

Shelly Gaydos – This Is How I Work



Shelly Gaydos is a mentor who is very dedicated to her team and spreading the word of FIRST. Gaydos is geared towards bringing new ideas and projects to get kids more interested about engineering. She began an FRC team at the high school where she teaches and has been involved with FIRST ever since. She has even started robotics classes at her high school to get kids more interested in robotics and prepare them for the FIRST season. She's also lead her team to win the Chairman's Award during the 2013 and 2014 season. [Responses from August 5, 2013; updated on October 6, 2014]

Name: Shelly Gaydos

CD Username: N/A

Current Gig/Job: Pre-Engineering Teacher, Hammond High Magnet School

Alma Mater/Degree: Southeastern Louisiana University BS Math Education
ME Secondary Principalship

Current Team(s): Torbotics Team 2080

Former Team(s): N/A

Location: Hammond High Magnet School, Hammond, Louisiana

Hobbies: Robotics, Swim Team, Football



What inspired you to do what you do? Tell us a story.

I had been teaching math and physics for 21 years and was looking for new and exciting activities to bring into the classroom. When our principal showed me the FIRST Robotics information, I had no idea how it was going to change my life and the lives of so many others. I started by walking down the hall and telling some of my students to stay after school for a meeting. We did not know what we were doing, but thankfully there were FRC mentors just a phone call away. We finished (survived) our first season, and I was finally able to sit down and reflect over the chaotic rookie season that had just come to a close. I realized that FIRST Robotics was the solution that I had been searching for all of these years. I am inspired by each of these students as I see how they can accomplish things that they never thought that they were capable of doing. These moments can be anything from a student picking up a hammer for the first time to the excited screams at midnight when we shoot a basketball. My inspiration is the sound of lives changing one moment at a time.

What is your day job, and how'd you get there?

I am a teacher at Hammond High Magnet School. After our first two seasons with FIRST Robotics, I started a robotics class. The program has now expanded, and our students have the opportunity to take Engineering Classes starting with Intro to Engineering, progressing to Engineering Design I and Engineering Design II and finishing with Robotics.

What is your favorite story to tell about robotics?

I could write a book about my favorite robotics stories. Anyone who is involved in FIRST Robotics can tell you that it is always an adventure. My favorite story begins two years ago at the 2012 Bayou Regional. Everything was going great, and team 2080 was in the top twenty going into the selection process on Saturday. However, for the first time since our Rookie year, we were not chosen to play in the Championship Tournament that

afternoon. We were devastated and shocked. I went with the drive team to return the robot to the pits, and I prepared myself to go help my students deal with the disappointment. When I came around the corner and looked in the stands, I found my students all on their feet cheering for all of the other teams who did get to compete that day. I am so blessed to have the opportunity to work with these teenagers each day! The story does not stop there. Instead of anger and bitterness, these students came home with a new passion to become a better team. They began to brainstorm on the way home that day. I am so proud to say that their passion paid off at the Razorback Regional 2013 and the Bayou Regional 2014 where Team 2080 won the Chairman's Award both times. These students truly understand what FIRST Robotics is all about!

What's your favorite robot that you didn't help build?

My favorite robot was the Logomotion robot built by Team 456.

What's your workspace setup like? (Work/Robotics/Home)

We were fortunate enough to be able to renovate the wood shop in our school to our Engineering Lab. It has machines capable of working with wood and metal. We are able to build our robot completely in our own shop.



What do you listen to while you work?

Country music makes me happy, happy, and happy!

What's your schedule like during build season?

We work 6 days a week. We do not work on Sundays to allow the students to go to church and be with their families.

What everyday thing are you better at than anyone else?

I guess it would be time management. I have a weird way of being able to predict exactly how long it will take us to complete a task.

What's the best advice you've ever received?

Don't try to do it all!

What is your favorite guilty pleasure?

DIET COKE!

Fill in the blank. I'd love to see Maureen Politz answer these same questions.

I was the Woodie Flowers Award winner for the Bayou Regional 2014.

“Education is not the learning of the facts, but the training of the mind to think.” - Albert Einstein