



GRANT REPORT
FRC Teams 1816 and 2177
May 31, 2024

The SWIFT Initiative

Teams 1816 and 2177 received a \$1,500 FIRST Equity & Inclusion Financing Initiative for FIRST in Upper Midwest (FEI FI FO FUM) grant to start the SWIFT (Support Welcoming Inclusion for FIRST Teams) Initiative, a FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC) Community project. The SWIFT Initiative was inspired by the exchange and gifting of friendship bracelets by fans in the electronic dance music community and at Taylor Swift concerts. We proposed to recruit a minimum of 10 other "influencer" teams (12 teams total, including 1816 and 2177) to create SWIFT bracelets with messages about gracious professionalism and team core values that would be exchanged and/or gifted to students from other teams, event volunteers, and community members. In our grant application, we outlined two specific goals:

- To increase a sense of belonging and acceptance at FRC regional events, particularly for girls and young women, and other FRC students who are marginalized in STEM
- To provide an opportunity for FRC community members to reinforce the ethos of gracious professionalism, their team's core values, and community expectations regarding appropriate behavioral norms at regional events

Our overall objective was to use SWIFT bracelets to catalyze conversations that build and enhance an inclusive community at FRC regional events and beyond.

This grant report describes the outcome of the SWIFT Initiative during the 2024 "Crescendo" competition season, and our assessment of the impact of our efforts. We thank *FIRST* in Upper Midwest for providing us with the funding to pilot the SWIFT Initiative.

Executive Summary

- The FEI FI FO FUM grant was used to purchase 12 "SWIFT bracelet kit of parts" containing \$125 of bracelet supplies. An additional \$600 (personal funds) was

used to purchase additional supplies for teams and for bracelet making workshops.

- We successfully met our goal of recruiting 10 FRC teams in Minnesota and North Dakota as SWIFT influencer teams. An additional 5 FRC teams in Minnesota independently contacted us and joined as SWIFT influencer teams. A total of 17 FRC teams officially participated in the SWIFT Initiative.
- We developed resources to assist teams in making bracelets. Mentors indicated that these resources helped their team make bracelets (100% strongly agree/agree).
- Team 2450 hosted a SWIFT bracelet making event for 5 other FRC teams prior to kickoff.
- The 18 teams participating in the SWIFT Initiative self-reported making a total of 6,950 bracelets, for an average of 386 bracelets/team. This exceeded our total goal of 100-200 bracelets per team.
- SWIFT influencer teams competed at 11 different regional events, the FRC Championship in Houston, and the MSHSL State Robotics tournament.
- Bracelet making workshops held at the Duluth regionals, the Great Northern Regional and the Arkansas Regional, and SWIFT Meet-Ups were well attended and provided students on other teams the opportunity to make bracelets and/or establish connections with each other. In a survey, 71% of mentors strongly agreed/agreed that these events were important to the success of the SWIFT Initiative.
- At regional events, we noted that multiple teams outside of the 17 teams that we recruited made bracelets and brought them to the event to share and trade with others. We also provided resources to individuals in the Indiana District and the New England District to make and distribute bracelets at their events.
- In a survey, team mentors indicated that their team purchased additional bracelet supplies to make more bracelets (93% strongly agree/agree), and that their team made more bracelets than anticipated (71% strongly agree/agree). Only 7% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that the SWIFT Initiative took too much time away from other important team activities during the build season.
- In the mentor survey, mentors indicated that the SWIFT Initiative increased team dynamics and cohesion (86% strongly agree/agree), improved their team's event experience (100% strongly agree/agree) and increased the ability of their team to meet others and establish connections at the regional event(s) they attended (100% strongly agree/agree).
- In the student survey, students indicated that they were glad that their team participated (95% strongly agree/agree), improved their experience during build season (81% strongly agree/agree), and improved their experience at regionals (92% strongly agree/agree).

- Mentors indicated that the SWIFT Initiative did not have a major impact on increasing team recruitment and retention.
- Some survey respondents indicated that the SWIFT Initiative was time intensive, as well as resource intensive. Some responses focused on the desire to have more team members participate in the SWIFT Initiative, particularly boys, and to have some more guidance in using bracelets to start conversations at events. A few students commented that it was important that many students on the team participate in making bracelets rather than delegating this activity to just a few students.
- The student survey highlighted the value of the SWIFT Initiative in building community within and outside of their team, the creativity inherent in making bracelets, and the opportunity to make connections and bring people together. The student survey indicated that SWIFT bracelets improved the experience for students at FRC regionals (89% strongly agree/agree)
- All mentors (100%) strongly agreed/agreed that the time and effort required to be part of the SWIFT Initiative was worth it for their team, and that the SWIFT Initiative met their team's expectations and goals. In the student survey, 93% strongly agreed/agreed that the SWIFT Initiative was worth the time and effort that their team put into it.
- Among the mentors responding to our survey, 86% strongly agreed/agreed that they planned to continue making SWIFT bracelets for future FRC seasons. Students also expressed a strong interest in having their teams continue making bracelets in the future (94% strongly agree/agree)

Overall, the SWIFT Initiative was successfully developed and implemented during the 2024 FRC Crescendo season. We exceeded our goals in terms of the recruitment of SWIFT influencer teams, the number of bracelets made, and minimally impacting other team activities during build season. Mentors and students reported that the SWIFT Initiative improved the team experience at regional events. The bracelet making workshops and Meet Ups were well received. Many other teams independently made bracelets and we assisted other areas outside of the Upper Midwest in implementing the SWIFT Initiative at their events. Although some survey respondents indicated that it was time and resource intensive to make so many bracelets, teams indicated that the SWIFT Initiative was worth their time and that many teams plan to continue making bracelets in future FRC seasons.

SWIFT Initiative [photos and videos](#)

Use of grant funds

The grant funds were used to purchase \$1,500 of supplies to make SWIFT bracelets divided into 12 “SWIFT bracelet kit of parts” containing \$125 of bracelet supplies:

- Stretch Magic Bead Cord (0.7 mm)
- G-S Hypo Cement
- Retractable tape measures
- Glass beads
- Alphabet and number beads
- Felt sheets
- Masking tape
- Silver foil cupcake liners

Due to interest, an additional \$600 from personal funds was used to purchase additional bracelet making kits.

