

Chairman's Award - Team 1071

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2017 - Team 1071

Team Number

1071

Team Name, Corporate/University Sponsors

UTC/Lockheed Martin Sikorsky/Wolcott Board of Education & Wolcott High School

Briefly describe the impact of the *FIRST* program on team participants with special emphasis on the 2016/2017 year and the preceding two to five years

The educational atmosphere fostered by Team MAX has promoted 97% of alumni to go to college (the other 3% has gone into technical schools or the military) with 80% of them pursuing STEM. The remaining 20% have learned skills valuable to their intended majors while with the team. Not only have team members learned how to build a robot, but also how to express themselves effectively. Students learned how to use machines and how to communicate with peers and mentors.

Describe the impact of the *FIRST* program on your community with special emphasis on the 2016/2017 year and the preceding two to five years

We've raised over \$2500 in 3 years for cancer research. We enrich STEM education by educating 200 students over 5 years through Science Splash, we run an FLL qualifying event, and run science summer programs. Max has held 12 "Let's Make Stuff" events making over 250 projects. We've made 13 trips to the senior center to spend time with 100+ seniors. Members cleaned the dog park, allowing it to open in addition to making 100+ dog beds for the pound.

Team's innovative or creative method to spread the *FIRST* message

We brought robots to 3 Maker Faires and 13 times to the senior center to spark interest in diverse groups. To reach youth specifically, we have run Science Splash, a program through which we experimentally prove the inherent intrigue of STEM, for 5 years, and volunteered at STEAMFest, which provided kids with hands-on experience with robots. We donated 100+ dog beds, 2 benches, and a table with FIRST and MAX logos on them to the dog park and pound.

Describe examples of how your team members act as role models and inspire other *FIRST* team members to emulate

We have been hosting an FLL Jr. celebration for 4 years, and an FLL competition for 6. For the past 9 years we have run WIWI, an offseason FRC competition where all of our team volunteers and we offer volunteer slots for other teams. At other competitions we have won a total of 4 Gracious Professionalism awards in 4 consecutive years for embodying what it means to be an FRC team by helping others and representing our team proudly.

Describe the team's initiatives to help start or form other FRC teams

Every year we invite pre-rookie teams and interested students to WIWI, and connect them with veteran teams to shadow. We collect and donate practice robots for these students to drive in matches. Nuts and Bolts, the Digital Devils, and the Crosby Bulldogs have formed after becoming interested in FIRST through WIWI in 2011, 2014, and 2016 respectively. We also work with many teams closely as we've shared our shop space with 3 various teams.

Describe the team's initiatives to help start or form other *FIRST* teams (including Jr.FLL, FLL, & FTC)

Team Max has consistently run FLL Jr teams, this year we boasted 10 plus 1 FLL team. We run a FLL Jr. Celebration as well as an FLL Qualifying Tournament. For the past 5 years members have volunteered at the FLL State Championship, filling roles such as Judges, Referees and Ambassadors. We also help FLL members transition into our FRC program and encourage them to continue on in FIRST. This is also our second year running an FTC team in the past 3 years.

Describe the team's initiatives on assisting other *FIRST* teams (including Jr.FLL, FLL, FTC, & FRC) with progressing through the *FIRST* program

In addition to hosting a qualifying tournament for FLL, our team plays a major role in the FLL state tournament by volunteering nearly all of our members. We run an FLL team and 10 FLL Jr. teams. We've run an FLL Jr. event for the past 3 years. Our mentors have volunteered their time to FTC competitions. We also donate equipment and volunteers to Wolcott summer programs. Furthermore, members of MAX have gone on to run other FIRST teams, assisting them by sharing their knowledge.

Describe how your team works with other *FIRST* teams to serve as mentors to younger or less experienced *FIRST* teams (includes Jr.FLL, FLL, FTC, & FRC teams)

Teams like the Crosby Bullbots and Operation PEACCE have been to our shop for programming assistance. This year, MAX and PEACCE held weekly CAD workshops at our school during the off-season. Classes were attended by both students and mentors. We've hosted the statewide Kick Off for 3 years, offering quickbuild and other training in addition to opening rooms for teams to analyze the new challenge. MAX volunteers at many events run by other teams year round.

Describe your Corporate/University Sponsors

Thanks to our excellent relationship with the Wolcott Board of Ed, we are granted exclusive space and resources within our high school with which we can operate, as well as generous funding and other support. Sikorsky, being a technology-based company, especially appreciates FIRST and STEM, and is very attentive and supportive to our endeavors. To show our appreciation, we frequently volunteer at Sikorsky events like Family Day and Camp Sikorsky.

