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GRADUATING SENIORS

As the 2022 school year draws to a close, 1678 would like to celebrate our seniors and their achievements. Below is a short profile from each of our seniors, including their future plans for education and FRC. Thank you so much, and congratulations to all of our seniors!

AMENA SAHMOUD - BUSINESS AND MEDIA

What do you plan to do after graduating?
I plan on majoring in Graphic Design at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.



What's one thing you learned during your time on the team that you'll always take with you?
Understanding and expecting how others perceive your work so you can effectively communicate. I've had to talk about the team in a million different settings and each time I got better at highlighting what the audience will probably care about more accurately— I've found this to be harder than it sounds.

What's one thing you'd like to tell any incoming students?
Your experience on the team is what you make of it. Explore, volunteer for stuff and you'll get something out of everything you do. I tried different things within my subteam and volunteered with most of our outreach programs, and it was all rewarding in the short run and beneficial in the long run!

Proudest achievement?
I'm really proud of Business and Media this year! Not exactly my achievement, but I've loved working with every single BaM member and seeing all of them grow in every aspect makes me incredibly proud to have worked alongside them. I can't wait to see where they go in their own lives and where they take the team. Also, I'm more amused than proud but it feels like everyone on the team is at least familiar with the idea of branding standards because of how much I meme about it. Keep it up y'all ;)

A quote?
"Look! Bubbles! I'm an alchemist!!" -Melody Ho

Do you have any future plans regarding robotics/FRC?
I'd like to stay involved with FRC in some way. I think I'll be volunteering at events and maybe mentor a team— especially since there are few business/media mentors in FRC.

ELI PAPAGNI - HARDWARE FABRICATION



What do you plan to do after graduating?
I plan on attending UCLA.

What's one thing you learned during your time on the team that you'll always take with you?
I learned how to manage my time and balance my schoolwork, robotics work and outside responsibilities.

What's one thing you'd like to tell any incoming students?
A little bit of confidence can go a long way. Belief in yourself is the first step in doing anything, because if you don't believe in yourself you won't try.

Proudest achievement?
On the team I think my proudest achievement was fixing the velox one time after looking on a bunch of forums for a few hours to figure out what was wrong. It turned out to be a pretty simple fix, but I was proud I was able to do it myself.

A quote?
I don't even have a senior quote!

Do you have any future plans regarding robotics/FRC?
No, I'm planning on focusing on college for the next four years.

HELENA YOUNG - HARDWARE DESIGN

What do you plan to do after graduating?
I plan to attend Northwestern University as a mechanical engineering major!



What's one thing you learned during your time on the team that you'll always take with you?
During my time on the team, I learned a lot about how to be an organized and effective leader, which I know will help me to succeed both in my everyday life, and in a future career.

What's one thing you'd like to tell any incoming students?
The more you invest into the team, the more fun and rewarding it is, so put a lot into it and enjoy your time, because it goes by way faster than you expect it to!

Proudest achievement?
My proudest achievements were leading the design on this year's climber (and getting to watch it climb successfully at competition!), and the effort we put in as a drive team this year, and the improvements we saw over the season because of that.

A quote?
"MFLT" - Dave

Do you have any future plans regarding robotics/FRC?
I hope to join the robotics club at Northwestern, and possibly mentor an FRC team in a few years.

LUDI WANG - SOFTWARE SCOUTING



What do you plan to do after graduating?
I will be heading to Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio to study Music and Computer Science!

What's one thing you learned during your time on time on the team that you'll always take with you?
The team has taught me to be organized and communicate well, and always write things down if you don't want to forget them.

What's one thing you'd like to tell any incoming students?
This team is huge- it's pretty much impossible to experience everything that goes on. Design students (for example) will have different opportunities than those on Scouting, so you might feel like you're missing out, but this team has plenty of really cool experiences to offer everyone as long as you put in the effort to participate. Also, try not to compare yourself to others. It's a very easy habit to fall into, but it gets you nowhere. Focus on how much you can grow from where you started.