Total cost of the SWIFT Initiative: ~\$2,100

In addition to providing the SWIFT bracelet kit of parts, we provided additional resources to teams:

- Bracelet making video
- Written guides to making bracelets
- Suggested messages for SWIFT bracelets
- SWIFT-FRC Slack Channel
- Bracelet kits of parts list and resources/links to purchase additional bracelet supplies

Recruitment of SWIFT influencer teams

During the fall of 2023, we contacted 14 FRC teams and invited them to join the SWIFT Initiative. We outlined the following expectations:

- Make a minimum of 100-200 bracelets, each with a message about one of their team’s core values, gracious professionalism, or robotics
- Attend a virtual SWIFT Initiative meeting with other influencer teams
- Wear your bracelets at the regional event(s) that the team attends, and then start conversations with others at the event about their team’s core values, gracious professionalism and FIRST Robotics by exchanging or gifting SWIFT bracelets
- Help other teams at a regional make SWIFT bracelets by volunteering at a SWIFT Initiative workshop at a regional event (optional)

Among the 14 teams that we invited, a total of 10 signed on as a SWIFT Influencer Team:

| Team Number | Team Name | Location |
|-------------|------------------|----------------------|
| 876 | Thunder Robotics | Hatton Northwood, ND |
| 2239 | Technocrats | Hopkins, MN |
| 2450 | Wind Chill | St. Paul, MN |
| 2491 | No Mythic | St. Paul, MN |
| 3082 | Chicken Bot Pie | Minnetonka, MN |
| 3102 | Tech-No-Tigers | Nevis, MN |
| 3291 | Au Pirates | Brooklyn Park, MN |
| 4009 | DNA | Duluth, MN |
| 5653 | Iron Mosquitos | Babbitt, MN |
| 5690 | SubZero Robotics | Esko, MN |

We sought geographic diversity among the SWIFT Influencer teams. A total of 5 teams (50%) were located in areas outside of the Twin Cities.

The following teams also independently reached out to us and joined the SWIFT Initiative:

| Team Number | Team Name | Location |
|-------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| 5720 | Jagobotics | Hinckley, MN |
| 3926 | MPArors | St. Paul, MN |
| 3130 | The ERRORS | Woodbury, MN |
| 2526 | Crimson Robotics | Maple Grove, MN |
| 2531 | RoboHawks | Chaska, MN |
| 7235 | Red Lake Ogichidaag | Red Lake, MN |

Most of these additional teams were located in the Twin Cities area.

Prior to kickoff, Team 2450 hosted a bracelet making session at their shop that was attended by members of Teams 1816, 2177, 2239, 2491, and 3082. This was a very successful event, but we were not able to host similar events once build season began.

Regional events

In 2024, SWIFT influencer teams competed at 11 different regional events, the FRC Championship in Houston, and the MSHSL State Robotics tournament:

| Event | Total # of SWIFT teams | SWIFT Teams Competing |
|--------------------|------------------------|--|
| Lake Superior | 7 | 1816, 2239, 2526, 3291, 4009, 5653, 5690 |
| Northern Lights | 4 | 2491, 3082, 3130, 5720 |
| Great Northern | 4 | 876, 2177, 2450, 3926 |
| Arkansas | 1 | 3102 |
| St. Louis | 1 | 2531 |
| Iowa | 1 | 2526 |
| Colorado | 2 | 4009, 5690 |
| Las Vegas | 2 | 5653, 7235 |
| MN Granite City | 4 | 876, 1816, 3102, 3130 |
| MN 10,000 Lakes | 5 | 2177, 2239, 2450, 2491, 3926 |
| Seven Rivers | 1 | 3082 |
| Championship | 3 | 876, 1816, 2531 |
| MSHSL Championship | 5 | 1816, 2491, 2531, 3102, 5690 |

*Based on self-reported numbers, SWIFT influencer teams made a minimum of **6,950** SWIFT bracelets for distribution at the events.*

SWIFT Initiative Workshops and Meet-Ups at regional events

At the Duluth regionals and at the Great Northern Regional, we held SWIFT initiative Workshops (1.5 hours for each workshop), where students attending these regionals could attend and make bracelets. Both of these workshops were well attended.

Although we did not take attendance, we estimate that 60-70 students attended each workshop. Despite a very small room at the Great Northern Regional, students were willing to sit on the floor and make bracelets.

Space was unavailable at the Granite City Regional or the 10,000 Lakes Regional to host workshops. Instead, teams hosted SWIFT Initiative Meet-Ups, where students could meet and exchange bracelets.

Whenever possible, we linked SWIFT Initiative events with other workshops and events focused on supporting girls and young women. At the Duluth regionals, our SWIFT Initiative Workshop took place immediately following a “FIRSTIES” event hosted by Teams 5653 and 4009. Students who attended the SWIFT Initiative Workshop were able to make SWIFT “FIRSTIES” bracelets. Team 3102 incorporated bracelet making into their Women in STEM event at the Arkansas Regional.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Our assessment and evaluation included two surveys, one for mentors on SWIFT influencer teams and one for students on SWIFT influencer teams. The surveys were completed in April/May 2024. The mentor survey received 14 responses from 10 teams. The student survey received 63 responses from 10 teams. Survey results are presented below and the full survey results are in the Appendix.

Enthusiasm among teams in FUM for the SWIFT Initiative. Enthusiasm was assessed based on success in recruiting influencer teams, and whether other teams beyond our influencer teams engage in this project by making and exchanging SWIFT bracelets at an FRC competition.

Recruitment and engagement of influencer teams. In addition to Teams 1816 and 2177, our goal was to recruit 10 additional teams to be SWIFT influencer teams. We met this goal by early December 2024. A total of 5 additional teams independently approached us with interest in becoming a SWIFT influencer team. In total, 17 FRC teams participated as SWIFT influencer teams and made an average of 409 bracelets. This average far exceeded our expectation that each team make 100-200 bracelets.

Budget: A total of 14 teams received \$125 of bracelet supplies. We also purchased additional supplies for the SWIFT Workshops. As a result, additional personal funds were used to cover the additional expenses.

The mentor survey below indicated that most teams purchased additional supplies to make more bracelets.

Mentor survey:

| Statement | % respondents who agree or strongly agree |
|--|---|
| The bracelet supplies provided by the SWIFT Initiative organizers were sufficient to make all of our bracelets | 43% |
| The resources provided to you by the SWIFT Initiative organizers helped our team make bracelets | 100% |
| Our team members already knew how to make bracelets | 43% |
| We purchased additional bracelet supplies to make more bracelets | 93% |
| Students on our team made the majority of bracelets | 79% |
| Making bracelets took too much time away from other important team activities during the build season | 7% |
| Our team made more SWIFT bracelets than expected | 71% |
| We made a sufficient number of SWIFT bracelets for our events | 64% |
| Making SWIFT bracelets improved team dynamics and team cohesion | 86% |

The mentor survey indicated that making SWIFT bracelets improved team dynamics and team cohesion. Making bracelets did not take too much time away from other important team activities during build season, although several mentors indicated that making bracelets was time intensive. Opportunities to interact with other SWIFT influencer teams outside of competition were desired.

Additional mentor feedback:

“Gave a useful outlet to students who wanted to be at practice but weren’t currently working on anything”

“When you are sitting around making bracelets, the conversations just flow. The sheer volume of interesting facts that we learned about our teammates and the LAUGHTER that was a fairly constant presence around the table was infectious.

We were also able to use the project to help students who couldn't come to practice an opportunity to earn hours outside of the building.”

“Fun to make and all students could participate, whether they typically build or program the robot and work on fundraising and communications.”

Build season is busy!

