

Creating Relationships in the Community

Why build relationships within your community?

Spreading the word of FIRST through your team is a great way to get kids and families that you meet excited about STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).

- Community members can introduce your team to future career choices that they might have never known about.
- Community outreach plays a role in the path of promoting a culture change where STEM professionals/fields are celebrated.
- Building relationships within your community is critical for the future growth of your team.
- You may interact with potential sponsors and/or mentors as well as working with a variety of groups and organizations.

Getting out to your community to spread the word of FIRST and your team

Creating relationships within your community may take some time; your team needs to prove themselves as a positive, responsible, and helpful group of students. Many corporations, community organizations, and employees are not always used to working along side high school students and can be a bit apprehensive at first. Remember that when you are out in your community you are representing FIRST, your school, and your team so you should behave in a way that is professional and business-like. It is important early on in your outreach, that you pick few events to help out with. This way you will not overwhelm your team members and you will keep them excited about volunteering, without burning them out. Community service is all about sustaining relationships and promoting FIRST. Some ways to find an organization to get started with might be:

- Look to mentor new FRC, FTC and FLL teams in your area
- Check out STEM related events that may be happening in your area and contact them to see if they need volunteers. Until you have built a reputation with organizations you might be assigned set up and clean up. Don't get discouraged, prove yourself to be hard workers!
- Contact local elementary school that may be having family events and offer to help set up booths/clean up so parents can enjoy the event with their children
- Contact any local festivals, street fairs, etc. and see if you can have a booth set up promoting FIRST, demonstrating your robot and possibly having several VEX/Mindstorm robots available for children to play with

What your team gains from your community

- Through community service you show teams members the importance of giving back and leaving their community a better place than they found it
- Outreach shows your team they can create a positive reputation as well as good community relationships with those you are helping, this will keep them coming back to you for volunteers
- Giving back to your community will help the members of your team feel better about what they are doing as well as creating a work ethic that will carry over into build season

and their future endeavors

What your community gains from your team

Giving back to your community inspires kids and families you come in contact with to become excited about FIRST, and shows them that STEM can be fun. Companies see you as enthusiastic and responsible high school students and may even offer you internships. Overall, community service can positively impact you, your team, and the people around you.