST* builds student confidence, but it also teaches the teachers; our STEM educators are more comfortable doing other things in the classroom now because they know they can do this," said Amy.

Knob Noster School District:
An Eye on Workforce Preparedness in Rural Missouri

In rural Johnson County, Missouri, where the Title I Knob Noster School District serves 1,400 students, workforce preparedness is a key focus for a student body in which 70 percent of students come from military families stationed at the nearby Whiteman Air Force Base.

Ruth Adams, K-5 robotics teacher, and her husband, Chris Adams, lead STEM teacher, were interested in bringing robotics to their district. They brought their school district superintendent to *FIRST* Championship, where he immediately saw the potential of the program's sports-like atmosphere to engage more students, give them an extracurricular outlet for the STEM principles learned in the classroom, and build a stronger community. That cleared the way for the Adamses to apply for grants, including a DoD STEM grant, to facilitate the introduction of *FIRST* LEGO League Discover and Explore in grades K-5 as rotational courses that students take once per week, just as they would music or art. They also implemented after-school *FIRST* LEGO League Challenge, *FIRST* Tech Challenge, and *FIRST* Robotics Competition teams, all of which regularly convene for peer-to-peer mentorship across age groups.

True to the superintendent's vision, community is at the heart of Knob Noster's robotics program. In a district where students often join or leave suddenly due to the realities of military family life, the Adamses are particularly grateful for the broader *FIRST* network, which provides consistency for students whose families relocate. They also tap into the local professional community by partnering with Whiteman Air Force Base to provide mentorship, internships, and even the opportunity to work on advanced engineering projects.

The Knob Noster district administration appreciates most the flexibility of *FIRST* implementation: "As a small district, we operate like a small business would. If you're just getting started with *FIRST*, don't worry about perfection – just be creative," said Chris Adams.

During Teacher Appreciation Week in 2024, *FIRST* announced Knob Noster as part of a cohort of 10 schools honored through the Inspire the Future: *FIRST* School Recognition Program, which strives to celebrate educators and schools with exceptional commitments to their learning communities.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Every U.S. school district has its own unique strengths and opportunities. The proven impact of *FIRST* programs on student learning and development outcomes, plus the many ways to implement it during and after school, make it a flexible option that helps administrators and educators meet their goals while encouraging students' lifelong love of science and technology.

**"YOU'RE NEVER ON AN ISLAND.
FIRST IS ONE GIANT TEAM
THAT'S HERE TO SUPPORT YOU
THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS."**

– Knob Noster Administrator





IN THE SPOTLIGHT: *FIRST* TEAMS & ALUMNI

Each year, *FIRST* teams, participants, and alumni innovate and use their skills to promote STEM and make a positive impact in their own communities – driven by programs that are *More Than Robots*®.

The *FIRST* community is guided by the *FIRST* Core Values ([see back cover](#)) and strives to embody *Gracious Professionalism*® and *Coopertition*®, part of the foundational *FIRST* ethos emphasizing high-quality work alongside respect and kindness for individuals and the community.

The following stories are just a few of the countless ways the *FIRST* community builds a better world.

STEM for All: Bridging the Gap in Indigenous Communities

Elena Klopfenstein, a participant of *FIRST* Robotics Competition Team 2486 “CocoNuts” in Flagstaff, Arizona, is a proud member of the Navajo Nation. Elena had limited access to STEM programs while growing up on the Reservation, and she credits her team mentors, David Thompson, a retired professor at Northern Arizona University, and Christine Sapio, a science and physics teacher at Coconino High School, for helping her recognize her potential. Access to STEM opportunities is not only shaping her future – it is equipping her to make a difference for other Indigenous students.

Dave and Christine founded the CocoNuts 18 years ago with a mission to prioritize community impact first and robot performance second. Under their guidance, the CocoNuts travel to rural areas across the southwestern U.S. to expose youth to STEM and academic opportunities. On the Reservation, they, with Elena’s help, created “RezBotics.” Partnering with the Navajo Transitional Energy Company, the CocoNuts started over 10 new Reservation *FIRST* Tech Challenge teams and ran the first all-Indigenous robotics tournament for Reservation teams across the Four Corners region.

The CocoNuts went to Washington, D.C., to speak with policymakers about RezBotics and the importance of STEM access; next year, RezBotics is set to double in size and host its own *FIRST* Tech Challenge regional championship. The CocoNuts were awarded the prestigious *FIRST* Impact Award at 2024 *FIRST* Championship and inducted into the *FIRST* Hall of Fame.