Making sure we didn't accidentally pull young women out of STEM activities to make bracelets. We found the balance, we were careful to always schedule bracelet making at a time when no other build activities were happening.

Resource intensive

The tiny beads meant that it took a long time to make each bracelet. We made much fewer bracelets than we thought we could make. We organized separate all-team events to make bracelets rather than having the bracelet-making supplies available at each team meeting.

Some students were hesitant to get on board with the initiative because they only wanted to focus on "robot relevant" tasks. Most of these individuals were male. However, several of our older male students jumped into the task and were big encouragers/supporters of the initiative which then made it more fun/acceptable for the others. One thing that we changed on the team is that we started making event specific bracelets. For the state tournament we made Finale State 2024 and MSHSL State 2024 bracelets. We also started to make red/white/blue bracelets that say FIRST ALUMNI 5690 and FIRST MENTOR 5690 and kids were excited to make those as well. Once there was more flexibility in what we were creating, more kids were on board with what we were doing.

It took time! It was hard for the team to carve out time unless one of the involved mentors scheduled the time. And unfortunately, one of the primary mentors involved with the initiative was out for the season on medical, and that deflated efforts.

The time investment is immense.

Overall the experience was good and we tried to get a majority of the bracelets completed before build, but it's always hard juggling the different commitments.... school, family, team outreach, team impact award (didn't happen), team branding

with our own bows, etc. We did pre-make kits to send home with kids over weekends & breaks. And we found ourselves at the end of the build season making more bracelets with the leftover letters as a "fidget" while practicing pit presenting questions. So yeah, I'd say it was the time commitment.

Bigger beads to make the process faster. We made just over 100 bracelets which we handed out in Duluth and then one friend made another 25 for the MPLS tournament. We didn't make enough to trade extensively and talk with lots of teams about our team values. Also, bracelets should not be seen to motivate/retain just female-identifying or marginalized team members. Our team values already encourage involvement of all students irrespective of their sex or gender-orientation, neurodivergence, or family income.

Hold more inter-team bracelet making sessions like the one hosted by Windchill! This may mean ramping up earlier in the fall/pre-Kickoff.

Student survey:

| Statement | % respondents who agree or strongly agree |
|---|---|
| I am glad that my team participated in the SWIFT Initiative | 95% |
| The SWIFT Initiative improved my own experience during build season | 81% |

Students indicated that they were glad that their team participated and indicated that the SWIFT Initiative improved their own experience during build season. Students also commented that making bracelets was a good team bonding experience and provided a different way to contribute to the team during build season. Making bracelets provided an outlet for creativity. Some students indicated that making the bracelets themselves was tedious and took time, and that it was important that multiple team members participate in making bracelets.

Additional student feedback:

I feel as though I was able to bond a lot with my teammates and coaches and made my first and last year as a student in robotics the best I could have imagined it.

It was really fun to be hanging out with my friends and just making bracelets and then when we handed them out, people would get so happy

I not only enjoyed having them at regionals, but I also enjoyed that it was something lower stress to work on during build season when I needed a break

my team would host bracelet making parties with other teams, so we got to make friends as well as bracelets :)

I enjoyed the informal and loose discussion that I was able to have with my team mates while remaining productive

It was really fun to get creative with the bracelets. And people from other teams enjoying them.

it helped me get hours

I loved being able to make bracelets with my friends then give them to my friends on other teams and make new ones.

They take more thought and effort to make, which makes them more meaningful

as a woman stem, i loved the community building the initiative created. it was honestly just so so fun making them and simply enjoying time with my team, taking my mind off of the stress of building a robot. trading the bracelets was also really fun as i got to meet so many amazing people at competition!

It was a creative and fun project, it was fun to see other teams progress on social media

My team and I had a beading party that was super fun! It brought us together as a team.

It brought our team together

The creativity that got put into the bracelets

I liked that a lot of people enjoyed getting the brackets it was super cool to see that people loved the idea of bracelet making

I enjoyed having bracelet creation groups with my own team and others mixed. It allowed us to socialize and meet new people along with produce a lot of bracelets for comp.

The bonding I had with my team when making the bracelets.

I liked making the bracelets with my team members because it made it easier to get to know them personally.

it helpd me make new friends

It just takes hours to make a lot, but minutes to give them away.

I wish more male FRC members made swift bracelets

I often felt, especially towards the end of the season, that I wasn't making valuable contributions to my team because it became ALL I was doing. I also know that this sentiment was shared by other members of my graphic design department as we were doing a lot of the heavy lifting for our team on this project.

We wanted to make a lot of bracelets, but a lot of our team didn't actually like building them. They liked the outcome, but spending time on it was hard. So we had a smaller group that actually made the majority of bracelets.

I think that the SWIFT initiative is a great way to help out with the team as a new comer and a really fun way to interact with other teams at events but, is unfortunately uninspiring when it becomes what you do when you go to robotics. To me it was unfulfilling and became a tedious task that discouraged me from participating in robotics. This may be a personal gripe with my team but nonetheless something that I think is important to emphasize should this initiative persist beyond this season. Robotics is not only about robots but it's not about only making bracelets either which, is how it felt for me in my first and only season participating in robotics unfortunately. It is important to me that this initiative be a team effort, not an individual one. Whether that be individual persons, departments, or groups of students. Otherwise I felt it was that it was demanding and made me feel like less a part of the team than other students. I love robotics and am grateful for my one and only experience with it but I also am dedicated to seeing its improvement for future students through. Thank you for the opportunity to give feedback.

Other FRC teams engaged in the project. At regional events, we noted that additional FRC teams (estimate of a minimum of 12 additional teams) were making and exchanging bracelets. Volunteers in Minnesota also made SWIFT bracelets.

Enthusiasm for the SWIFT Initiative at regional events. Enthusiasm was evident based on the large number of students who attended the SWIFT Initiative Workshops, teams in addition to the SWIFT influencer teams bringing bracelets to regional events, and social media posts about the SWIFT Initiative. Bracelets were featured in a FIRST Impact Award video.

We were also approached by event organizers in the Indiana District and the New England District about the SWIFT Initiative and we shared our resources with them. Teams outside of the FRC Northland also contacted us to get information and our resources.

Did the SWIFT Initiative improve the regional event experience, particularly for girls and young women (and other students marginalized in STEM)?

Mentor survey:

| Statement | % respondents who agree or strongly agree |
|---|---|
| We made new connections with other SWIFT influencer teams through this initiative | 86% |
| Having SWIFT bracelets that we could distribute and trade improved our team's event experience | 100% |
| SWIFT bracelets increased the ability of our team to meet others and establish new connections at the regional event(s) we attended | 100% |
| The SWIFT bracelet workshops and Meet-Ups were important to the success of the SWIFT Initiative | 71% |

Additional mentor feedback:

We had students that normally do not want to do anything at competitions happily taking bracelets out to give to other teams in the pits and in the stands making connections with other teams.

increased social discourse at the competition

Giving students another tool for breaking out of their shells and having positive interactions with other teams at events. (And also having positive experiences with each other as well).