Describe the strength of your partnership with your sponsors with special emphasis on the 2016/2017 year and the preceding two to five years

For the past 5 years the team has strengthened our partnerships with our sponsors. UTC, Sikorsky, and the Wolcott Board of Ed all have logos on the backs of our team shirts, are all mentioned in our team scrapbook, and our website. To support our sponsors, we take part in events like Sikorsky Family Day and Camp Sikorsky. We also demo for the Board of Education annually and volunteer at the UTC sponsored Special Olympics.

Describe how your team would explain what *FIRST* is to someone who has never heard of it

FIRST is a worldwide organization which organizes robotics competitions for 4 types of teams, FLL Jr., FLL, FTC, and FRC. All programs within FIRST teach students about not only engineering and programming, but also teamwork, communication, business management, and volunteerism. FIRST teaches gracious professionalism and cooperation, ideals revolving around the benefits of sportsmanship. The hard fun of FIRST fosters close friendships and gives students a sense of accomplishment and self worth.

Briefly describe other matters of interest to the *FIRST* judges, if any

Team Max allows everyone interested to join regardless of where they are from or if they are homeschooled. We do not charge a fee to be on the team or demand qualifications prior to joining, we are open to everyone. Team MAX's only requirements for admission are an appreciation for STEM, a desire to learn and a commitment to your fellow teammates..

Team Captain/Student Representative that has double-checked this submission.

Alex Herren

Essay

Since 2003, Team MAX has worked hard to positively impact our school, our town, and FIRST. There is so much to share with you, but first we want to talk about our new motto;

"Let's Make Stuff"

This motto highlights our attitude while reminding us of a team strength. Team MAX has the willingness to help others and the ability to make a difference.

Let's Make a difference

We help in so many ways that we couldn't possibly list them all here. All of our programs have been running strong for years while we look for new opportunities. We help individual kids with school projects by making our meetings public and our members available to help. We assist the Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts with badges.

Let's Make local charities and organizations stronger

Team MAX has developed many relationships with groups in need. For three years, MAX has hosted Pizza Wars, raising \$2,500 for the American Cancer Society. This fundraiser has been successful due to the support of 10 local restaurants that showcase their food at this event. We have a mobile bone marrow testing lab on site at our "Where is Wolcott Invitational". Over the past 4 years Team MAX has also built over 100 dog beds out of PVC pipe and cloth for local animal shelters in need. This was the start of a growing relationship with our local animal shelter where we have also painted a colorful mural on the front of the building and raised \$800. Our technical skills were perfect for their next need: building a remote control dog trap. This trap helps capture lost dogs as well as wild animals for relocation. Our connection to four-legged residents was a driving force in opening our town's dog park last year, as we cleaned up the space for use and built two benches and a picnic table. Because Team MAX has such a tremendous impact on the local community, we are the first group that people turn to when they need help because they know we won't hesitate to provide assistance.

Let's Make strong connections with our sponsors

We have been working with Sikorsky at their events. At Sikorsky Family Day we let guests drive that season's robot.

Another event is Sikorsky Day, where we teach programming and design for LEGO creations. At the yearly UTC sponsored Special Olympics in we volunteer and help make sure the event runs as smoothly as possible.

Let's Make creative connections to our community

Because Team MAX is so active, we see that people are eager to build and learn. As an effort to provide hands-on exciting STEM experiences for our community members, we introduced our "Let's Make Stuff" program. These workshops started in 2015, inspired by the maker movement. "Let's Make Stuff" brings kids into our shop monthly to work on projects that showcase technology. These projects include teaching how to program an arduino, build a catapult, complete a circuit, and more. It also serves as a way to spread the word of FIRST as we showcase the programs and our robot at every event. As of February 9, 2017, we have hosted 12 Let's Make Stuff events, making over 250 projects. This success has prompted us to have our first 'Let's Make Stuff' for adults planned for this February.

MAX maintains a close relationship with the Wolcott Senior Center, making 13 trips in the past 3 years. We serve and eat meals alongside the mayor and about 100 seniors while demystifying technology such as smartphones, and demonstrating our robot for them. Also for the past 4 years we have run a booth at the Wolcott Country Fair and provided fair volunteers. Over three days, about 30,000 people see robot demos, and learn about our team and FIRST. In addition, we observe the tradition of walking in our town's Memorial Day Parade.

When we can't physically interact with our supporters, members of the team diligently update our various social media outlets daily. On Facebook we have 4 pages:

- * FIRST Team MAX - 488 followers from 13 countries
- * MAX 1071 - Is our team website for current members. Alumni, mentors and parents
- * Agua - 300 followers from 10 countries
- * Let's Make Stuff - 56 followers

On Twitter, we have 1,112 followers. On Instagram we have 1104 followers with an average of 129 likes per post. The main interest of our audience is technology, closely followed by tech news and science news. Our hashtag across all of our social medias is #LetsMakeStuff.