For Elena, a *FIRST* Dean’s List Award Finalist recognized for her student leadership, her goal is not to build the skills she needs to abandon the Reservation but rather to improve Reservation life and show her community they are more capable than they believe. As Elena prepares to graduate high school in 2025, it is clear she is far from finished. Like many of her peers on the CocoNuts, Elena will be the first in her family to go to college. She plans to major in chemical engineering and combine her passion for STEM with business advocacy to improve life for all who call the Reservation home.

"THE COCONUTS ARE ROLE MODELS WHO ARE CHANGING LIVES. PEOPLE WHO NEVER THOUGHT THEY COULD DO STEM CAN LOOK AT THE COCONUTS, SEE SOMEONE FROM A SIMILAR BACKGROUND, AND SAY, 'IF THEY DID IT, SO CAN I.' THAT'S AN IMPACT WE CAN'T MEASURE." – Christine, mentor, CocoNuts

FIRST LEGO League Team Revolutionizes the Reading Experience

When FIRST LEGO League Team 55504 "Code Warriors" from Oakville, Ontario, brainstormed an arts problem they could solve with STEM for the MASTERPIECESM season, they realized many of their peers preferred activities like video games over reading because they provide more sensory stimulation.

The team set out to uncover a solution to make the reading experience more engaging and immersive. They conducted surveys and met with publishing industry experts, including Kindle product designers, Harper Collins publishers, and authors. After extensive research, the Code Warriors launched a prototype, nicknamed Page Palette, which incorporated music and sound effects into the reading experience. In its initial form, Page Palette was a website with sound and music options the reader could listen to as they enjoyed their book.

After initial testing, the team needed to figure out a way to account for varied reading speeds so the sounds align with the story. The team used the Python coding language to develop a sample reading piece and analyze the reader's speed as they advanced through the sample. The updated platform now keeps pace with the user and provides an engaging experience for those who want to discover or enhance their passion for reading.

The Code Warriors are proud of their accomplishment, especially Page Palette's potential application for those who are blind/visually impaired as a tool to provide more sensory stimulation and immersion.



"BEING A CODE WARRIOR IS A POWERFUL EXPERIENCE BECAUSE IT'S MORE THAN JUST CODING AND ROBOTICS. FIRST EMPOWERS US TO CREATE MEANINGFUL IMPACT THROUGH OUR WORK AND TO USE OUR STEM SKILLS TO MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE."

— Abhigyan & Abheer, students, Code Warriors





FIRST Tech Challenge Team Gives Back to Local Communities, Uplifts Participant Voice

FIRST Tech Challenge Team 21036 “JUSTICE” from Goiânia, Brazil, exemplifies the opportunities STEM can provide for underserved communities.

Students, mentors, and coaches from around the region have united under JUSTICE to champion women in STEM, empower students, and support Indigenous and economically challenged populations through a range of innovative programs. Since its inception in 2021, JUSTICE has flourished as a majority-girl team committed to expanding opportunities for girls and women in STEM. JUSTICE launched its “STEAM for Girls” initiative in 2023 and held a day-long event that featured robotics workshops, lectures, and practical activities involving all areas of STEM, such as lectures given by women entrepreneurs, chemistry experiments, and design challenges.

In addition to promoting STEM participation among girls and women, JUSTICE supports its community by collaborating with local organizations to host robotics workshops and donate clothing, toys, books, and education materials. The team has aided other local *FIRST* teams in Brazil, assisting with the translation of video submissions and organizing video conferences to help teams prepare for competitions. JUSTICE has also extended its outreach to Brazil’s Indigenous populations, sending robotics kits to the Anjo Bom community to expand STEM opportunities even further.

In just a few short years, JUSTICE has become a beacon of empowerment, inclusion, and innovation in its community. The team’s ongoing commitment to empowering others is shaping a brighter, more inclusive future in STEM for Brazil and beyond.



Leveling the STEM Playing Field: Warriors of East Harlem

In East Harlem, *FIRST* alum and mentor Brian Green is making sure students from economically challenged neighborhoods in New York City understand success is not about where you are from – it is about where you believe you can go. Under Brian's guidance, the 40 students who make up *FIRST* Robotics Competition Team 1880 "Warriors of East Harlem" show what is possible through the power of STEM and mentorship.