We love the collaboration & connections with other teams both influencer meet-ups and the seminar/workshops at the events with other attendees. Love our robot friends!

It felt like we made a good amount of bracelets, but we ran out almost immediately at both of our competitions. I don't know if this can be helped at all as the more bracelets there are the more people will take to wear.

The SWIFT session in grand forks was awesome - I wish we would have been able to replicate that success at 10k. The meetup we organized was nice (I heard a student say 'I'm SO glad I'm here!') but it was pretty lightly attended due to space / marketing / timing. Would love to make posters or something if we do this again!

Hosting a bracelet workshop was great for us and we learned a lot of small things to help with making bracelets. I think having as many tips and recommendations for new teams making bracelets will help, things like "get small tweezers for picking up beads" and if there's a good demonstration video/graphic for how to tie the knots.

Student survey:

| Statement | % respondents who agree or strongly agree |
|--|---|
| The SWIFT Initiative improved my own experience at the regional event(s) that I attended | 92% |
| Having SWIFT bracelets made it easier for me to meet new people at the regional event(s) that I attended | 83% |
| The SWIFT Initiative allowed me to make new connections with members of other SWIFT Influencer teams | 73% |
| SWIFT bracelets improved the experience for girls and | 78% |

| | |
|--|-----|
| young women (and other students marginalized in STEM) on my team | |
| SWIFT bracelets improved the experience at FRC regional(s) for girls and young women (and other students marginalized in STEM) | 82% |
| SWIFT bracelets improved the experience for all students at FRC regionals | 89% |

The student survey indicated that the SWIFT Initiative improved the event experience and provided a new way to meet new people at an event.

Additional student feedback:

It's just a super fun way to connect with new people

how much better it was at comp., there seemed to be significantly less aggressive conversations. It was also just more fun to do bracelets than buttons.

It was such a cool way to make connections and bring people together in a way that didn't require extensive knowledge or previous connections

Being able to collect and trade bracelets with other teams, I have so many fun bracelets made by members of other teams and it helped us get closer and every time I wear my bracelets I'm reminded of first.

People seemed really happy when they go one.

in duluth during that swift meeting i enjoyed talking to other teams and creating a stronger connection with first

It was fun to trade them with people on other teams

Having a go to that parents, friends, kids, etc. that came to competition could relate to.

the fun messages on the bracelets and it's an easy way to support/be supported by other teams!

It let me meet more people.

it created opportunities to meet new people

It is a new way to connect different business-side members to each other at competition, where most connections are through builders and coders in the pits.

I liked making connections with other people and teams the best.

I loved getting to meet new people from other teams that I wouldn't have connected with otherwise.

I liked making them and the connections formed from trading bracelets!! I also liked how people's faces lit up (especially judges and younger kids) when we offered them a bracelet.

At comp I met much more people than usual. The bracelets were a great conversation starter and I really loved giving them away and seeing the smiles on peoples faces.

I liked that it gave an opportunity to connect not only with my teammates, but also members of other teams.

Trading for other cool bracelets - kind of like button culture but easier to manage

It just takes hours to make a lot, but minutes to give them away.

I think it should make a more active effort at being gender inclusive; obviously you can't force anybody to make or wear bracelets but idk

I wish more male FRC members made swift bracelets

It was hard to find time to pass around bracelets, and most teams ran out of bracelets early while others went home with hundreds remaining.

It was hard to find people with bracelets at competition!

With it being the first year many teams did not participate and/or know about the SWIFT Initiative so I hope that in the coming years more teams will participate and I also think there should be more social media presence about the SWIFT Initiative as well.

I think there should be some work on the approach to trading SWIFT bracelets at competition but that is also mostly in the control of individual teams and their members. Also, I wish a couple more teams made bracelets so there could be more bracelets to trade and teams to meet.

I didn't like having to explain every time what it was, but I guess that's just a drawback of it being the first year of it.

At 10k Lakes Regional, exchanging bracelets brought a dozen strangers from multiple teams together for a good time, and I left that group with more than five new friends

Other feedback:

Jamee Luce is a FIRST Senior Mentor based in Maine. She brought the SWIFT Bracelet initiative to the New England District Championship event. Her feedback was that this activity appealed primarily to girls and students who identify as female/LGBTQIA. The activity area was busy, with each attendee making 2-3 bracelets. There was a lot of interest in exchanging bracelets, but she did not provide an exact number. She said that it worked as a silent message. There were a lot of smiles and showing bracelets as girls especially passed each other in the queuing lines, on/off the field. Due to the enthusiastic reception, Jamee is making plans to do the SWIFT FRC Initiative again in 2025.

Teams commit to continuing SWIFT in future years using their own resources to build and distribute SWIFT bracelets at competitions and their community outreach events. If successful, the SWIFT Initiative will become a positive, self-sustaining cultural practice in our FRC community.

Mentor survey:

| Statement | % respondents who agree or strongly agree |
|--|---|
| We plan to continue making SWIFT bracelets for future FRC seasons | 86% |
| We plan to use SWIFT bracelets in our community outreach and other team events | 64% |

Additional mentor feedback:

For a first year experience I think this initiative was well organized/promoted! We were just grateful to have been able to be a part of it and will continue the movement into the years. We have already re-stocked our supplies for the summer!

The team has stated they wish to continue this initiative next season, and have already discussed possibilities to have supplies "in-shop" to take advantage of shop downtime.

Student survey:

| Statement | % respondents who agree or strongly agree |
|---|---|
| I would like my team to continue making SWIFT bracelets in the future | 94% |

Impact of the SWIFT Initiative on recruitment and retention. Although the SWIFT Initiative was focused on community building, a secondary impact may be on increasing the number of girls and young women (and other students marginalized in STEM) who are recruited to teams, and increased retention and success of these students in FRC and beyond. Our mentor survey indicates that the SWIFT Initiative was judged to have a minimal impact on enhancing recruitment or retention of girls and young women (and other students marginalized in STEM)

Mentor survey:

| Statement | % respondents who agree or strongly agree |
|---|---|
| The SWIFT Initiative will increase the recruitment of girls and young women (and other students marginalized in STEM) to our team | 21% |
| The SWIFT Initiative will increase the retention and success of girls and young women (and other students marginalized in STEM) on our team | 36% |

Overall assessment by SWIFT influencer teams.

Mentor survey:

| Statement | % respondents who agree or strongly agree |
|---|---|
| The time and effort required to be part of the SWIFT Initiative was worth it for our team | 100% |
| The SWIFT Initiative met our team’s expectations and goals | 100% |

Additional mentor feedback:

Connections with other teams as well as internal team bonding, excitement from additional members of our team, an additional way to contribute to the overall team

Learning Anishinabe words and connecting with Indian Education professionals in a meaningful way.

When the team made time to make the bracelets, it was a joyful experience for all. They report having better interactions with other teams at events, just 'showing' the bracelet meant that they were in agreement about friendship. Drive team stated it made a difference in their interactions.

