

Letters from 2016 WHS Robotics Team

Dear sponsors

Thank you for giving us the funds to build a robot and giving us a chance to participate in the FIRST Robotics competition. This experience has given me many skills as well as lessons that I can carry on into my adult life.

One of the skills that I have gained is learning how to use various tools, like using a drill press, various hand tools, and saws.

Another skill that I gained is at a basic level is learning how to program using C++. Working with the programming has given me a first hand experience in what it would be like to have that be my career if I so choose. Some of the lessons I gained throughout the experience is being able to work with a team and create a product in a timely fashion. This ability to work well with others will help me in my future as well, whether it be working for a big company or even just waiting tables at my local diner.

This program is beneficial to all who join no matter their history of working with tools or electrical appliances, or even with a computer. The tone and attitude that FIRST Robotics promotes allows students to enter a healthy work environment and as result lets them get out of their comfort zone in a cool and always changing creative new ways. Being a senior, I will not have to privilege to participate in next year's competition. But having the funds, which were so generously given by you, allowed me to have not only new found skills and lessons but also come away with great memories that I'll never forget.

Best regards,

Ethan Layne

Dear Sponsors,

Thank you for donating to our club to help fund our way to the FIRST Robotics Competition. Being that we were the first ever Robotics team at Winters High School, we had no knowledge about what to expect or how much money and effort would be needed to develop a strong robot worth competing against. We learned so much through this experience and bonded together as a team. We now know the mechanics of building a robot, basic welding and tool work, and how to work with others to accomplish our goal.

We did not expect there to be so many small complications when entering the Robotics competition. We needed to build a website, create t-shirts, document all of our materials and more. This all needed to be done in a small matter of time and we were very overwhelmed. But, as a team, we completed everything that need to be done and handled the sometimes stressful tasks with grace. In doing so, we practiced and improved our communication, mechanical, and technical skills to make sure these tasks were complete.

The strongest, and most valuable lesson we learned during this experience is the importance of teamwork and communication. We couldn't of finished everything that we have without everyone helping out and doing their part. We each had a job and we completed it knowing that if we didn't, we would let the rest of our team down. We grew as robotic technicians and as students. None of this would've been possible without my team, our mentor, and you, our sponsor.

Thank you for giving us this opportunity to make stronger friendships and understand the value of teamwork.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Franco

Dear sponsors,

Thank you very much for supporting my school's robotics team. Building and competing with the robot was a blast and I learned a lot from the experience. I wish we could have started the robotics program earlier so that my first year competing wouldn't be my last since this is my senior year of high school.

I learned a lot about general wiring and pneumatics. I had never gotten to build anything as complicated as our robot before, and the part I helped with most independently was the wiring. I had to set up the components as the diagram suggested, strip and connect wires, and solve design problems involving the limited space for the wiring inside the robot.

I gained a lot of experience and knowledge in problem solving and design during the whole season. During build season and the competition there was problem after problem, but we always ended up solving it. The competition was the most fun overall though, it was great to see all the other teams' unique robots and strategies. The competition ended up being really communication and strategy based. We had to scout out other teams who we were paired with and against, and in between matches some had to strategize quickly with other teams while others worked on the robot. We all got to drive the robot, which was very fun, but Austin was the driver for the competition. We learned to work together as a team and to be able to rely on each other to get the jobs done. It was challenging to compete with a small team, small school, and limited funds, but we couldn't have done it without our sponsors.

Thank you again,

Matthew Holmes

Dear Sponsors,

Thank you so much for donating to our club. Your donation helped fund our way to the FIRST Robotic Competition. This was Winters High School's first ever robotics team, so we did not know what to expect. Our robotics team is made up of many different parts but we all worked together to create more than just the robot. As a team we built a website, facebook page, created t-shirts and documented all of our materials.

We were even more surprised when we arrived to the competition. When we arrived, we were placed into an unfamiliar situation, and though at first we were confused, after our first match, we began to learn the ways of the game. As a team, we worked together on strategizing and collaborating with the teams we were partnered up with. As the day went by, we became more sure of ourselves and even began to take charge of how we wanted to play the next match.

Robotics has given me the chance to learn new things, acquire 21st century skills, and has helped to acquire better people skills. After my first experience with robotics, I can say that this club has truly become something that I want to continue with. Dealing with the robot was a team effort ,and without communicating and including everyone, we wouldn't have been able to do as well as we did.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to learn new things and helping us find our new favorite activity.

Sincerely,

Lizbeth Mendoza

Dear sponsors,

Thank you all so very much for sponsoring my school's robotics team. Working with the team and competing in the robotics competition was tons of fun and I got a lot of experience out of it too. If I knew it would've been this fun I would've joined a lot sooner.

I'm not like the other members of the team. I don't know anything about coding or wiring or the mechanisms that go into making a robot. My math teacher wanted me to join when he needed a graphic designer on the team to help with making the team logo and flag and such. And while my time with the team was shorter than the rest of my teammates, I still had fun while I was with them, whether it was from me working on the flag while they tinkered with the robot or standing beside them as we watched our robot battle it out in the arena. The competition didn't turn in our favor in the end, but it was the experience we got out of it is what really matters. We learned to work with one another by spying on other teams, planning out our strategy, and just having fun together in general. I was chosen to be the flag bearer and wave the flag around whenever our team was announced. Basically the face and spirit of the team if I do say so myself. The whole time with the team was 10 times better than I previously thought and it's thanks to you, our sponsors, that helped us to gain this experience. Thank you again!

~Fox Marie

Winters High School Students attend a field trip at the UC Davis Mondavi Center

By: Anne Guidici, Winner of the Newspaper Article Writing Contest

On Friday, October 23rd, at the Mondavi Center in Davis, 65 Winters High students, myself included, were privileged enough to witness a traditional yet moving performance by Julie Fowlis, an innovative Scottish folk singer. She and her three instrumental musicians performed a variety of Gaelic songs, with their own modern touches.

First, some background information. Fowlis is a multi-award winning Gaelic singer that was brought up on the Scottish island of North Uist. She made history in the December of 2014 by being the first solo Gaelic artist to win a Scottish Music Award, although the younger portion of the general population probably know her for her songs in the Disney Pixar animated movie, *Brave*.

Fowlis and her small band told stories through their songs, stories just as numerous as their talents. For example, we were told a myth about a little girl who, one day was herding sheep on a hill, when she came across a boy of her age. He seemed nice enough at first, and they got to talking. But when she turned her back to tend to one of the sheep, the boy turned into a notorious monster, grabbed her, and kept her prisoner in his lair. She eventually escaped by putting him to sleep with a lullaby, which just so happened to be one of the songs Fowlis performed. We were taught about Gaelic lineage, culture, and holidays. Apparently, in old Scotland, on Halloween, people didn't go around saying "Trick or Treat", but performed dancing songs in exchange for small bits of food.

On top of the educational benefits of the performance, there was also the wow factor of how utterly talented the musicians were, especially Fowlis. She not only sang in English, Scottish, and Gaelic, but also played several instruments, including the bagpipes, a tin whistle, which is basically like a miniature flute, and a squeezebox, a cousin of the accordion. The members of the band all played stringed instruments: an acoustic guitar, a violin, and the most weirdly named one by far, the Irish bouzouki (boo-**zoo**-kee).

Despite my mother being born in Spain and my father being nearly three-quarters Italian, Julie Fowler's performance left me feeling impressed, but suddenly un-cultured.