The team is part of the East Harlem Tutorial Program (EHTP)'s no-cost Out-of-School Time (OST) program, which recruits from 39 schools across New York City. The OST program gives students access to a range of resources, including STEM competitions, they might not receive at their own schools in preparation for life post-high school. Between the program resources and Brian's careful mentorship, *FIRST* students are performing better in school, their in-school attendance has improved, and they understand their potential to be leaders in all they set out to conquer.

The Warriors of East Harlem recognize community engagement is as important as academic achievement. The team actively participates in college mentoring programs, advocates at anti-bullying and wellness fairs, hosts expos to promote STEM engagement, and recently built a Little Free Library amid public housing in East Harlem. In addition, the student team members mentor the program's six *FIRST* LEGO League Challenge teams, where many members began their own *FIRST* journeys.

Thanks to the Warriors of East Harlem's community efforts to promote STEM, EHTP was one of five organizations awarded a 2023 *FIRST* STEM Equity Community Innovation Grant, allowing it to expand its robotics program across three elementary and middle schools. Last season, the Warriors also won awards at regional *FIRST* Robotics Competition events, recognizing the student team members' commitment to promoting engineering within their community.

"I WANT TO ENSURE STUDENTS CAN SEE THEMSELVES IN THE STEM ARENA. THEY NEED TO KNOW YOU DON'T HAVE TO HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS. IF YOU TAKE A CHANCE AND TRY SOMETHING NEW, THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS."

– Brian Green, *FIRST* alum and mentor, Warriors of East Harlem





Kelli is a *FIRST* alum, mentor, and president of the *FIRST* Illinois Robotics Alumni Association. As an LED video engineer and content systems manager at Graystone Media, Kelli mixes engineering and design to create in-arena LED showpieces for clients such as the NBA, PGA, and The Walt Disney Company.

"THE PEOPLE WHO SUPPORT YOU WHILE YOU'RE ON A FIRST TEAM ARE THE PEOPLE THAT WILL STAND BY YOUR SIDE THROUGH THICK AND THIN AND CELEBRATE YOU FOR YOU. I DOUBT YOU'LL FIND FRIENDSHIPS LIKE THESE ANYWHERE ELSE."



Sarah has been deeply involved with *FIRST* for 20 years as a team member, mentor, and coach. As a senior product manager at John Deere, a *FIRST* Strategic Partner, she helps farmers and agriculturalists by applying her *FIRST*-learned STEAM skills to the autonomous tractor. Her experience with *FIRST* helped her learn how to adapt swiftly and lead teams.

"SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT SKILLS I LEARNED FROM FIRST WERE THE WILLINGNESS AND CURIOSITY TO LEARN. THIS NOT ONLY HELPED ME EXCEL ACADEMICALLY, BUT ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO MY SUCCESS IN MY PROFESSIONAL CAREER AS I BRANCH INTO THE AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY SIDE WITH JOHN DEERE."



Zain is a *FIRST* alum volunteer, coach, and mentor. He is currently pursuing a master's degree at the University of Technology in Sydney, Australia, in mechatronics, a branch of engineering that combines mechanics and software. Zain's time in *FIRST* helped him discover his passion for hands-on engineering and exploring the endless possibilities made available through STEM.

"WHEN I STARTED MY JOURNEY WITH FIRST, I LACKED CONFIDENCE IN MY ABILITIES AND DIDN'T THINK A STEM CAREER WAS IN MY FUTURE. WORKING AS PART OF A TEAM COMPLETELY TRANSFORMED MY ASPIRATIONS AND SKYROCKETED MY ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AS WELL AS MY SELF-ESTEEM, AND IT INSPIRED ME TO PURSUE A PROFESSION IN ENGINEERING."



2023-2024 SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

Our 2023-2024 season theme, **FIRST® IN SHOW™** presented by Qualcomm, shined a spotlight on the roles STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) skills play in the arts and empowered our youth participants to bring their ideas to life and create the future they dream of. Through program challenges that inspire young people to create innovative solutions through robotics, our teams used their curiosity, creativity, and artistry to design and build a world of endless possibilities.