If anything, it would be good to develop traditions that encourage students to connect with more people using the bracelets. I think that culture will grow, but it is new for some students. We need those taste maker leaders to model how to connect to new people so it becomes a known thing. We did our best!

Thanks for organizing this activity. We had fun.

It was a fun activity with a good message.

Thank you for having the insight into starting something new in FIRST!

Student survey:

| Statement | % respondents who agree or strongly agree |
|--|---|
| The SWIFT Initiative was worth the time and effort that my team put into it | 93% |
| The SWIFT Initiative was worth the time and effort that I personally put into it | 89% |

Additional student feedback:

Thank you for putting this on this season!

Thank you for organizing this :)

"love this idea :)

I wear the bracelets I received from other teams every day.

Swift should extend to some other teams in the Midwest or country

Being able to collect and trade bracelets with other teams, I have so many fun bracelets made by members of other teams and it helped us get closer and every time I wear my bracelets I'm reminded of first.

So grateful for all the opportunities and experiences SWIFT has given my team and I. Would love to see it continue in the future and for it to keep spreading positivity and inclusivity!

I really enjoyed this idea I hope we do it again next year!!

I thoroughly enjoyed this FIRST Robotics season and SWIFT played a large part it in!

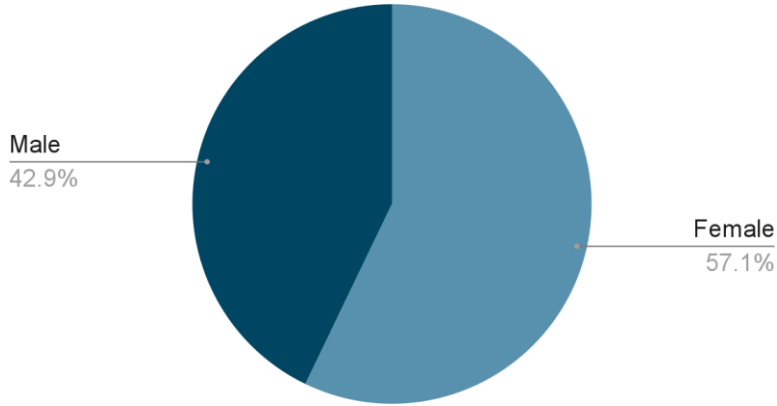
APPENDIX

1. SWIFT Initiative [photos and videos](#)
2. [SWIFT Initiative invitation](#)
3. [SWIFT Initiative how to make a bracelet video](#)
4. [SWIFT Initiative Workshop invitation](#)
5. [SWIFT Initiative Information Sheet](#)
6. Influencer Team Mentor Survey results
7. Influencer Team Student Feedback Survey results

MENTOR SURVEY RESULTS

14 respondents, 10 influencer teams

To which gender identity do you most identify?



| Statement | % respondents who agree or strongly agree |
|---|---|
| 1. The bracelet supplies provided by the SWIFT Initiative organizers were sufficient to make all of our bracelets | 43% |
| 2. The resources provided to you by the SWIFT Initiative organizers helped our team make bracelets | 100% |
| 3. Our team members already knew how to make bracelets | 43% |
| 4. We purchased additional bracelet supplies to make more bracelets | 93% |
| 5. Students on our team made the majority of bracelets | 79% |
| 6. Making bracelets took too much time away from other important team activities during the build season | 7% |
| 7. Our team made more SWIFT bracelets than expected | 71% |
| 8. Making SWIFT bracelets improved team dynamics and team cohesion | 86% |
| 9. We made new connections with other SWIFT influencer | 86% |

| | |
|--|------|
| teams through this initiative | |
| 10. Having SWIFT bracelets that we could distribute and trade improved our team's event experience | 100% |
| 11. SWIFT bracelets increased the ability of our team to meet others and establish new connections at the regional event(s) we attended | 100% |
| 12. We made a sufficient number of SWIFT bracelets for our events | 64% |
| 13. The SWIFT bracelet workshops and Meet-Ups at regionals were important to the success of the SWIFT Initiative | 71% |
| 14. The SWIFT Initiative created a more positive experience for girls and young women, and other students marginalized in STEM, at our regional event(s) | 71% |
| 15. We plan to continue making SWIFT bracelets for future FRC seasons | 86% |
| 16. We plan to use SWIFT bracelets in our community outreach and other team events | 64% |
| 17. The time and effort required to be part of the SWIFT Initiative was worth it for our team | 100% |
| 18. The SWIFT Initiative will increase the recruitment of girls and young women (and other students marginalized in STEM) to our team | 21% |
| 19. The SWIFT Initiative will increase the retention and success of girls and young women (and other students marginalized in STEM) on our team | 36% |
| 20. The SWIFT Initiative met our team's expectations and goals | 100% |

What was the biggest benefit of the SWIFT Initiative for your team?

Connections with other teams as well as internal team bonding, excitement from additional members of our team, an additional way to contribute to the overall team

Gave a useful outlet to students who wanted to be at practice but weren't currently working on anything

We had students that normally do not want to do anything at competitions happily taking bracelets out to give to other teams in the pits and in the stands making connections with other teams.

increased social discourse at the competition

Learning Anishinabe words and connecting with Indian Education professionals in a meaningful way.

Giving students another tool for breaking out of their shells and having positive interactions with other teams at events. (And also having positive experiences with each other as well).

Team building in bracelet making

Fun to make and all students could participate, whether they typically build or program the robot and work on fundraising and communications.

Evening activity at regional, and outreach for FIRST Ladies events that we hosted

When you are sitting around making bracelets, the conversations just flow. The sheer volume of interesting facts that we learned about our teammates and the LAUGHTER that was a fairly constant presence around the table was infectious. We were also able to use the project to help students who couldn't come to practice an opportunity to earn hours outside of the building.

When the team made time to make the bracelets, it was a joyful experience for all. They report having better interactions with other teams at events, just 'showing' the bracelet meant that they were in agreement about friendship. Drive team stated it made a difference in their interactions.

Being able to plan a bracelet making event for our school incorporating school core values increased our team visibility in the school.

We love the collaboration & connections with other teams both influencer meet-ups and the seminar/workshops at the events with other attendees. Love our robot friends!

What was the biggest drawback of the SWIFT Initiative for your team?

It felt like we made a good amount of bracelets, but we ran out almost immediately at both of our competitions. I don't know if this can be helped at all as the more bracelets there are the more people will take to wear.

Time needed to make each bracelet

Build season is busy!

Making sure we didn't accidentally pull young women out of STEM activities to make bracelets. We found the balance, we were careful to always schedule bracelet making at a time when no other build activities were happening.

Resource intensive

The tiny beads meant that it took a long time to make each bracelet. We made much fewer bracelets than we thought we could make. We organized separate all-team events to make bracelets rather than having the bracelet-making supplies available at each team meeting.

In parts of the country, could be construed as political and we were careful not to be confrontational inadvertently.

