

### We Are One

Gael Force FIRST Robotics Team 126 from Clinton, MA kicked off their 23<sup>rd</sup> season this year. Of the 32 student members on the team, only 7 are returners. To some, this could be a huge problem. But to Gael Force, this is a tremendous opportunity to teach, influence, and inspire new students. In his traditional kick-off speech to the team, senior mentor Jorge Martinez addressed the crowd of new faces:

“Einstein once said that not everything that is countable counts, and not everything that counts is countable. We do what we do, because it matters. At Gael Force, FIRST has always been about more than robots, it’s about the power of people working together to discover what resources we can offer others. We may be new, but we are fearless, we are relentless, we are FIRST, WE ARE ONE.”

At Gael Force, it’s about changing the culture of our schools and communities by working together as one.

### FIRST Outreach

Team 126 is one of 28 founding FRC teams and one of only 7 original and sustaining teams competing in the 2014 competition. Gael Force has been embodying the gracious professional spirit of *FIRST* since our first team meeting in 1992. Helping rookie and veteran teams near or far has always been a priority. Whether it’s through handing out dry erase match lists for each team at competitions, or our informative seminars, Gael Force strives to keep strong connections within the *FIRST* community.

Before kickoff in January, we continued our year round efforts to promote Science and Technology. We hosted our third annual programming class which was led by a Raytheon engineer to educate new students and mentors. This class teaches the fundamentals of Java and Object Orientated Programming by having participants recreate the game Space Invaders.

Continuing our training series, we developed and hosted an Awards/Presentation Seminar for FRC teams last year, and enhanced it with new information this year. We were able to host seminars in MA, CT, and NH and additionally provided information online to benefit other teams. This seminar gives teams a better understanding of the judging process, award submissions and talking to judges. New to our Awards/Presentation Seminar in the 2014 season is a comprehensive break down of the new district points system and awards changes. In January of 2014 we went to Farmington, CT to work with FRC team 178 on their Chairman’s submission and have been keeping in contact via email. Additionally, we hosted our seminar for the second year in a row at the Week Zero Scrimmage in Merrimack, NH. We hope that our outreach to other teams help them achieve their goals.

### Community Outreach

To promote *FIRST* and our team we are actively involved in our hometown community. We are regular participants in community events, and are actively involved with The Corcoran House, a local assisted living facility. We visit frequently, and send holiday cards to the staff and residents. We demonstrated our 2012 robot at a local summer camp during their Space Week celebration and, more recently, at an elementary school in Marlboro, MA at their Science Fair. We also provide busses from Clinton to our

Regionals, so our community can get the full *FIRST* and Gael Force experience. Our community is a part of our team!

This past summer we held our 4th annual backpack drive, collecting school supplies for elementary students in Holden, Worcester and Clinton, MA and as far away as New Jersey. Over four thousand dollars in school supplies were provided by team members and community members and 130 backpacks were filled, an improvement from the 110 backpacks in 2012!

Additionally, we donated 30 copies of "The New Cool" in 2012 to Clinton High School and are in the process of integrating it into the school's curriculum. We are also working closely with our Superintendent to develop STEM curriculums for the Elementary and Middle Schools. Gael Force students are developing hands on learning experiences for students at all grade levels, and are currently in the process of applying our schools for the WPI Stem Integration program. We hope these efforts will not only get students interested in joining Gael Force, but give them a better understanding of STEM.

### Reading is Fundamental

In an effort to bring *FIRST* to young students, we created "If I Built a Robot". This children's book, created during the 2013 build season, is a rhyming narrative with illustrations describing a young girl named Kimmy's idea for her perfect robot. Over 1000 copies of this book were distributed during the 2013 season, and touched home with volunteers we met at the Championship event in St Louis. We met the parents of a young girl named Kim from Team 456 who had passed away, when they stopped by our pit to check out the book. In an email we received after Championships they said: "I cannot even begin to tell you how much the coloring book is just like our Kimmy. It will be distributed at the Play A Day fundraiser at St. Aloysius yearly event". The joy "If I Built a Robot" brought to so many people is what drove us to create a sequel this year entitled "If I Built My Future". Through these books we hope to engage people in STEM, *FIRST* and Gael Force in a unique way.