FIRST. IN SHOW.™

PRESENTED BY **Qualcomm**

A SEASON IN NUMBERS

785,000+

students impacted

4,500+

official FIRST events

111

countries with
FIRST presence

430,000+

volunteer, mentor, and educator roles

33 million+

volunteer, mentor, and educator hours

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS



FIRST founder Dean Kamen, Mark Rober, and FIRST CEO Chris Moore at FIRST Championship

FIRST engaged more participants in life-changing robotics programs than any previous year during the FIRST IN SHOW season, with overall **youth participation growing 17%** from the 2022-2023 season.

FIRST continued to influence culture with youth robotics, partnering with top **YouTube creators Mark Rober and Ryan's World** and showing up in leading media publications like The New York Times and Forbes to share the FIRST mission.

FIRST awarded **five outstanding community organizations 2023 STEM Equity Community Innovation Grants**, a competitive annual program that has granted \$3 million to community leaders since 2016 to develop innovative approaches to close the STEM education gap.



The Class of 2024 signs a banner at FIRST Championship

FIRST founder Dean Kamen and i.am/Angel foundation founder will.i.am hosted the **2023 FIRST Inspire Gala** in Miami. The event included a special tribute to FIRST Board member Ursula Burns.

In celebration of Google's 25th anniversary, **Google.org announced \$6.5 million in grants** to FIRST to further its work introducing students to the latest technology, like AI, and preparing them for the jobs of tomorrow.



A FIRST participant shows will.i.am and Kamen a student-built robotic scooter at the FIRST Inspire Gala

FIRST celebrated key community milestone moments during the 2023-2024 season, including:

- **Walk Like Woodie Day (October 11, 2023)**, a day of recognition in honor of the late **Dr. Woodie Flowers**, who helped establish the ethos of FIRST by coining the term *Gracious Professionalism* and nurturing its meaning in his every action.
- **35 Years of FIRST (March 20, 2024)** marked the 35th anniversary of the organization's founding with a fundraising day that included a virtual auction and sharing of FIRST photos and memories across social media.
- **FIRST Signing Day (May 20, 2024)**, an end-of-season celebration to share congratulations and next steps of graduating FIRST alumni, whether education, enlistment, or employment.



AGES 4-16 (GRADES PREK-8)



In **MASTERPIECESM FIRST[®] LEGO[®]** League participants explored the role STEM plays in the arts, then put their skills to work to imagine and innovate. Discover and Explore students built a LEGO[®] model exploring new ways to create and communicate art across the globe and tracked what they learned in an Engineering Notebook. Explore teams used code to bring their model to life. Challenge teams developed creative, innovative ways to inspire others to learn and be entertained. They also built and programmed an autonomous LEGO robot to solve entertainment-themed missions in the MASTERPIECE Robot Game.



Season Participation

597,000+

students in **91 countries** explored STEM concepts and gained real-world problem-solving experiences through the guided, global *FIRST LEGO League* program.

94%+

of *FIRST LEGO League* coaches indicated* students **increased their problem-solving skills**.

*Source: 2024 *FIRST LEGO League* Explore and Challenge end-of-season surveys



75,000+
Discover students

189,000+
Explore students

333,000+
Challenge students

Spotlight



Hosted by *FIRST* Scandinavia, the ***FIRST LEGO League Open European Championship*** was held in Bodø, Norway, during the MASTERPIECE season, welcoming teams from more than **40 countries**. The event was one of five international open events hosted by Program Delivery Organizations, which together provided 618 opportunities for teams to participate in multinational events beyond *FIRST Championship*.



AGES 12-18 (GRADES 7-12)



Engineers, creators, and inventors understand that art and design are an integral part of great innovations. In **CENTERSTAGESM presented by RTX**, *FIRST*[®] Tech Challenge students used the power of design, creativity, and precision to create new art-inspired experiences and compete in a thrilling head-to-head robotics challenge. Over two-and-a-half minutes of game play with autonomous and driver-controlled sections, teams earned points by scoring pixels on a backdrop, creating mosaics, and launching a drone.



Season Participation

99,000+

students in **81 countries** developed STEM skills, practiced engineering principles, and explored the value of teamwork through *FIRST* Tech Challenge.

98%

of *FIRST* Tech Challenge students say* they **accept input and feedback from others**.

