

Selected Event: SBPLI Long Island Regional

Team Number: 358

Team Name: BAE Systems & Hauppauge High School

Team Sponsors: BAE Systems

Impact on Team Members

FIRST has done its job in Hauppauge. Technology has become the "new cool." Not only has our team doubled in size in the past three years (with an increase from 2 to 7 female students), but higher percentages of students graduating from FIRST are pursuing STEM as a career. A large portion of the team consists of underclassmen, indicating more growth for years to come. Alumni are attending WPI, RPI, MIT and other great schools for a variety of studies all built upon a foundation from the team.

Role Model Characteristics

FRC team 358 is a family. There is no other club or team in our district as close-knit as we are; it must be the late nights and great trips! We hope our evident brotherhood (and sisterhood) is contagious to other teams and organizations at any FIRST and non-FIRST event we attend. Our family is defined by shared values: gracious professionalism on a personal level. Respect, friendliness, and the eagerness to lend a hand apply to interactions among students both to other teams and within our own.

Impact on Community

FIRST has proven to our community how fun technology is. The once overshadowed robotics team has grown from a small club to one of the largest, most well-known and successful teams in the school district. This is a team that is represented at almost every community event. 358 has been invited to multiple board of education meetings and other teams' districts to spread our message. Our showcasing at the middle school science fair has even caused their LEGO robotics club to nearly triple in size.

Innovative Methods to Spread FIRST

Our team is a common face to the district, but we strive to spread FIRST beyond the scope of our schools. We've had many recent public exhibitions to show off the product of just six weeks. We demonstrated older robots at Sear's Hardware, a community Applebee's pancake breakfast, the annual SBPLI golf-outing fundraiser, and the Manufacturing Symposium at Suffolk Community College. Public awareness has generated support for both our team and the FIRST program by inspiring sponsors and students.

Strength of Partnership

FIRST has enabled our team to develop valuable entrepreneurial skills in dealing with sponsorship and finances. For the past few years we've received grants from our business with BAE Systems as well as generous funding from our Board of Education. Our parent booster club integrates the role of our

parents with our student officers to oversee our own fundraising efforts and the interaction of our team and sponsors, so that they are aware of our gratitude for their generous donations to us.

Communication Methods

Team 358 makes communication simple and effective. We can reach every member of our team instantly with email and Twitter. Students, mentors, and parents subscribe to Twitter updates via SMS so that a tweet from our account will be sent to their cell phones instantly. Less urgent or longer messages are sent through email. We have a Facebook group to keep in touch with our alumni and to act as an open forum for discussion outside the workshop. Our website serves as a bulletin board and calendar.

Main Essay

There are three steps to the FIRST experience: learning, practice, and sharing. What is great about FIRST is that these steps are true no matter what part of the program one is referring to. Students walk in to the workshop with the expectation that they will learn how to use some power tools or CAD software. They actually experience learning on a whole new level. As Benjamin Franklin once said, "Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn." The mentoring system is responsible for this learning process. Students are given responsibility and deadlines and, with just the right amount of guidance, accomplish great feats. Students grow from young freshmen into capable and involved seniors, ready to change the world using everything they've learned - technical or not - from FIRST. While the learning process is a spectacle in and of itself, nothing is more beautiful about FIRST robotics than the common goal to inspire, assist, and have fun. FIRST is about sharing these with other students, other teams, and other non-FIRST people and organizations.

Sharing the message of FIRST and the spirit of Gracious Professionalism involves ourselves, the FIRST community, and the world around us. Before attempting to teach new members of our team about actually building a robot, we teach them about building friendships. If we treat other teams the way we treat one another, the competition is much more enjoyable. That's our motto after all: It's more fun when everybody's robot works! This attitude is especially developed outside of the workshop. The robotics team is not only a chance to learn about engineering and management but a great way to meet new friends. Each year, we participate in our traditional "non-engineering" activities. We host our annual "Oldies Concert" (which is a fantastic fundraiser), visit local parks to clean up litter, and go holiday caroling with our alumni. This growth and familiarity within the team is vital to making the FIRST experience last. As kickoff approaches and build season begins, we learn technical skills as a family and hope to project these skills and characteristics of our team onto other teams.

After ensuring all of 358 is on board with the attitude of FIRST, our next goal is to help FIRST grow internally by assisting our fellow teams and promoting Gracious Professionalism and Coopertition. As a veteran team with a strong foundation, great mentors, and community support, we've made an effort to help FIRST grow by lending a hand to local rookies. The great thing about FIRST is that it actually is fun to be the new kid on the block. For the past few years, we've adopted rookies under our wing, including the Half Hollow Hills and Central Islip FRC teams by providing mentoring support, workshops, scouting

support, and a workplace as necessary. We've always done our best to make competition as fun as possible for everyone. Helping others is fun, too. Over the years, we've made quite a few friends, even some from England and Brazil. It may be a world-wide organization, but it's a small world when we come together for a common cause. Something we love about FIRST is the mutual feelings of helpfulness; it puts a smile on our faces to see other teams lend us a hand, because we often require assistance as well. One cannot begin to describe the spirit of FIRST without experiencing it "FIRST"-hand. This year we were invited to speak about team organization at a Long Island-wide workshop at the Webb Institute, organized by a student of Webb who is a team 358 alumni. In fall of 2011 we were privileged to represent FIRST and School-Business Partnerships of Long Island at the Long Island Manufacturing Symposium by showing our Logomotion robot to companies at the event.

FIRST is growing exponentially, and as a proud member of the family, team 358 hopes to show the world how cool technology truly is while teaching students to appreciate the value of Coopertition and Gracious Professionalism. Starting with the individual, working our way up to our whole team, to other teams, to our community, and ultimately to the world around us, we hope to provide at least the slightest bit of inspiration, so that students everywhere can embrace the experiences and purpose that FIRST robotics has to offer.

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