### Giving Back to Communities

Since 2011 we have conducted a monthly charity fundraiser, and have recently established an account specifically to allocate funds for charitable causes. The "Gael Force Gives Account" was established to provide financial support to those who need a little help. Since then our "Gael Force Gives Account" has made \$126 donations to five different charities: Typhoon Haiyan Relief, 100 Club of Arizona, a NH family who lost their home to a fire, the American Red Cross, and ALS.

Since 2011, has been a team goal to help the communities at the competitions we attend. We organized a collection of everyday items such as pillows and hygiene products for My Sister's Place in CT, New Horizons Shelter in NH, and Cradles to Crayons in MA. Through the generosity of *FIRST* teams, we were able to collect hundreds of items to benefit others.

The tragic events that occurred at the 2013 Boston Marathon deeply affected us. We immediately reached out to *FIRST* headquarters and received permission to host a collection for The One Fund Boston. We contacted all MA teams attending Championship along with Hall of Fame team, Buzz

Robotics to place a collection box in each of their pits. We collected over \$1,500 in 3 days! When we shared the news with our sponsor, Jabil Nypro, they generously matched our donation. We also handed out Boston Strong ribbons for teams to display in their pits or on their robots. It was a VERY successful effort and showed how generous and supportive the FIRST community truly is.

Our charitable and community involvement doesn't stop there! We are involved in: a tab collection for Shriners Hospital, Crayons for Cancer collection, Red Cross blood drives, Box Tops for Education collection, volunteering at a camp for terminally ill children, and after school tutoring program for middle schoolers. A new team endeavor this season has been recycling writing instruments and Elmer's Glue products. Through the Crayola Colorcycle program we have recycled over 100 pounds of writing utensils, which Crayola turns into clean burning fuel. Through the TerraCycle program we have been able to recycle used Elmer's glue bottles that get turned into eco-friendly products such as park benches.

### Jabil Nypro Partnership

For 23 years Jabil Nypro has supported *FIRST* and Gael Force Robotics. Jabil Nypro provides financial support, work facilities, mentors and an unwavering commitment to our team. We are offered a unique opportunity to work in a real world engineering environment. We are required to follow all safety standards, including wearing safety glasses and steel-toed shoes.

In 1994, Gordon Lankton, Nypro's founder and president, established The Gael Force Foundation to ensure that our team would be financially sustainable for years to come. Contributions are made on an annual basis. Because of this foundation, even with the recent merger of Nypro and Jabil, we've been able to sustain our team's finances and operations. We are grateful for the support of Jabil Nypro and look forward to a long running future together.

### Molding the Future

We have been inspiring students to not only further their education after high school, but to pursue careers in STEM. Every year, approximately 30 students participate on our team. Since 1992, over 550 students have proudly worn Gael Force green. Over 450 of our students have continued onto higher education, and over 75 of those majored in or entered STEM careers. We have had 6 *FIRST* scholarship winners: two full scholarships from WPI, WPI Regional Scholarship, Daniel Webster College, FIT and a National Autodesk Scholarship winner.

Last year we implemented a Student Sustained Scholarship where students can each add up to \$100 into their personal scholarship fund but cannot receive their scholarship until they have graduated while participating on our team. This not only aids in students paying for higher education but it also keeps students coming back to our team and staying until their senior year.

We instill the importance of giving back to your community and pursuing your passions in all team members. Over 30 of our alumni have gone on to mentor other *FIRST* teams, volunteer at *FIRST* events,

and work for *FIRST*. Current team members are also mentoring other FRC teams as well as volunteering at *FIRST* events while supporting our team.

### Impact

Our team is proof that one team from a small town can have an incredible impact on many people. Since our inception in 1992, we have been dedicated to creating strong partnerships between people, communities and *FIRST*. Through a strong school and sponsor partnership, we have changed the culture of not just our hometown community but the entire *FIRST* community, by working together as one.