*Source: 2024 *FIRST* Tech Challenge end-of-season survey

Spotlight

***FIRST* Tech Challenge Team 12791 "Iterative Intentions" from Flower Mound, Texas**, received this year's prestigious **Inspire Award** at the 2024 *FIRST* Championship presented by BAE Systems for their sophisticated robot design and focus on sustainability efforts to ensure location and costs are never barriers to participation in *FIRST* in their community. In that same spirit, Iterative Intentions went on to represent Team U.S.A. at the 2024 *FIRST* Global Challenge, an Olympic-style event with teams from 190 countries that is designed to provide access to *FIRST* programs in every nation.





AGES 14-18 (GRADES 9-12)



In **CRESCENDOSM** presented by Haas, *FIRST*[®] Robotics Competition teams were inspired to combine their creative ideas and innovations with engineering and design to entertain and move the world. Teams built and programmed industrial-sized robots to compete in alliances. Their robots earned points during pre-programmed and driver-controlled sections across two-and-a-half minutes of gameplay, collecting and scoring notes in an amp and speaker, climbing on a chain to score notes in a trap, and collaborating to harmonize.

CRESCENDOSM

PRESENTED BY **HAAS**
Gene Haas Foundation

Season Participation

87,000+

students in **28 countries** unlocked real-world engineering concepts, self-confidence, and workforce skills, supported by professional team mentors and sponsors.

98%

of *FIRST* Robotics Competition students say* they **persevere despite challenges or barriers.**

* Source: 2024 *FIRST* Robotics Competition end-of-season survey

Spotlight

For the CRESCENDO season, *FIRST* Robotics Competition introduced the **KitBot**, an optional guided robot build solution tailored to the season's game. The goal of KitBot is to provide a basic robot design that teams can build with basic power tools to complete some tasks in the game. The robot can be iterated on to complete more tasks or improve performance. Teams who used the KitBot resources reported it was a useful tool for training new students and mentors or as a starting point for their robot builds.



2024 *FIRST* CHAMPIONSHIP PRESENTED BY BAE SYSTEMS HIGHLIGHTS



FIRST CHAMPIONSHIP PUTS A SPOTLIGHT ON STUDENTS' STEM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In April 2024, 50,000 people from around the globe gathered at the 2024 *FIRST* Championship presented by BAE Systems to root for more than 1,000 student robotics teams who showcased their STEM skills, creativity, and collaboration.

50,000+
attendees

1,014
robotics teams

5,800
mentors/coaches/
adult supporters

1,400
event volunteers

1.2M+
video views of *FIRST*
influencer content

18,600+
student participants

59
countries

2.7M+
owned/organic social
media impressions

“Qualcomm has supported *FIRST* for the last two decades because we know passion for invention starts at a young age, and today we have many *FIRST* alumni driving innovation at our company. Here at *FIRST* Championship, we have been excited to see the creative ways students designed and built robots to solve this season’s challenges, and we are proud to support them.”

– Angela Baker, vice president and chief sustainability officer, Qualcomm Incorporated



Thank you to our 2024 *FIRST* Championship sponsors who appear on [page 44](#) of this report.

← *FIRST* founder Dean Kamen greets students while visiting the pits, offering words of encouragement to students, volunteers, and supporters.



← Mark Rober, founder of CrunchLabs and NASA-engineer-turned-YouTube-celebrity, spoke to crowds and received the Founder’s Award, presented each year by *FIRST* founder Dean Kamen to one organization or individual for exceptional service in advancing the ideals and mission of *FIRST*.

“Our longstanding partnership with *FIRST* reflects our commitment to fostering the next generation of our industry’s dreamers, planners, and doers. Through *FIRST*, these students are gaining the essential experiences and skills to solve our world’s biggest challenges and create a better tomorrow.”

– Tom Arseneault, president and CEO, BAE Systems, Inc.

“Every year, *FIRST* Championship gets bigger and better, but one thing remains the same: it’s a remarkable and life-changing experience for students of all ages. Not to mention, the competition is as fun, thrilling, and heart-pounding as any other sporting event – but our sport is the only one where every kid on every team can go pro.”

