



FIRST awards

Chairman's Website Woodie Flowers

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Event: **Chesapeake Regional**
Submitted: 02/22/2007

Your Team Number: 1727
Team Name, Corporate / University Sponsors: NASA Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC)/AAI & Dulaney High School

Images:



Briefly describe the impact of the FIRST program on team participants with special emphasis on the 2006/2007 year and the preceding two years. Team 1727 has doubled in size over the past year. To train new members, the team held a Vex and Sumobot competition in the fall of 2006. Last year's two alumni are now in college, majoring in engineering. All current seniors now plan study science or engineering in college as well. Because the team is student run, it requires greater initiative from members. In return, members gain broader opportunities in leadership, design, entrepreneurship and management.

Examples of role model characteristics for other teams to emulate. Team 1727 seeks to create individuals who take initiative to solve problems through cooperation. The organization is student run, focusing on the development of leadership in its members. New members learn from their more experienced peers, who in turn learn how to be teachers and role models. Members are heavily encouraged to take part in community service, especially in robotics at local elementary and middle schools. Also, the team successfully uses small businesses and parents for support.

Describe the impact of the FIRST program on your team and community with special emphasis on the 2006/2007 year and the preceding two years. The FIRST program at Dulaney High School is opening new doors for the community. Within Dulaney, the team is rapidly gaining popularity through an aggressive advertising campaign. In the community, many of the young participants in the team's Vex and NXT programs, though new to robotics, plan to continue involvement in FIRST programs. Through grassroots fundraisers, the team reached local families previously unaware of FIRST, encouraging their children to become involved with robotics as well.

Teams innovative methods to spread the FIRST message. Team 1727 took the initiative to found the Baltimore Area Alliance last year, an association of eight area teams. This year, the team hosted the first annual BAA fundraising dinner, which was attended by representatives from the county board of education and Nasa. The team is rapidly developing a Vex and Lego NXT program for local schools, including a summer camp in 2006 for which Johns Hopkins University was a partner. In addition, the team is considering hosting a Vex regional competition.

Describe the strength of your partnership with special emphasis on the 2006/2007 year and the preceding two years. Team 1727 has established many close community partnerships. The most successful of these partners has been the AAI Corporation. Many company employees at AAI are alumni of Dulaney High, and this year there have been six mentors from AAI working with team 1727. Last year, the team toured AAI's Hunt Valley, MD facility. This year, AAI is providing three internships for Dulaney students and in return two of AAI's leading mentors were honored at the team's Carraba's Night fundraiser.

Teams communication methods and results. Team 1727 publishes a newsletter, which is sent to school officials, parents, mentors, sponsors and businesses in the community. The team also provides information through its award winning website, which features a forum and a calendar of team events. Emails are also used to keep parents well informed. At public events, the team presents the message of FIRST through slide shows and videos. This campaign has been effective, as evident from high parent involvement and sponsor recruitment.

Other matters of interest to the FIRST judges, if any.

The parents of Team 1727 are a key to the team's success. They have contributed countless hours and unfaltering support, especially over the arduous six week build season. They have helped the team establish partnerships with sponsors, often convincing their employers to support FIRST robotics. All parents have contributed to the team through their expertise, which has ranged from making a lion mascot to providing technical knowledge for the robot's devices.

In only our second year of participation in FIRST Robotics, Rex has already made a major impact on our team, our school, the FIRST community and our local community. We chose our name because we wanted to set a goal to be a role model for future teams. The name Rex means "king" in Latin. Rex aspires to foster leaders in our school and community. Our team took the lead in forming the Baltimore Area Alliance, uniting eight teams across the Baltimore area to promote education, team support, and community outreach. After last year's success as Rookie All-Star winners, we raised popularity and awareness of FIRST and its ideals in our school and more than doubled our team's size.

Involvement in REX teaches members important skills in teamwork, leadership, business management, and engineering design. The team stresses student leadership. A core leadership group makes key decisions with the help of the team's faculty mentor. Though mentors are heavily involved and encouraged to provide guidance, the team feels that giving students the primary responsibility for making both business and engineering design decisions is of utmost importance. These decision-making roles prepare members as they move on to the real world, where they will be in similar positions of leadership.

Over the past two years REX has instilled a passion for engineering and science in its members. The two graduates from our rookie year are now both attending engineering programs in college, and one of them received two scholarships associated with the FIRST program. Of the current seniors, all have committed to study science or engineering in college. Interest in technology is also growing throughout the school. The team's membership has increased from about twenty-five members to fifty, and REX is now the second largest club in the school.

Team parents have enthusiastically commented on the positive impact that Team 1727 has had on their children. Participation in REX has strengthened students' self-esteem, given them a feeling of belonging to a community, and developed career interests. "FIRST enables us to channel our ambitions into positive changes for the community," says team president, Alex Hristov.

Team member, Courtney Dunham reports that prior to FIRST, she was not interested in engineering. "Before I became involved with our robotics team, I wasn't sure what I wanted to do after high school. Now I am interested in engineering. I didn't think I would like physics, but decided to try it this year, knowing that I would need it for engineering. I found out that I really do like physics, and I am pursuing plans to become an aeronautical engineer."

The members of REX provide strength for each other. Each student excels in a different area, and provides help in building the robot or any other necessary area. Then in turn, they pass along their knowledge to the newer members of the club, who learn from the alumni and perfect upon their ideas, building a community that feeds itself and grows through new membership.