Proudest achievement?
Winning the Game Design Challenge with the Strategy subteam in 2021 with our game, Storm Surge, tied with having a pretty smooth run of the scouting system with no catastrophic issues at competition during the 2022 season.

A quote?
Cueball: "Hey, look, we have a bunch of data! I'm gonna analyze it."
Megan: "No, you fool! That will only create more data!"
-Randall Munroe

Do you have any future plans regarding robotics/FRC?
I want to volunteer at future FRC events and stay involved in the FIRST community. I may eventually mentor an FRC team, but not until several years down the line.

YOUYOU (HAOYUN) XU - BUSINESS AND MEDIA

What do you plan to do after graduating?

I plan on attending a university for a law school fast track- 3 years in undergrad, 3 years in law school, then I'll be pursuing a Doctor of Psychology degree for a career in forensic psychology.



What's one thing you learned during your time on time on the team that you'll always take with you?

I think it's probably just the general communications and writing. The mentors here are an invaluable resource both within and outside the realm of high school robotics, and I don't think I'd have the same writing ability I do now without their help.

What's one thing you'd like to tell any incoming students?

Participate in the secondary subteams, outreach, and extra meetings that you think can help you. Even if it's just a little bit.

Proudest achievement?

Becoming so used to Adobe InDesign that sometimes I press on the keyboard shortcuts for InDesign in my sleep.

A quote?

"Kina... I don't think that's a sandwich anymore... that's a panini." -Kate Unger

Do you have any future plans regarding robotics/FRC?

I'd like to mentor a team in the Bay Area when I go there for postgraduate studies, but otherwise, I might even consider coming back to mentor 1678. Either way, I will try and do some mentoring and volunteering for teams and events where I can. FRC has a very special place in my heart.

CAROLINE JOHNSON - HARDWARE DESIGN



What do you plan to do after graduating?

I will be attending UC Berkeley as a Chemical Engineering major. Go Bears!

What's one thing you learned during your time on time on the team that you'll always take with you?

So many leadership skills! Knowing how to manage a project, work around a deadline, using machines is just the start as well.

What's one thing you'd like to tell any incoming students?

Join Chairmans. It gives you a perspective of the team that helps see the bigger picture of the program. Also writing and presenting skills will definitely come in handy for professional interviews and maybe 1 or 2 of my college essays seem pretty similar to the Chairman's essay. Also, make friends with everyone on the team! They have lots of good stories to share and working with people you love makes the whole experience so amazing.

Proudest achievement?

There's quite a bit to be proud of, basically all of it. It's a toss up between Chairman's, Citrus Service, and MCing tournaments, but being called the resident bumper expert by a lead robot inspector at Champs was pretty cool.

A quote?

"The final score is the score at the end of the match"

Do you have any future plans regarding robotics/FRC?

Maybe MCing a few tournaments or helping out a team, but that won't be for a few years. I'll definitely still be reading our Chairman's submissions!

SOPHIA PALOMARES - SOFTWARE SCOUTING

What do you plan to do after graduating?

I plan on attending UCLA as an applied math major.

What's one thing you learned during your time on time on the team that you'll always take with you?

I learned a lot of technical skills and I also learned a lot of soft skills such as teamwork, leadership, work ethic, and time management.



What's one thing you'd like to tell any incoming students?

Get involved! Volunteer for the programs that Citrus organizes, you'll learn a lot about our community through the process and you'll make the coordinator's life a lot easier.

Proudest achievement?

Planning and leading all three in-person DYR tournaments for the 2021 season!

A quote?

"y'know robots"

Do you have any future plans regarding robotics/FRC?

Not yet!

KATE UNGER - SOFTWARE SCOUTING



What do you plan to do after graduating?

In the fall, I will be attending UCSB in the College of Creative Studies as a Computing Major.

What's one thing you learned during your time on time on the team that you'll always take with you?

The more effort you can put into something, the more meaningful it is—win or lose. Also, don't drink as many Monsties as Mike does.

What's one thing you'd like to tell any incoming students?