– Chris Moore, CEO, *FIRST*



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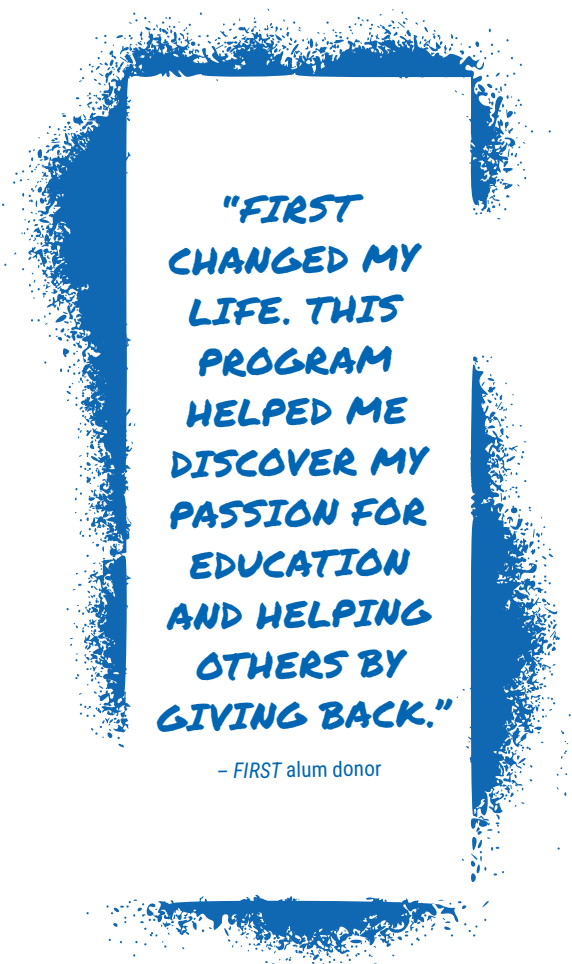
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LOVER OF
LEARNING, I
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 INTEREST
 IN STEM
 EDUCATION, AND
 PREPARES THEM
 FOR A CAREER."**

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— Randy Bumps, vice president for corporate social responsibility, RTX



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— Kathy Looman, director of education, the Gene Haas Foundation

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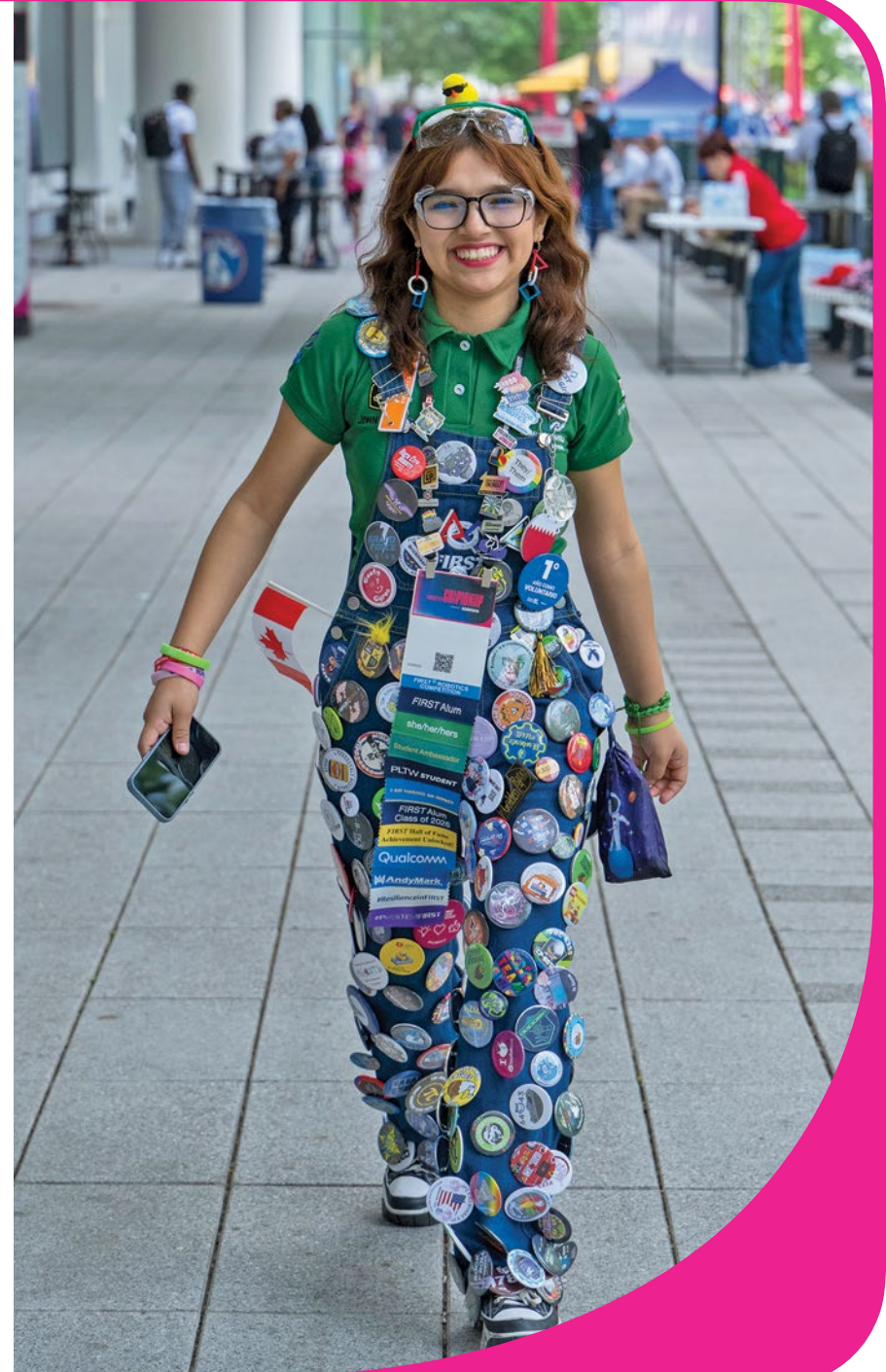


