

2009 Woodie Flowers Award Submission (Jon Jack)

It was in 2004, during his junior year of high school, that Jon Jack assembled a group of friends and created Team 1538. His enthusiasm and commitment has only grown. Since that time Jon has graduated from High Tech High, but has refused to give up the excitement of FIRST and has returned, year after year, as one of The Holy Cows' most dedicated mentors.

As a mentor, Jon has stayed extremely active; each year he dedicates over 400 hours during the Build Season and more than 1100 hours year-round. His well-rounded knowledge, perfectionist work ethic, and humorous personality continues to have a great effect on all of our team members.

Jon has an innate ability to motivate team members. Just ask past director Brittany Parker. When Brittany first joined the team, she didn't show an interest in science or engineering and was very shy. Jon saw her potential and worked with her to learn the ropes of the team, allowing her to realize her passion and aptitude for engineering. Jon later influenced Brittany to get an internship at SeaBotix, where he put in a good word for her.

Another student whom Jon has affected is Jason Carrier. Jason boldly admitted he had only joined the team to be with friends. But, when Jon noticed his exceptional skill in driving the previous year's robot, Jason soon became more involved. The following year Jon and Jason worked together on writing code for the robot, and Jason quickly became the lead programmer. Jon has a talent for communicating with team members, teaching them, and allowing them to grow through FIRST; he has pushed us all to do our best.

Jon's tireless dedication extends beyond The Holy Cows, as well. This year he was elected to become the Chairperson of Team San Diego (TSD), a coalition of all of the San Diego FRC teams. Jon has run every TSD meeting, organized events, mentored rookie teams, and spread his knowledge to all. Jon even traveled to Texas to become a certified FRC control system expert. Upon his return Jon ran several workshops; "All About Drive trains," "An Intro to the Control System," and "the Rookie Crash Course."

What is most striking about our mentor Jon Jack is that he is a FIRST kid. He started The Holy Cows, managed the team, and became a mentor. He has lived the madness and knows exactly what we are going through each build season. While he could do much of the work himself, Jon helps each of us to learn and passes on the knowledge he has gained. Jon brings industry techniques and professionals in to help the team; furthering our abilities and level of work. Ultimately his own words say it best, "Mentoring through FIRST has given me a sense of fulfillment and accomplishment. I see the benefits as the students go on to college to pursue engineering and see such a positive change in them." It is without a doubt that The Holy Cows, and all San Diego teams, have been positively influenced by FIRST and the dedication of our mentor Jon Jack.