Some students were hesitant to get on board with the initiative because they only wanted to focus on "robot relevant" tasks. Most of these individuals were male. However, several of our older male students jumped into the task and were big encouragers/supporters of the initiative which then made it more fun/acceptable for the others. One thing that we changed on the team is that we started making event specific bracelets. For the state tournament we made Finale State 2024 and MSHSL State 2024 bracelets. We also started to make red/white/blue bracelets that say FIRST ALUMNI 5690 and FIRST MENTOR 5690 and kids were excited to make those as well. Once there was more flexibility in what we were creating, more kids were on board with what we were doing.

It took time! It was hard for the team to carve out time unless one of the involved mentors scheduled the time. And unfortunately, one of the primary mentors involved with the initiative was out for the season on medical, and that deflated efforts.

The time investment is immense.

Overall the experience was good and we tried to get a majority of the bracelets completed before build, but it's always hard juggling the different commitments.... school, family, team outreach, team impact award (didn't happen), team branding with our own bows, etc. We did pre-make kits to send home with kids over weekends & breaks. And we found ourselves at the end of the build season making more bracelets with the leftover letters as a "fidget" while practicing pit presenting questions. So yeah, I'd say it was the time commitment.

What could the SWIFT Initiative organizers have done differently to improve your team's experience?

The SWIFT session in grand forks was awesome - I wish we would have been able to replicate that success at 10k. The meetup we organized was nice (I heard a student say 'I'm SO glad I'm here!') but it was pretty lightly attended due to space / marketing / timing. Would love to make posters or something if we do this again!

Hosting a bracelet workshop was great for us and we learned a lot of small things to help with making bracelets. I think having as many tips and recommendations for new teams making bracelets will help, things like "get small tweezers for picking up beads" and if there's a good demonstration video/graphic for how to tie the knots.

nothing. It was terrific

It was well supported. If anything, it would be good to develop traditions that encourage students to connect with more people using the bracelets. I think that culture will grow, but it is new for some students. We need those taste maker leaders to model how to connect to new people so it becomes a known thing. We did our best!

I do not have any suggestions. I (genuinely) believe they did a great job.

"More grant \$\$ for teams next year. Language how to communicate involvement in the project for awards"

Bigger beads to make the process faster. We made just over 100 bracelets which we handed out in Duluth and then one friend made another 25 for the MPLS tournament. We didn't make enough to trade extensively and talk with lots of teams about our team values. Also, bracelets should not be seen to motivate/retain just female-identifying or marginalized team members. Our team values already encourage involvement of all students irrespective of their sex or gender-orientation, neurodivergence, or family income.

Having a time to interact with other influencers could have been beneficial

For a first year experience I think this initiative was well organized/promoted! We were just grateful to have been able to be a part of it and will continue the movement into the years. We have already re-stocked our supplies for the summer!

Hold more inter-team bracelet making sessions like the one hosted by Windchill! This may mean ramping up earlier in the fall/pre-Kickoff.

Any additional comments:

Thanks for the opportunity.

Thanks for organizing this activity. We had fun.

It was a fun activity with a good message.

Thank you for having the insight into starting something new in FIRST!

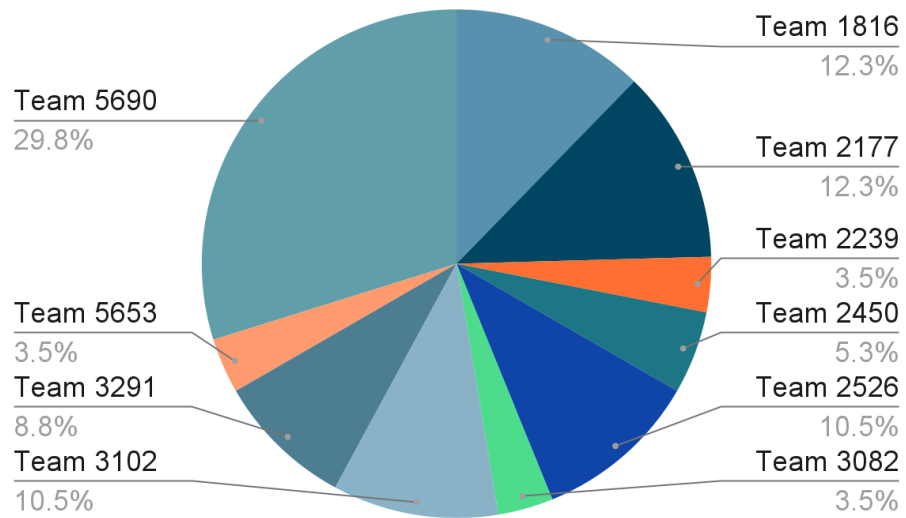
The team has stated they wish to continue this initiative next season, and have already discussed possibilities to have supplies "in-shop" to take advantage of shop downtime.

I honestly have no idea how much of our supplies were the "kit" v "og team stash" v "____ wants us to make 600 so we purchased more stuff" v "oh, here are some left overs from other projects of ____'s" ****shrug**** but we had SO MANY SUPPLIES & BINS

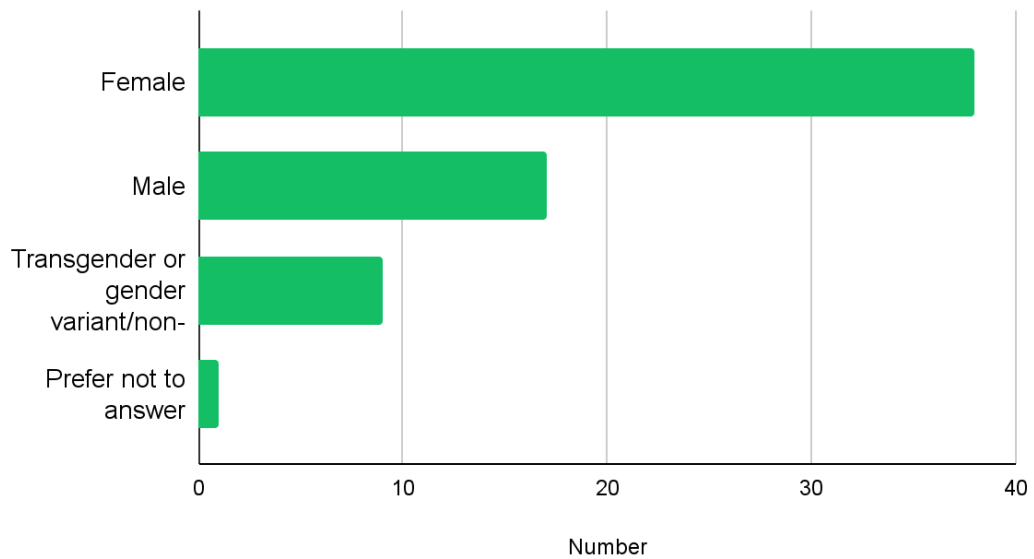
STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