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At the [2024 *FIRST* Championship](#), we honored a few outstanding [event volunteers](#), mentors, and coaches from each of our programs for their contributions of time and talent to the *FIRST* community:

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- **Volunteer of the Year Award:** Scott Goering (Kansas, U.S.A.)
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- **Coach/Mentor Awards:** Alin Dincá (Pitesti, Romania); Werner Flick (Göggingen, Germany); Monica Marques dos Santos (Ourinhos, Brazil); Dave Tomko (Pennsylvania, U.S.A.); Maxwell Kangas (New Mexico, U.S.A.); and Peggy Maricle (Wisconsin, U.S.A.)





FIRST reported an operating surplus in our most recent fiscal year, which ended June 30, 2024. The operating surplus in FY2024 can be primarily attributed to interest earnings on our cash investments, continued support from our generous sponsors, and modest growth in our programs. Noteworthy, the surplus in FY2023 is largely related to the organization's eligibility for the one-time Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC) which FIRST recognized in its entirety in FY2023 but had yet to receive within FY2024.

In FY2024, FIRST served 17 percent more youth participants over FY2023. In keeping with long-time practices, FIRST continues to apply the maximum percentage of funds possible to directly benefit FIRST participants. Delivering quality programs to as many young people as possible continues to be our priority, but economic pressures and inflation have caused increasing challenges. FIRST continues to look for opportunities to manage our expenses through disciplined cost control and sourcing efforts, through the generous donations of our sponsors, and through other one-time opportunities like the ERTC and meticulous cash management. FIRST was fortunate to continue to prioritize investment in important initiatives, such as our Youth Protection Program, Information Technology, Program Evaluations, Diversity & Inclusion Program, and Education Initiative. In the coming year, FIRST also plans to leverage our prior-year operating surpluses to enable our investment in strategic priorities centered around growing the reach and impact of FIRST, reducing barriers to participation, increasing global awareness, and innovation.

As with previous fiscal years, support from generous contributors remained strong. Thousands of individuals, small businesses, corporations, and foundations worldwide maintained or increased their support. In addition, many of our contributors also provided significant support with unrestricted donations, providing FIRST with important flexibility to manage increasing prices and address our most important business needs. This contributed support continued to provide meaningful experiences to hundreds of thousands of youth participants engaged worldwide in FIRST programs.

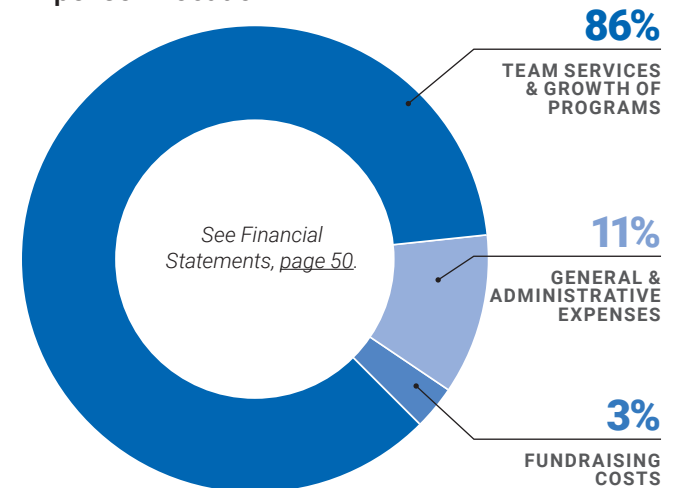


Charity Navigator Four-Star Rating

FIRST has a top-ranked four-star rating from [Charity Navigator](https://www.charitynavigator.org/ein/222990908) for consistently executing its mission in a fiscally responsible way.