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Let's Make STEM programs that educate and excite

Since 2011 we have run a week long after-school program called "Science Splash" at elementary schools. Science Splash promotes STEM and FIRST by having students perform engaging experiments involving everything from spectrometers, to chemical reactions, to electromagnets. Science Splash has welcomed a minimum of 20 students per session and showcased 110 experiments to over 200 students so far. It currently runs in 2 elementary schools and has ALWAYS been filled to capacity.

MAX volunteers at Wolcott Summer Studies, where we have founded and staffed three different courses. Summer programs is a 5 week program for students grades K-7. We started and assisted in the following classes:

- * LEGO Robotics - 10 years running, 4 Classes a day, 24 students a class. 960 Students
- * The Science of Art - 2 Years running, 2 classes a day, 24 students a class, 96 students
- * Endless Creations with the Arduino - 1 Year running, 1 class, 24 students

All of these classes will run next summer and into the future.

Team MAX also takes advantage of a great many existing programs to spread the word of FIRST. Last year alone, members were invited to represent NE FIRST at 2 Maker Faires, and reached over 2,000 people. We also attended the first ESPN STEAMFest with Operation PEACCE (FRC 3461) and the Digital Devils (FRC 5129), inspiring over 700 people by giving kids hands-on experiences with our FLL and FRC robots. In addition to these technology oriented programs, we have been on Better Connecticut (WFSB) in 2013 and 2016. We also ran a FIRST booth at the 2015 Traveler's Championship, a highly publicized professional golf tournament. Having a presence at these events is a major part of being on Team MAX because they help us better inform others of the world of science, technology, engineering, art, and math.

Let's Make ways to impact students

Team MAX greatly impacts the lives of students by providing numerous initiatives. We provide experiences for team members to be leaders and problem solvers. The educational atmosphere fostered by Team MAX has prepared students for college as proven by:

- * 97% of our students go on to college
- * 80% pursue a STEM field
- * A 2:1 student to mentor ratio where working alongside industry professionals gives students a leading edge as they move on to enter the workforce themselves.
- * Jobs and internships with our sponsors

MAX teaches the importance of giving back to the FIRST community with 25% of alumni volunteering at a wide range of events. Weekly slushie nights, our Lord of the Bling competition, and dance lessons, give our team members an opportunity to have fun and bond. We have so much fun we invite other teams as well. Team MAX's all-encompassing acceptance eradicates fear of judgment, prompting students to shed their shells and practice communicating confidently and effectively. This helps students plan for their future and empowers them to accomplish their goals.

Let's Make our team a leader in spreading the word of FIRST

Team MAX understands the importance of providing an avenue through all of the FIRST programs. We support the entire progression of FIRST programs. This year we have:

- * 10 FLL jr. teams Started in 2009
- * 2 FLL teams Started in 2000
- * 1 FTC team Started in 2015
- * 1 FRC team Started in 2003

To support these programs Team MAX runs:

1. An FRC Invitational event called "WIWI" (Where Is Wolcott Invitational). This event has run for 9 years and has become the final event of the school year for many teams. We host the event for 24 established FRC teams. But also WIWI serves as a platform for new experiences.

* Pre- rookie teams - We are thrilled with the results of our pre-rookies program. Over the years many schools have come to WIWI where they have been giving a robot for the day to compete with. Some teams that experienced FRC for the first at WIWI were Team 5129 - Digital Devils, Team 3525 - Nuts and Bolts of Fury, and Team 5856 - Crosby Bulldogs.

* Mentor robot/volunteer robot - the ONLY competition that gives adults a chance to compete in the event with the actual teams.

* Guest game announcers - Want to try to be a play by play announcer? This is your chance!

2. The Wolcott State Qualifying FLL Competition. Team MAX hosts one of the 6 state qualifying events for FLL. This event has run for 6 years. It has become a surprisingly popular method for spreading the word of FIRST in Wolcott. It consistently brings in volunteers from the community and in excess of 30 student volunteers from Wolcott High School that are non FRC members.

3. The Connecticut FRC Kick-Off. For 3 years and running Team MAX has hosted kick-off to CT teams. Along with the broadcast, the team is in charge of training, field display, and kit distribution.

4. The Wolcott FLL jr. Celebration. Team MAX has run 3 celebrations so far which uses all members of our team. The day includes a model scavenger hunt, reporting sessions, challenge themed games, and awards.

Let's Make sure our team incorporates all of the ideals of FIRST

We are very proud of what our team has accomplished through the years. Our members dedicate an excess of 30 man hours yearly to community events and another 30 man hours yearly for FIRST events. We do so many different things it is hard to do them justice in this essay. While there is always room for improvement, we feel Team MAX incorporates all of the ideals of FIRST.

Let's Make Team MAX the Chairman's Award recipient