Put your all into the team, but also take a step back once in a while to put the team into perspective.

Proudest achievement?

I've rewritten this answer too many times—I can't choose one so I'll just share my top three: winning game design my junior year, speaking for the team during alliance selections at HPR, and watching everyone on Front End take up more responsibility as this year continued.

A quote?

"I'm a senior."

Do you have any future plans regarding robotics/FRC?

We'll see about after college. I think I need to let my FRC experience ferment like a fine wine, for now.

TAD (THOMAS) FLIN - HAREWARE DESIGN

What do you plan to do after graduating?

I plan to earn my associates degree at a two year community college and transfer to a UC or CSU in mechanical engineering and earn a bachelor's degree.

What's one thing you learned during your time on time on the team that you'll always take with you?

I think we can all say that the ideals of FIRST will stick with us forever. Before joining the team, I had no idea how much of a culture had formed within FIRST. Gracious professionalism is at the center of this. I also learned to love coming together to share an experience and to accomplish so much.



What's one thing you'd like to tell any incoming students?

Learn as much as you physically can in your first year. You can't always rely on the veteran members to do everything. Also consider the time commitment seriously.

Proudest achievement?

Making it to Einstein 8 years in a row!!!!

A quote?

"Want to trade shirts?"

Do you have any future plans regarding robotics/FRC?

I actually plan on either mentoring a small team or starting my own later on in college. I have not decided which, but I would like to help smaller "come-up" teams that are in need of help. I also would love to spread Gracious Professionalism around the world. And hey, maybe you will see me again in 3 or 4 years!

AUSTIN WILCOX - HARDWARE ELECTRICAL



What do you plan to do after graduating?

I plan to study electrical engineering at Montana State.

What's one thing you learned during your time on time on the team that you'll always take with you?

One thing I learned on the team is working with other people with different skills than you to accomplish a common goal.

What's one thing you'd like to tell any incoming students?

My tip for new students is to not worry so much about college admissions. Don't work yourself haggard for college apps.

Proudest achievement?

My proudest achievement has been being able to teach and mentor the next class of members of the team.

ELLIE KIM - SOFTWARE SCOUTING

What do you plan to do after graduating?

I plan on attending WPI (Worcester Polytechnic Institute) in Worcester, MA. I'm going in as a Computer Science major, but I'm pretty undecided and I'm excited to explore all the options at my college.



What's one thing you learned during your time on time on the team that you'll always take with you?

That sometimes it's not only beneficial to take breaks for your health and wellbeing, but also to be more productive and on task when you're working. Knowing myself, my attention span, and my mental capacity allows me to work more efficiently and be happier.

What's one thing you'd like to tell any incoming students?

Remember that your health comes first, and that you can ask for help. Don't be afraid to talk to your friends or subteam leads if you're struggling. Asking for help isn't a sign of weakness, but a sign of strength that you can recognize what you need to improve on and have the bravery to reach out.

Proudest achievement?

I'm most proud of being someone the younger kids (and other team members) can talk to if they need help. For something I've done though, it'd have to be transforming our RoboCamps - a chaotic yet exciting experience!

A quote?

"You can't code when you're dead." - Wes Hardaker

Do you have any future plans regarding robotics/FRC?

Not at the moment, but I know WPI has a club where college students can mentor and assist local robotics teams, and I could see myself joining.

BENTON TOLSON - HARDWARE FABRICATION



What do you plan to do after graduating?

I plan to go to college at SFSU.

What's one thing you learned during your time on time on the team that you'll always take with you?

Gracious Professionalism.

What's one thing you'd like to tell any incoming students?

Family and school should take priority.

Proudest achievement?

Learning Mill

A quote?

"My life is nothing but a series of undocumented OSHA violations"

NITHMI JAYASUNDARA - HARDWARE DESIGN

What do you plan to do after graduating?

I'm studying Electrical and Computer Engineering at UC Davis. I plan to apply for a Summer Internship in Tokyo or Barcelona after my sophomore year of undergrad.



What's one thing you learned during your time on time on the team that you'll always take with you?