63 responses, 10 influencer teams

Team Number

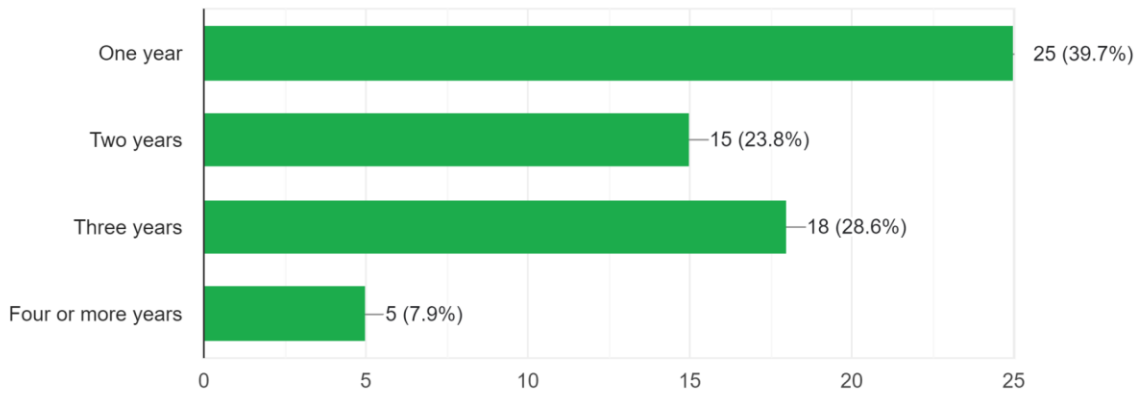


To which gender do you most identify?



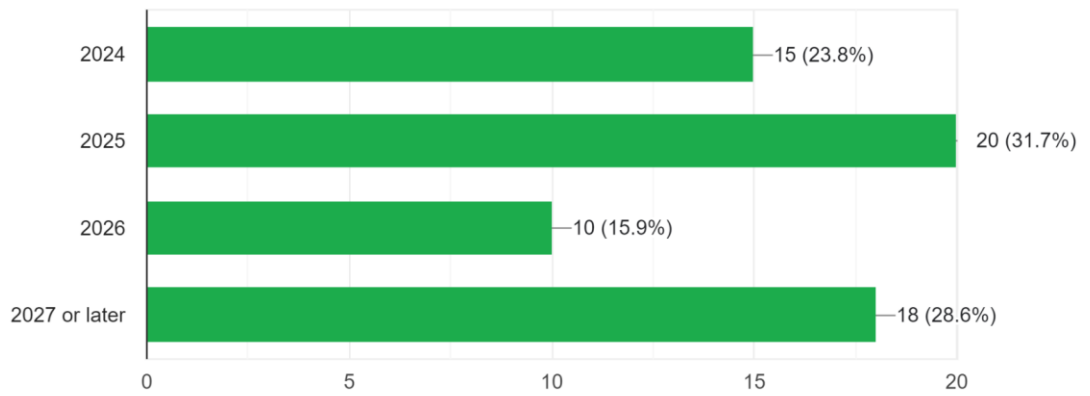
How many years have you been a member of your team?

63 responses



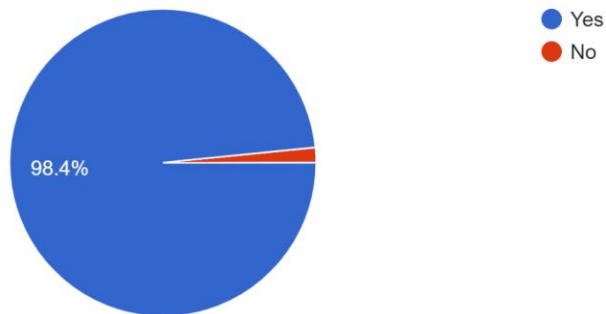
What year will you be graduating from high school?

63 responses



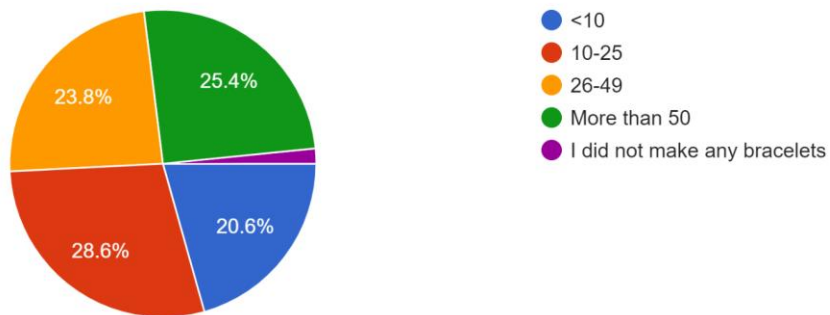
Did you make SWIFT bracelets?

63 responses



How many SWIFT bracelets did you personally make?

63 responses



| Statement | % respondents who agree or strongly agree |
|---|---|
| 1. I am glad that my team participated in the SWIFT Initiative | 95% |
| 2. The SWIFT Initiative improved my own experience during build season | 81% |
| 3. The SWIFT Initiative improved my own experience at the regional event(s) that I attended | 92% |
| 4. Having SWIFT bracelets made it easier for me to meet | 83% |

| | |
|--|-----|
| new people at the regional event(s) that I attended | |
| 5. The SWIFT Initiative was worth the time and effort that my team put into it | 93% |
| 6. The SWIFT Initiative was worth the time and effort that I personally put into it | 89% |
| 7. I would like my team to continue making SWIFT bracelets in the future | 94% |
| 8. The SWIFT Initiative allowed me to make new connections with members of other SWIFT Influencer teams | 73% |
| 9. SWIFT bracelets improved the experience for girls and young women (and other students marginalized in STEM) on my team | 78% |
| 10. SWIFT bracelets improved the experience for girls and young women (and other students marginalized in STEM) at FRC regionals | 82% |
| 11. SWIFT bracelets improved the experience for all students at FRC regionals | 89% |

What did you like the most about the SWIFT Initiative?

Se se of community between people who exchanged them.

It's just a super fun way to connect with new people

Teaching other teams about the message

I feel as though I was able to bond a lot with my teammates and coaches and made my first and last year as a student in robotics the best I could have imagines it.

It was really fun to be hanging out with my friends and just making bracelets and then when we handed them out, people would get so happy

I not only enjoyed having them at regionals, but I also enjoyed that it was something lower stress to work on during build season when I needed a break

The amount of creativity and personality you got to put into each and every bracelet you made, whether the beads were colors of characters to the astonishing amount of range of encouraging/kind words you could put on the bracelets.

my team would host bracelet making parties with other teams, so we got to make friends as well as bracelets :)

the ability to go around and seeing peoples faces light up when they got one.

how much better it was at comp., there seemed to be significantly less aggressive conversations. It was also just more fun to do bracelets than buttons.