In addition to the FIRST Robotics Competition, our team also holds internal competitions in Vex and Sumobot, facilitating year-round involvement. We held one such competition for new members in December as an introduction to the design process. We invited sponsors and parents, and over one hundred people attended. In addition to the competition, these events serve as an information session for parents and as an important pre-build-season meeting between parents, members, mentors, and sponsors.

Dulaney Robotics has truly lived up to its name, REX, by being a leader in the community and spreading interest in robotics to younger students. Last summer, the team ran a camp for middle school students in partnership with the Johns Hopkins University. Twenty-one students participated in each of two weekly sessions. Students learned to construct Vex robots and got to keep their kits.

Last year, we held robot demonstrations at local middle and elementary schools. This fall, we followed through on our plans to expand community outreach by conducting several all-day workshops using NXT and Vex for groups of eighteen to twenty-four students. Flyers were distributed to two middle schools, six elementary schools and team families and friends, spreading the message of FIRST to many people. Seeing the excitement of kids learning about robots for the first time made our efforts worthwhile. Just as our mentors provide guidance and inspiration for REX, we foster interest in science and technology in younger students, many of whom will be future members of Team 1727.

The workshops are preparatory for starting FLL and Vex teams next fall. We also plan to host a regional competition for Vex and volunteer for Habitat for Humanity. Team members participate as leaders in numerous other school and community activities.

We also raised community awareness through numerous fundraisers and partnerships with corporate sponsors and local businesses. Without the partnerships of our sponsors, AAI, Raytheon, SAIC, Black & Decker, Select Associates, the Meoli Family, Dresher Foundation, Wal-Mart Foundation, Northrop Grumman, JMT, the Hecht Family, Cleaners of America, Crawford Advisors, LLC, KLMK, and NASA Goddard, none of our efforts to expand the community's knowledge and understanding about FIRST would have been possible.

Due to our close relationship with AAI, the firm is providing internships for three Dulaney seniors. In our first year, they initially donated, and when we qualified for the championship, they donated more!

At the beginning of the school year we had close to 5,000 dollars in our account. Through our many fundraisers, including team dinner nights and fundraising days at Barnes & Noble and Sam's Club, we plan to finance a large portion of next year's expenses. By demonstrating our robot, showing team videos, distributing literature, and talking with the public at our fundraisers, we spread the message of FIRST. REX's mailing list includes hundred's of area businesses who all receive news of the team's activities and information about FIRST Robotics. Our Carrabba's Night is our biggest event of the year, in which we invite community partners, parents, and mentors to demonstrate what FIRST is all about, while getting to know each other.

To spread knowledge about technology and engineering in our club, we have attended tours of partner companies, such as Black & Decker, AAI, and Bovis. These tours create and strengthen the drive of club members to pursue a technology-based career, and

cement the bonds with our community partners.

The team is also busy generating interest in FIRST by writing letters to our congressmen and other government officials, as recommended in Dean's Homework assignment. In addition to relating the urgent need to increase interest in science and technology and address the shortage of engineers, we invited elected officials to visit our team at work and attend competitions.

Over the past year and a half, we raised awareness in our school by holding demonstrations and fundraisers, as well as being featured on the televised Live on Five news show and in school publications.

After we returned from the regionals, we held demonstrations of our robot throughout school lunch periods, where hundreds of people saw the robot, and many came over to find out more. As half-time entertainment during a school basketball game, we held a shoot-off between the star player and the robot.

We produced several videos showing us in full spirit at the competitions to recruit new members to the team. Team 1727 was featured in the school newspaper The Griffin, which is read by more than two thousand students at Dulaney.

Last spring, REX started the Baltimore Area Alliance (BAA to help local teams with fundraising and team support. Through our major fundraiser, the Outback Steakhouse Dinner, we raised \$1000 per team and generated interest and enthusiasm about FIRST throughout the greater Baltimore community. Students, teachers, administrators, school board members, parents, mentors, and sponsors from different teams were able to interact, demonstrate robots, and share resources. Members of 1727 created the BAA website with an information-sharing forum, increasing communication with local teams. Plans for next fall include a joint training program.

In only one and a half years, Team 1727 has taken great steps toward truly living up to our name "REX" and fulfilling our goal of promoting leadership within our team, school, and community. The team has evolved into a well-managed and internally-led program, one dedicated to the development of its members through facilitating leadership opportunities, fostering relationships with mentors, and providing hands-on opportunities in engineering. "FIRST," says team member David Schneider, "is a realistic representation of the real world where a team of engineers are working under a deadline and under budget constrictions...I enjoy FIRST because of the innovation required." By encouraging students to explore solutions to engineering challenges, team members learn to "think outside the box."

REX 1727 has broadened awareness of FIRST, utilizing our award-winning website and a multi-faceted communication system encompassing school activities, outreach programs, and community fundraisers. In the community, REX has partnered with businesses new to FIRST, as well as those who have been involved before, and has helped to organize the Baltimore Area Alliance. The team has spread robotics to a total of eight local elementary and middle schools through Vex and Lego NXT programs, and plans to host a Vex regional in future years. With the honor of three awards in our Rookie year, we are looking ahead to continued expansion as we strive to become a beacon of teamwork, leadership, and enthusiasm for science and technology in our communities and within the FIRST organization.

This entry was submitted towards fulfilling the Nasa Grant requirements.

By entering my name below, I agree that I have read my teams Regional Chairman's Award submission and have personal knowledge that the statements and claims made are complete and accurate.

Team Captain / Student Representative :

Alexander Hristov

Team Mentor :

Brian Bruneau