



FIRST Equity & Inclusion Financing Initiative for
FIRST in Upper Midwest
(FEI FI FO FUM GRANT)

GRANT REPORT
Team 1816
June 29, 2022

FRC Team 1816 was inspired to apply for a \$500 FEI FI FO FUM Grant to help restart efforts, thwarted by the COVID-19 pandemic, to reach more girls enrolled in the Edina middle and high school *FIRST* programs. In recent seasons, even before the pandemic forced our team to modify its build and outreach activities, Team 1816 was seeing a drop-off in the number of girls who participated in our *FIRST* Tech Challenge teams. These FTC teams are a vital early experience and are one of the pipelines to membership on “The Green Machine.”

Our goal is to create long term relationships between the Edina FTC and FRC girls to increase their interest in STEM and The Green Machine. To recruit and retain girls on our team we found that making relationships with them prior to joining The Green Machine increases their comfort and confidence to contribute once they join. We have hosted two ‘Girls in the Workshop’ events, one where we soldered handheld electronic games that we bought with the grant funds, and one where we talked about our experiences in *FIRST*, what we do on The Green Machine as well as what they do in FTC. After the first ‘Girls in the Workshop’ event, one FTC girl decided to join The Green Machine and is now embedded into our build and business subteams. Of the 13 original invitations issued, 11 girls attended both GITW workshops. Nine girls are now

interested in joining 1816 in Fall 2022, with six of them joining us this summer (2022) for our summer training program.

Planning is underway for a third 'Girls in the Workshop' event this fall, at the beginning of the school year, offering another opportunity to learn how to solder by using a purchased kit. The other extension is re-starting a series of workshops and team development exercises focused on implicit bias and how to recognize this bias and how it impacts the inclusion and belonging of all students, but especially girls. With more girls joining our team, we want to make sure we are as welcoming as we can be, and that means we need to confront our biases as a team. We have earmarked additional funds to support our various ice-breaker and implicit bias-based activities.

Use of Funds: We requested \$500 to underwrite the first of a series of workshops. This entire grant was used, in fact, we spent more than the \$500 granted, to make this a successful workshop (we wanted each participant not only to leave with a finished soldered, working small game, but with the batteries to test and play the device).

Outcomes: 11 of 13 girls invited attended both the fall workshop, where we soldered our kits, as well as a second workshop during which the 1816 girls talked through the design, build and programming of the 2022 robot and the FTC team members did the same for their robots.

Next Steps: 1816's team leadership, now composed of three girls as co-Captains and assistant captain, have selected a new soldering kit for a workshop in Fall 2022. Invited to this workshop will be both FTC girls, new and veteran to the program, as well as girls enrolled in Edina High School Project Lead the Way and Computer Science classes.

Edina Robotics FIRST Team 1816, "The Green Machine," thanks FIRST in Upper Midwest and the Diversity & Inclusion Committee, for making these small-grants available and for inspiring us to move our ideas forward to get more girls engaged in STEM and FIRST.

