

Belonging

the newsletter from the *FIRST* NC ED&I Team – October 2022

Equity – Treating everyone fairly, having equal opportunities and removing barriers

Diversity – The way we are all different

Inclusion – Creating space for everyone where differences are embraced

Team Share from #4561 TerrorBytes - Not all outreach events go as planned but that doesn't have to stop everyone from benefiting...

Robotics is so much more than just building robots. It is an opportunity to learn, grow, and inspire all students. These are the core values of the TerrorBytes, and we employ these principles as part of our daily lives. Our key motto is to “Build Better People.” This motto encapsulates our mission to improve the members of our team throughout their FRC careers. Today, a majority of our alumni are in or have graduated from universities with degrees in STEM fields, and several of them have returned to mentor the next generations of TerrorBytes.

In 2016, our team had a vision to establish an outreach that lowered barriers of entry to robotics by reducing cost and expanding access. In response, we created a series of events named MiniFRCs. These events are scaled-down versions of the actual FRC game from the same year at approximately a quarter scale. The events went well because they were created and run by team members that had an innate passion for robotics and the knowhow to create a robot.

Along the way, our team recognized and were burdened by the reality that the benefits of robotics were still out of reach for students with special needs. In June of 2022, the TerrorBytes hosted what could be one of our most influential outreach events ever: **MiniFRC: Special Edition (1.0)**, which was an idea conceived by our business team in August of 2021. The vision for this event was to be as inclusive as possible, specifically catering to students with special needs. In the end we did not get any sign-ups from students with special needs, so we opened the event up to any youth interested in participating. In the end we hosted around 20 participants in MiniFRC: SE from nearby elementary and middle schools. All of these students learned how to build, wire, and program a robot from scratch. Over the three days of this event, the TerrorBytes and volunteers worked 1:1 with participants to help aid in the designing and creation process. Our team was fortunate enough to allow for this event to be free, and for participants to keep their robots once the competition was over.

Our team got lots of help from Alfredo Systems, a company founded by some of the same TerrorBytes alumni that originally established MiniFRC. Alfredo Systems helped provide robot parts and field components for this event. MiniFRC:SE would not have been possible without them. Our team is proud of how the event went, and plan on hosting similar ones in the future. For now, the TerrorBytes are currently planning a traditional MiniFRC this December, stay tuned to our social media accounts to hear more news about it!

Although the initial goal was to increase inclusivity for this event through the incorporation of youth with disabilities from our community, we consider any form of outreach to be a success. We continue to work with contacts and partners for future events to meet our goals.

If your team has something they'd like to share, send them to the ED&I team at FIRSTNC-EDI@googlegroups.com

From *FIRST*: Just in case you missed it! - *FIRST* is a Place Where I Belong

EDUARDO PINEDA - *FIRST* Robotics Competition Team 6647 "Voltec Robotics," Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico.

"I had a feeling that *FIRST*® was the place where I belonged, and that feeling has never disappeared."

Before I participated in *FIRST*, I never saw myself with a career, many friends, or as a leader. I was always very lonely and shy. During a presentation at my high school about *FIRST*® Robotics Competition, I had a feeling that *FIRST* was the place where I belonged, and that feeling has never disappeared.

Read more: <https://www.firstinspires.org/stories/first-place-where-i-belong>

October Events:

Global Diversity Awareness Month: Aims to promote knowledge and respect for various cultures

National Disability Employment Awareness Month: Advocates for people with disabilities, and their inclusion in the workforce

Breast Cancer Awareness Month: Aims to increase awareness of the disease, one of the leading causes of death in women

National Polish American Heritage Month: Dedicated to honoring Polish heritage, October was chosen because it was when Polish settlers first arrived in Jamestown, VA in 1608

October 10th – World Mental Health Day (People with Disabilities): Promotes mental health awareness and education, and advocates against social stigma relating to mental health

October 10th – Indigenous Peoples' Day (United States): Formerly called Columbus Day, honors the indigenous people of North America

October 14th – Defender of Ukraine Day – Honors all who have fought for the sovereignty of Ukraine

October 21st – Spirit Day (LGBTQ+): Wear purple on this day to support LGBTQ youth and speak out against bullying

October 24th – Diwali (Hindu): Significant celebration in the Hindu faith in which they praise diverse deities

Inspiration & Recognition Spotlight: Felycia Edi Soetaredjo

Born: Surabaya, Indonesia. April 2, 1977



For her work on using biomass for environmental remediation, Soetaredjo was awarded the 2017 Elsevier Foundation Awards for Early-Career Women Scientists in the Developing World. In her research, Soetaredjo converts biomass and clay into absorbents that can be used to remove hazardous compounds such as antibiotics, heavy metals and dyes from wastewater. She is also in the process of patenting a method using Fenton reagents that can be used to degrade 98 percent of the pollutants in wastewater.

Click the following link to learn more: <https://globalyoungacademy.net/fesoetaredjo/>

ED&I Retention and Participation Tips: Avoid isolating students from marginalized groups.

When possible, it is helpful to keep together at least two members of any marginalized group during role rotations. For example, keeping together two Latino students may help them feel less isolated. Researchers have studied what happens when only one student from a marginalized group is on a team. They found that those isolated students can have a negative experience and are more likely to drop out, especially in nontraditional subjects.

Read more: <https://www.firstinspires.org/resource-library/training-equity-diversity-inclusion>

The FIRST NC ED&I Team: Contact us at: FIRSTNC-EDI@googlegroups.com

We are a team of coaches/mentors who want to help create a community and culture of people who embrace the values of equity, diversity, and inclusion, who want to develop themselves, and who understand that growth and diversity of all types lead to team excellence.

Anisha Patel - The Pitt Pirates 2642
Dave Lashley (he/him) - Team SPORK 3196

Linda Whipker - Team PyroTech 3459
Melissa "Bee" Bube (they/she) - Girls on Fire 5679

All Editions are Available Online at: <https://www.firstnorthcarolina.org/belonging-newsletter>