Communication is key and trying to do everything on your own isn't going to get you far. A room full of talented, driven students can't build a robot without playing to each other's strengths and keeping everyone in the loop about what's going on. We're stronger when working together. Also, don't touch battery leads together :)

What's one thing you'd like to tell any incoming students?

You're going to make mistakes from the moment you join the team to the last match on Einstein. That's the nature of going into a high intensity activity while learning new skills at the same time. Don't beat yourself up over getting something wrong; it's okay to not know how to do something that you haven't had experience with. Just own up to it so you can learn from it and teach those around you.

Proudest achievement?

Helping a team at champs fix their CAN loop during Citrus Service! They had been stuck on it for ages and the excitement/gratitude on the programming lead's face when we got it to work helped me see the impact that I can have on the FRC community.

A quote?

"NiThMi, WhAt'S tHe CAN LoOp?"

Do you have any future plans regarding robotics/FRC?

Since I'm majoring in EECE, there's going to be a fair amount of robotics related projects along the way. My long term career goals also definitely involve working with robots. In addition, since I'll be at UC Davis I plan on volunteering at Sacramento Regional :)

JAKE ROGGENBUCK - SOFTWARE SCOUTING



What do you plan to do after graduating?

I am going to UC Davis for Computer Science.

What's one thing you learned during your time on time on the team that you'll always take with you?

Python & Linux

What's one thing you'd like to tell any incoming students?

Experiment with code in your free time.

A quote?

"If you prioritize everything, you prioritize nothing" - Richard

Do you have any future plans regarding robotics/FRC?

I will probably volunteer again at Sac regional. It was very fun, I highly recommend it.

CHARLIE POLLOCK - HARDWARE DESIGN

What do you plan to do after graduating?

I'm going to UC Santa Cruz to study robotics engineering and filmmaking.

What's one thing you learned during your time on time on the team that you'll always take with you?

If you want work to do, bother someone above you until they give you it.

What's one thing you'd like to tell any incoming students?

Don't try and take on every job, take care of yourself too.



Proudest achievement?

Worked on the Storm Surge animation.

A quote?

"Everything went great right until the explosion."

TONY (DONGIK) CHA - HARDWARE DESIGN



What do you plan to do after graduating?

I'm planning to attend college and study structural engineering.

What's one thing you learned during your time on time on the team that you'll always take with you?

By doing activities in the structured group, I learned various ways to communicate with other groups in order to organize the work.

What's one thing you'd like to tell any incoming students?

Always be positive, active, friendly to others.

Proudest achievement?

Although my activity wasn't very major, I hope everything I did helped this group.

A quote?

"The people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do." - Steve Jobs

Do you have any future plans regarding robotics/FRC?

For couple of years in college, I'm not thinking of any FRC related activity. However I'm considering to be a mentor when I graduate! Maybe, I can be a mentor for a team in South Korea? Who knows!

ELIE BUKOWSKI - HARDWARE DESIGN

What do you plan to do after graduating?

I plan on studying Mechanical Engineering at Bucknell University in Lewisburg, PA.

What's one thing you learned during your time on time on the team that you'll always take with you?

I learned how to be a leader. I learned how to delegate tasks, spread knowledge, and provide support for those around me. How to work hard to achieve my goals, and achieve the goals of the team.



What's one thing you'd like to tell any incoming students?

Don't worry if you don't understand what's going on. Just ask questions, and you will get out of the team what you put into it.

Proudest achievement?

Being part of the presentation team and a major contributor to the Game Design Challenge... and winning.

A quote?

"Life is to be lived, not controlled; and humanity is won by continuing to play in face of certain defeat."
- Ralph Ellison, Invisible Man

Do you have any future plans regarding robotics/FRC?

I would like to continue contributing to the FRC community on the East Coast, volunteering at competitions and events. I would also like to become a mentor in the far future to provide the same educational and fulfilling experience that I received to a new generation of youth.

CLAIRE HAYS - SOFTWARE SCOUTING



What do you plan to do after graduating?

