

In the 3 years that Amy Frankhouser has been on the team, she has really dedicated herself to FIRST, challenged boundaries, and shown what it means to be a leader. Having little to no experience with animation before joining the team, Amy has grown in her knowledge of the subject and, without the help of a mentor, is now leading and mentoring other students. Many of whom had no previous knowledge of the software, Amy spent the fall preseason teaching the new members on her subteam how to use Autodesk 3DS Max and now has a fully functional team.

Constantly challenging stereotypes about women being less technically inclined than men, Amy is currently the first Team 116 female Animation Subteam captain and, having paved the path for girls in Animation, is running a team made up of mostly new female students.

Team member Anthony sums up her impact on the team, “She is the first animation captain who wants to do something completely unrelated when she goes to college, that being chemistry, and yet she still took on the responsibilities of being animation captain. She is hard-working, diligent, kind, and always gets the job done no matter what it takes”

At the D.C. Regional last year, Amy and the 2 captains of the animation team were asked if they would create an animation about the history of the FIRST logo, an animation that would be shown at the 2010 Championship. Dean Kamen told them that if their animation met his standards he would base the Dean’s List Award trophy on their design. Amy and her team worked hard on their animation during the 4 weeks between the Regional and Championship. On the bus to Atlanta, their animation crashed and they had to start over from scratch. Amy is not the type to give up and she and her team worked through the first two days of the Championship competition, and late into the night, to finish what they had promised to do. The animation was a success, and the trophy was based on their design.

Amy is very involved in spreading the message of FIRST to the community. She is an active participant in many of the outreach activities that the team participates in such as the Air & Space Museum’s Air and Scare program, where she helped to inspire young minds in science through the running of a robotics booth, and the Herndon festival outreach weekend where Amy helps bring FIRST to the local community through a hands on robot game for all ages. She has also participated in many charity events with the team such as The American Cancer Association’s Relay for Life and helping to raise funds for Haiti victims. “I love working with Amy on outreach. She really cares about what she is doing and it shows in everything she does. It’s amazing to see her interact with kids and their parents to get them all excited about Math and Science and Technology.” (Heidi Foster, mentor)

Amy’s abilities are not limited to Robotics. She also has an incredible academic record and, in addition to her schedule of strenuous classes and exceptionally high grades, was chosen for governor’s school during the summer of her junior year. Additionally, Amy has recently been accepted to Cornell using the early decision program. She intends to go into a Chemistry field

based in medical research. She also performs in the school choir and in the summer, volunteers at a local hospital.

Mentor, Dave Lavery, says it best, “Amy has consistently shown her outstanding leadership, technical, and innovative capabilities during her tenure on the team. It would be impossible to overstate her value to the team, or the importance of the contributions she has made. She looks at every activity as an opportunity to contribute to the mission of the team. Her dedication has been total and selfless.”

After her graduation from high school and the team this year, Amy will be greatly missed, but her legacy will live on in the students that she has helped to mentor in the art of Animation and the high bar of expectations she has set for the team in the years to come.