It was such a cool way to make connections and bring people together in a way that didn't require extensive knowledge or previous connectikns

Being able to collect and trade bracelets with other teams, I have so many fun bracelets made by members of other teams and it helped us get closer and every time I wear my bracelets I'm reminded of first.

People seemed really happy when they go one.

in duluth during that seift meeting i enjoyed talking to other teams and creating a stronger connection with first

It was fun to trade them with people on other teams

Meeting new people

giving me an opportunity to do something for more than just my own team

I enjoyed the informal and loose discussion that I was able to have with my team mates while remaining productive

The way it bring people together from something small no matter what team.

Coming up with messages to put on the bracelets

It was really fun to get creative with the bracelets. And people from other teams enjoying them.

it helped me get hours

Having a go to that parents, friends, kids, etc. that came to competition could relate to.

Everyone knows Swift- so having something they could take home and reference that wasn't just a button was nice.

Giving out the bracelets at regionals and meeting a variety of different people because of it

I loved being able to make bracelets with my friends then give them to my friends on other teams and make new ones.

Meeting new people from other teams

They take more thought and effort to make, which makes them more meaningful

the fun messages on the bracelets and it's an easy way to support/be supported by other teams!

It let me meet more people.

it created opportunities to meet new people

as a woman stem, i loved the community building the initiative created. it was honestly just so so fun making them and simply enjoying time with my team, taking my mind off of the stress of building a robot. trading the bracelets was also really fun as i got to meet so many amazing people at competition!

How i got to meet new people

It is a new way to connect different business-side members to each other at competition, where most connections are through builders and coders in the pits.

It was a creative and fun project, it was fun to see other teams progress on social media

I liked making connections with other people and teams the best.

I loved getting to meet new people from other teams that I wouldn't have connected with otherwise.

I liked making them and the connections formed from trading bracelets!! I also liked how people's faces lit up (especially judges and younger kids) when we offered them a bracelet.

My team and I had a beading party that was super fun! It brought us together as a team.

At comp I met much more people than usual. The bracelets were a great conversation starter and I really loved giving them away and seeing the smiles on peoples faces.

I liked that it gave an opportunity to connect not only with my teammates, but also members of other teams.

The connections you can build and the smiles from giving out bracelets
Bracelet making

how great it was to talk w other teams

It brought our team together

The creativity that got put into the bracelets

I liked that a lot of people enjoyed getting the brackets it was super cool to see that people loved the idea of bracelet making

Meeting new people

The deaigns. the excitment from others

I enjoyed having bracelet creation groups with my own team and others mixed. It allowed us to socialize and meet new people along with produce a lot of bracelets for comp.

Trading for other cool bracelets - kind of like button culture but easier to manage

The bonding I had with my team when making the bracelets.

I liked making the bracelets with my team members because it made it easier to get to know them personally.

it helpd me make new friends

Giving out bracelets and meeting new people.

What did you like the least about the SWIFT Initiative?

I wouldn't say I have a least favorite thing.

Sometimes making the bracelets would hurt my hands

It just takes hours to make a lot, but minutes to give them away.

The amount of times the bracelets would come untied, or beads would fall off the string. It was definitely annoying, but it didn't make my experience with making them make me like it any less.

making the bracelets took a little while

i'm not sure

I think it should make a more active effort at being gender inclusive; obviously you can't force anybody to make or wear bracelets but idk

I wish more male FRC members made swift bracelets

When the beads fell off while making them.

WHENEVER I MAKE A BRACELET AND THEN I ACCIDENTLY PULL ON THE STRING AND EVERYTHING FALLS OUT

I don't love making the brackets

Tying the bracelets

I often felt, especially towards the end of the season, that I wasn't making valuable contributions to my team because it became ALL I was doing. I also know that this sentiment was shared by other members of my graphic design department as we were doing a lot of the heavy lifting for our team on this project.

I have nothing negative to say.

Dropping my beads on accident :(

I got tired of making bracelets after a while.

making the bracelets took a lot of time

We wanted to make a lot of bracelets, but a lot of our team didn't actually like building them. They liked the outcome, but spending time on it was hard. So we had a smaller group that actually made the majority of bracelets.

Not sure

I didn't get much time to make bracelets

Nothing!

How few teams did it at regionals

Nothing

how i had to talk to people

It was hard to find time to pass around bracelets, and most teams ran out of bracelets early while others went home with hundreds remaining.

It was hard to find people with bracelets at competition!

With it being the first year many teams did not participate and/or know about the SWIFT Initiative so I hope that in the coming years more teams will participate and I also think there should be more social media presence about the SWIFT Initiative as well.

I didn't like having to watch the long videos but I did find them helpful.

My team probably made around 500+ bracelets, which was definitely a lot of work for our small team of 12. However, it was worth it when we almost ran out at 10k!

The knot

A lot of the sessions were girls only, which is the point of the initiative, but it doesn't really help connect any of the boys on different teams.

everything was good

How long it took to make the bracelets

Nothing

I think there should be some work on the approach to trading SWIFT bracelets at competition but that is also mostly in the control of individual teams and their members. Also, I wish a couple more teams made bracelets so there could be more bracelets to trade and teams to meet.

Making the bracelets was tedious unless we had a team of students doing it, but then again I'm a build team lead so I didn't really have time for it anyways

Some people were scared to come up and start talking to other people

I didn't like having to explain every time what it was, but I guess that's just a drawback of it being the first year of it.

the glue given

Nothing

Any additional comments:

Thank you for putting this on this season!

Thank you for organizing this :)

"love this idea :)

I wear the bracelets I received from other teams every day.

At 10k Lakes Regional, exchanging bracelets brought a dozen strangers from multiple teams together for a good time, and I left that group with more than five new friends"

Swift should extend to some other teams in the Midwest or country

I think that the SWIFT initiative is a great way to help out with the team as a new comer and a really fun way to interact with other teams at events but, is unfortunately uninspiring when it becomes what you do when you go to robotics. To me it was unfulfilling and became a tedious task that discouraged me from participating in robotics. This may be a personal gripe with my team but nonetheless something that I think is important to emphasize should this initiative persist beyond this season. Robotics is not only about robots but it's not about only making bracelets either which, is how it felt for me in my first and only season participating in robotics unfortunately. It is important to me that this initiative be a team effort, not an individual one. Whether that be individual persons, departments, or groups of students. Otherwise I felt it was that it was demanding and made me feel like less a part of the team than other students. I love robotics and am grateful for my one and only experience with it but I also am dedicated to seeing its improvement for future students through. Thank you for the opportunity to give feedback.

i loved everything about this initiative, and i think the mission/message is so wonderful! however i dislike how it takes inspiration from taylor swift and her concert as she is not a very good role model in my opinion; she goes against the idea of sustainability (which stem strives for).

None

So grateful for all the opportunities and experiences SWIFT has given my team and I. Would love to see it continue in the future and for it to keep spreading positivity and inclusivity!

I really enjoyed this idea I hope we do it again next year!!

I thoroughly enjoyed this FIRST Robotics season and SWIFT played a large part it in!