

## **Team 34 2024 Executive Summaries**

**Describe the impact of the *FIRST* program on team participants within the last 3 years. This can include but is not limited to percentages of those graduating high school, attending college, in STEM careers, and in *FIRST* programs as mentors/sponsors.**

The *FIRST* program has had a major impact on all the members of Team 34. In the past three years, every single student from our team has graduated from high school. In addition many of these students go on to be directly or indirectly involved in a STEAM field. We are also very fortunate to have four returning alumni students who come back to mentor the team and teach what they learned in their time on Team 34.

**Describe your community along with how your team addresses its unique opportunities and circumstances.**

The citizens of Limestone County love to connect with one another. We target events where this is happening to connect with our community. These events include festivals, like our Christmas parade and Crape Myrtle Festival in Ardmore, TN; advocacy events, like Eli's Block Party, which raises awareness for pediatric cancer; and places of business, like our town square and farmers market. Through our outreach the past 3 years, we have reached over half of the population of Limestone County.

**Describe the team's methods, with emphasis on the past 3 years, for spreading the *FIRST* message in ways that are effective, scalable, sustainable, and creative. How does your team measure results?**

Over the past 3 years our team has impacted and created a social environment that has spread the message of *FIRST*. Our team has participated in almost 70 outreach events within the past 3 years. These events include our local farmers market, our school board, and presentations to local leaders. Through these events we have been able to reach over 64,000 people. We measure these results by contacting the leader of each event to thank them for having us and get the number of people in attendance.

**Please provide specific examples of how your team members act as role models within the *FIRST* community with emphasis on the past 3 years.**

Team 34 has acted as role models by introducing and guiding the development of STEAM skills to younger audiences. Recently, we have established a middle school robotics club in every single middle school across Limestone County. We also host an annual Tough Truck challenge to help aspiring students create a robot from scratch. This June, we hosted a LEGO robotics camp

for 4th and 5th-grade students. In addition our team members have over 2,600 hours of community service.

**Describe your team's initiatives to Assist, Mentor, and/or Start other *FIRST* teams with emphasis on activities within the past 3 years.**

Team 34 has assisted multiple FIRST teams across multiple competitions and even outside of competitions. We have assisted teams like 6404 Brazilian Storm by allowing them to use our facility. We have also mentored multiple teams, including FLL Team 32309 The Skyrockets, by helping them code their robot and attending their competitions. In addition we have started 3 FLL Explore teams in Limestone County. We are currently in the process of starting a Limestone County FTC team as well.

**Beyond starting teams, what initiatives have you done to help inspire young people to be science and technology leaders and innovators? What results have you seen from your efforts in the past 3 years?**

Team 34 has started 6 middle school Lego robotics clubs across Limestone County and we have one at every school. We have hosted multiple Lego camps during the summer. As well we hosted a 4th and 5th-grade Lego camp to introduce STEAM to younger students. In addition we bring the students who participate in these camps to the Rocket City Regional to introduce them to FRC. This has worked to inspire many students, a majority of our rookies this year have come from our camps and clubs.

**Describe the partnerships you've created with other organizations (teams, sponsors, educational institutions, philanthropic entities, etc.) and what you have accomplished together with emphasis on the past 3 years.**

Our team enjoys partnering with organizations within our community. We work with Athens Main Street to volunteer, hold events, and make improvements to our community. We also work with TRAIL which is a youth philanthropic organization that focuses on volunteering. We have also partnered with our school board to create 6 lego robotics clubs and 2 camps. In addition we work with the FIRST in AL Youth Advisory Council and the FIRST in AL operations team to lead the growth of FIRST in AL.

**Describe your team's efforts in the past 3 years to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion within your team, *FIRST*, and your communities.**

Ensuring that students from all walks of life are welcome and safe on our team is the most important thing to us. One way that we ensure socio economic inclusion is by having sponsors

cover team members dues. Over half of the 23 members on our team qualify for free or reduced lunch and wouldn't be on our team without these sponsorships. In addition we make it a priority to have women in positions of leadership. Half of our subteams are female led and we hope to boast this number soon.

**Explain how you ensure your team and the initiatives you have created will continue to run effectively for the foreseeable future.**

To ensure our team runs effectively in the future, we take two major initiatives: an apprenticeship dynamic and documentation. For the apprenticeship dynamic, new students are given a returning student to work under. The returning student is responsible for making sure their apprentice knows how to do their job and our workflow. Our documentation system is a new act to retain knowledge and stay relevant to changes. We make daily online or physical entries of all of our changes and notes.

**Describe your team's innovative strategies to recruit, retain, and engage your sponsors within the past 3 years.**

Our team has many different strategies to recruit, retain, and engage sponsors. To recruit we send our team members to various businesses with our information including our Star Sponsor System. A system using stars paired with the amount of money given. To make sure that businesses continue to support us we give them bi-weekly newsletters of what we have done in that time. We also invite them to our regionals as well as our facility to visit and see the progression of our team and robot firsthand.

**Highlight one area in which your team needs to improve and describe the steps actively being taken to make those improvements.**

Last year, we struggled to keep relevant documentation, negatively affecting our quality of work. This year, our team is working to improve our documentation, as our team leaders are keeping log books with information about what our sub-teams have worked on. Along with this we also have weekly wrap-up meetings to keep the team informed. In addition we use this documentation and our Impact documentation to ensure honesty in our submissions and show other teams what we are doing and how we do it.

**Describe your team's goals to fulfill the mission of *FIRST* and the progress you have made towards those goals.**

Team 34 believes in starting small. To build a better world, we need to build better robots, better relationships, and better character. Our goal is to see each student leave Team 34 positively

impacted by STEM. This is a hard goal to achieve because it's measurable only on an individual basis, but all students who graduated in the past three years have certainly left our team in a greater place, whether it be in skill, confidence, resilience, or some other aspect. We aim to perpetuate this.

**Briefly describe other matters of interest to the *FIRST* Judges, including items that may not fit into the above topics. The judges are interested in learning about aspects of your team that may be unique or particularly noteworthy.**

This past year one of our mentors visited Zimbabwe. There he connected with a community that needed agricultural help due to the dry conditions. Our team created a plan to help them. This plan is made up of three phases. The first phase consisted of raising awareness and reconnecting with the community. The second phase includes developing an agriculture curriculum for K-12 students. Lastly, the third phase is to raise money to send to the community to build an irrigation system.

**Please use this space to ask 1 question to your *FIRST* Impact Award Judges which will be answered after each event with feedback from the judges. Note: Questions asking what is required to win the award will not be answered.**

How are *FIRST* programs implemented and sustained in third world countries?