I'm going to Caltech to study bioengineering.

What's one thing you learned during your time on time on the team that you'll always take with you?

I learned to have confidence in my ideas and advocate for them.

What's one thing you'd like to tell any incoming students?

Don't be afraid to speak up about your opinion and suggestions. Make sure you listen to other people's ideas and try to bring others up if you see them not being heard.

Proudest achievement?

I'm really proud of the DiSTEM programs I've helped organize and the ones I've helped grow. Girl Powered can inspire many young scientists, and I'm glad to have brought more girls into the program. Also, the WiSTEMinar and POCiSTEMinar I hope can bring more attention to DiSTEM.

A quote?

"Soup is back."

Do you have any future plans regarding robotics/FRC?

I'm going to keep up to date on what's happening. I plan to continue encouraging young underrepresented groups to pursue interests in STEM, including joining robotics/FRC teams.

ZACHARY HOBLIT - HARDWARE DESIGN

What do you plan to do after graduating?

I will be majoring in Aerospace Engineering at Seventh College at UC San Diego starting this Fall.

What's one thing you learned during your time on time on the team that you'll always take with you?

I learned how to communicate effectively in a process with a lot of moving parts.

What's one thing you'd like to tell any incoming students?

It's okay, the seniors don't know what's going on either.

Proudest achievement?

Leading the design of a division-winning robot!

A quote?

"You IDIOTS!!" - Dave

Do you have any future plans regarding robotics/FRC?

I'm not sure yet. I'm going to step back from FRC for a couple years to focus on college, but there are some amazing teams in the San Diego area that I could definitely see myself getting involved with in future years.



RAYKO FABIONAR - SOFTWARE SCOUTING



What do you plan to do after graduating?

I am gonna celebrate, man. High school is out, lets go!

What's one thing you learned during your time on time on the team that you'll always take with you?

I learned that a lot of people work a hell of a lot harder than I do. Seriously, I gotta keep upping my game, all my friends are overworking themselves and here I am just working myself.

What's one thing you'd like to tell any incoming students?

Talk to people on other subteams, everyone here is hella chill. Make friends and have fun. Try not to stress too much about the work.

Proudest achievement?

Beating a bunch of DaVinci students in lightsaber combat, that was great. I cooked minute rice in 57 seconds once, that was pretty good too.

A quote?

"I am a fountain of wisdom. People just don't realize it because I am a fool."

Do you have any future plans regarding robotics/FRC?

Might volunteer at some events. I dunno about anything further than that.

CARLO SARANITI - HARDWARE FABRICATION

What do you plan to do after graduating?

I plan to pursue a career in History.

What's one thing you learned during your time on time on the team that you'll always take with you?

The flavor of WD40.

What's one thing you'd like to tell any incoming students?

The team can be extremely stressful, especially during build season, and make sure to keep an eye on your mental health and take breaks if you need them.

Proudest achievement?

Communal Milk Jug

A quote?

"Whoops, All Berries" - Captain Beauregard the 3rd Crunch.



MICHAEL PAPAGNI - HARDWARE FABRICATION



What do you plan to do after graduating?
I plan to attend UCLA as a math major.

What's one thing you learned during your time on time on the team that you'll always take with you?
I have learned to be more confident in myself and in my abilities.

What's one thing you'd like to tell any incoming students?
Learn as much as you can.

Proudest achievement?

My proudest achievement as a member of the team was leading the mill training and fabrication effort this past year.

A quote?

"Cynicism is a self-imposed blindness, a rejection of the world because we are afraid it will hurt us or disappoint us. Cynics always say no. But saying 'yes' begins things. Saying 'yes' is how things grow."
-Stephen Colbert

Do you have any future plans regarding robotics/FRC?

I could definitely see myself mentoring a team in the future.

MILO KERR - HARDWARE FABRICATION

What do you plan to do after graduating?

Attend community college then transfer to a UC and study mechanical engineering.



What's one thing you learned during your time on time on the team that you'll always take with you?

How to be a leader and a teacher.

