

HOW TO CONNECT WITH YOUR LOCAL POLITICIANS

Dear Politician,

As a member of FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) robotics Team 1538 - "The Holy Cows", I would like to express the importance of FIRST, an organization whose goal is to inspire young people to become science and technology leaders. This is done by engaging students in exciting mentor-based programs that include building 120 lb robots. This program inspires innovation, fosters the growth of well-rounded students, and teaches students communication and leadership skills necessary for their success. As a (their position here), you have the opportunity to educate your constituency on the importance of a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education.

FIRST was founded in 1989 by Dean Kamen in Manchester, New Hampshire. His objective was to inspire an appreciation for science and technology in young people through a hands-on robotics program. FIRST motivates young people to pursue opportunities in STEM and grants over \$14 million through 736 scholarships annually. Through the support network of more than 3,500 corporations, institutions, and individuals, FIRST organizes four programs inspiring more than 220,000 K-12 youth in STEM education and career exploration:

- FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC) (High School Students)
- FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) (High School Students)
- FIRST LEGO® League (FLL) (9-14 years)
- Junior FIRST LEGO® League (JFLL) (6-9 years)

The Holy Cows, FRC Team 1538, incorporate FIRST's goals in everything we do. Our team of 67 students, from High Tech High, prepares team members for success in the academic environment and beyond. Our team has also grown in the number of girls who participate; beginning in 2005 with an all male team and growing to a team with over 20 girls (1/3 of our team), and our team is also proud to have 95% of our alumni pursuing STEM majors in college and 100% attending college. In addition, the Holy Cows work year round to cultivate an appreciation for STEM in our school and community. As a team, we discover new ways to make our work more beneficial to all. In the past year we've completed over 5,000 hours of community service through river clean-ups, mentoring elementary school FLL teams, and running robotics events.

FIRST's aspects and customs are designed to prepare it's members for the future. One value, Gracious Professionalism, encourages high-quality work, emphasizes the value of others, and cultivates respect for competitors and the community. With Gracious Professionalism, fierce competition and mutual gain are not separate notions. Members learn and compete, but treat one another with respect and kindness in the process. Knowledge, competition, and empathy are comfortably blended and will help each team member as they pursue a meaningful life.

With each new year, new faces and visits from several very influential people have graced The Holy Cow's engineering lab. One of our most memorable visits was an interview with Bill Gates, Melinda Gates and Oprah Winfrey for a special piece on schools educating students in extraordinary ways. On their trip through our school, special attention was given to our robotics team because we are bridging the gap between work and fun. Both were astonished at how we are required to design and build a robot in six weeks.

Also, on October 17th, 2009, The Holy Cows orchestrated the first ever city-wide FIRST day with the help of Mayor Jerry Sanders. Along with the San Diego FIRST Day, The Holy Cows recently appealed to the San Diego Unified School Board and encouraged them to support FIRST programs and volunteer teachers. In addition, this past December we attracted the attention of new FIRST president, Jon Dudas, as he toured the west coast.

I would like to invite you to visit us at High Tech High and observe firsthand the incredible experience of a thriving FIRST team. Your participation in promoting and endorsing FIRST, while embracing the FIRST goals as your own, is essential to our continued success. I appreciate your time and your service to our community and look forward to speaking to you about FIRST and the Holy Cows.

Sincerely,

Your name

Title

Team number & name

School name

City, State

contact e-mail

phone number