SOURCE: <https://www.charitynavigator.org/ein/222990908>

Expense Allocation



STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES	JUNE 30, 2024		JUNE 30, 2023	
REVENUES AND OTHER SUPPORT:				
Program registration fees	\$33,711,657	38.98%	31,432,688	36.54%
Contributions and Grants	15,366,461	17.77%	11,235,979	13.06%
Other income, net of expenses	5,085,421	5.88%	2,580,660	3.00%
Employee retention tax credit	-	0.00%	3,796,478	4.41%
Net assets released from restrictions	32,325,498	37.38%	36,974,858	42.98%
Total revenues (losses) and other support	\$ 86,489,037	100.00%	\$ 86,020,663	100.00%
EXPENSES:				
FIRST Program Expenses	71,663,278	86.07%	69,096,448	85.26%
Net cost of building space occupied by unrelated not-for-profit organizations	313,435	0.38%	321,525	0.40%
General, administrative, and supporting services	8,834,650	10.61%	9,226,630	11.38%
Fundraising and Development	2,447,985	2.94%	2,398,960	2.96%
Total expenses	\$ 83,259,348	100.00%	\$ 81,043,563	100.00%
<i>Operating surplus (deficit)</i>	<i>3,229,689</i>		<i>4,977,100</i>	

STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION	JUNE 30, 2024		JUNE 30, 2023	
ASSETS:				
Cash and cash equivalents*	\$19,781,313	25.68%	\$27,364,744	36.84%
Short-term investments*	32,793,620	42.57%	20,308,745	27.34%
Pledges, receivables, program supply inventory, and other assets	18,952,406	24.60%	22,649,527	30.49%
Net property, plant, and equipment	5,516,225	7.16%	3,956,671	5.33%
Total assets, end of year	\$ 77,043,564	100.00%	\$ 74,279,687	100.00%

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS:				
Total liabilities, end of year	\$ 8,322,517		\$ 8,273,348	
Net assets:				
Unrestricted	36,650,253	53.33%	33,420,564	50.63%
Temporarily restricted	32,070,794	46.67%	32,585,775	49.37%
Total net assets, end of year	\$ 68,721,047	100.00%	\$ 66,006,339	100.00%
Total liabilities and net assets, end of year	\$ 77,043,564		\$ 74,279,687	

For each of the two fiscal years summarized above, FIRST received unmodified (unqualified) opinions from its independent auditor, BerryDunn.

*NOTE: The cash and short-term investments are comprised of both unrestricted funds and donor temporarily restricted funds. The total liquid assets balance available to FIRST, for operating purposes, at June 30, 2024, is equivalent to approximately four months of FIRST operating expenses.

The financial information presented here is condensed and does not include the value of all donated services and materials. Audited Financial Statements (AFS) are readily available on our website at firstinspires.org under "About/Annual Report & Financials."

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Learn more about FIRST Leadership at www.firstinspires.org/about/leadership

Listing current as of November 2024

FIRST® is a global robotics community preparing young people for the future.

PURPOSE

FIRST exists to prepare the young people of today for the world of tomorrow.

VISION

To transform our culture by creating a world where science and technology are celebrated and where young people dream of becoming science and technology leaders.

MISSION

To provide life-changing robotics programs that give young people the skills, confidence, and resilience to build a better world.

CORE VALUES

Discovery

We explore new skills and ideas.

Innovation

We use creativity and persistence to solve problems.

Impact

We apply what we learn to improve our world.

Inclusion

We respect each other and embrace our differences.

Teamwork

We are stronger when we work together.

Fun

We enjoy and celebrate what we do!



Founded by inventor Dean Kamen in 1989, FIRST is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, headquartered in Manchester, New Hampshire. 200 Bedford Street, Manchester, NH 03101 | 800.871.8326 | www.firstinspires.org

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