What's one thing you'd like to tell any incoming students?

Robotics might seem overwhelming starting out, but everyone starts somewhere and if you stick with it you'll learn a lot, and it will be really rewarding. Don't let veteran members intimidate you.

Proudest achievement?

There's no single thing, probably just doing a ton of the machining this year.

A quote?

From Chief Delphi: "where's that blasted saw that cuts things back on?"

Do you have any future plans regarding robotics/FRC?

I would love to come back to the program as a mentor someday.

ELLIE BAIR - HARDWARE DESIGN



What do you plan to do after graduating?
I'm going to UC San Diego.

What's one thing you learned during your time on time on the team that you'll always take with you?
A really big part of leadership is being able to take a step back and make the decision best for the long run, not just the specific moment.

What's one thing you'd like to tell any incoming students?

You have so much to contribute to this team. Believe in yourself, share your opinions, and take initiative and there'll be no limit to what you can do here.

Proudest achievement?

I'm really proud of the team's first ever Engineering Inspiration Award! So many people put so much hard work into our outreach and engaging people across our communities in STEM, and I'm excited that we were able to communicate that to the judges.

A quote?

"Knees are just revolve mates for your legs" - Helena Young

Do you have any future plans regarding robotics/FRC?

I'll give it a few years, but I'm open to mentoring or maybe being a judge in the future.

APURVA MISHRA - SOFTWARE ROBOT

What do you plan to do after graduating?

After graduating, I'm excited to spend some time with family before heading off to college at Yale! I'll also be working at AFT this summer, and I hope to apply my interests in coding and engineering concepts towards real-world applications. Having spent so much time at the shop, it'll be fun figuring out what to make myself busy with next, but I'm excited for the opportunity to explore different interests and pursue something new that I'm passionate about with the incredible experiences I've gotten through the team.



What's one thing you learned during your time on time on the team that you'll always take with you?

In a more abstract sense, the team showed me how I could dedicate myself to something I cared so deeply about like never before. Having grown up with the shop as a second home in the past 5 years, I haven't had another activity in high school or the rest of my life that I've worked so much towards, and so having the privilege to work with a team of peers towards such kind of professional technical development and community outreach has been formative for my own understanding of work ethic and passion for a given subject. I think this overarching experience ties in a lot of other simpler learning lessons - time management, leadership, stress-handling, etc. Simply put, my time on the team allowed me to explore my true potential for working towards something I'm passionate about.

What's one thing you'd like to tell any incoming students?

The best advice I could give any incoming students would be that the team, among many other experiential learning opportunities, gives you back what you put in. Unlike many other school programs, I think the team is unique in its ability to immerse students in a real work environment that is applicable to so many facets of life that we wouldn't have the opportunity to experience had this program not been here. While the team is truly unparalleled in the breadth of experience in soft and hard skills it provides, those experiences are truly attainable when students invest their own effort in first. Showing up to meetings, asking questions, being unabated in requesting any work you can get, are all things that allow you to better utilize the numerous avenues the team provides to gain experience in a subject you're interested in. Without being confident in going out to seek those opportunities on your own, I think it's a lot harder to see those experiences come to you.

Proudest achievement?

Realistically, organizing the virtual Fall Workshops in 2020 when we were sure the program would fall through because the Capital City Classic offseason event where it was normally held was cancelled due to COVID-19 was one of my proudest achievements on the team, given the impact we were still able to have on the global FRC community. Apart from that, a number of things make me very proud - the opportunity to train new members, reorganizing and developing our codebase and technical workflow this year, and without a doubt, the first message I ever sent to random of Mike hanging upside down from a bar.

A quote?

"No Michael no, that is so not right."

Do you have any future plans regarding robotics/FRC?

Of course! In college, I plan on fully utilizing the engineering experience I gained from robotics towards biomedical engineering and CS concepts. Truthfully, I'd love to have my own robotics start-up one day, where I could continue to immerse myself in an environment similar to the team. In regards to FRC, it would be definitely be fun to see if I could come back to mentor another team in a couple years!