

Woodie Flowers 2015 Sacramento Regional Winner Steve Harvey

By Elise Wong

For Steve Harvey, mentoring goes beyond advising students and helping us learn about robotics. He fosters connections with students, inspires us to become independent thinkers, and provides invaluable resources for us to grow. He creates an environment that combines peer teaching with mentor experience, giving members the chance to reach their full potential.

Harvey's involvement with FIRST began in 2005 when he created FRC team 1678 Citrus Circuits, previously known as EnGen. Since the beginning, he has continually demonstrated a student-centered approach to mentoring. He finds leadership potential and encourages us to make our own decisions and guidelines. Harvey also emboldens females to take on key team management positions, including team captain. With his experience as a mechanical engineer, Harvey works closely with the design and manufacturing teams to create a competitive robot. When working with prototyping teams, he uses drawings and 3-D models to develop ideas and concepts with students. Always open to questions and ideas, he motivates students to constantly brainstorm on ways to improve systems and mechanisms.

Harvey also maintains a strong mentor and parent support group. He has recruited mentors including UC Davis students and graduates, team alumni, and professionals from the local area. Harvey hosts monthly meetings for parents and mentors, strengthening the foundation our team has built upon. He has worked with UCD representatives, including Chancellor Katehi, since 2011 to form a unique sponsorship and set the groundwork for other teams in California to do the same. He has spent countless hours collaborating with the Davis Joint Unified School District, introducing administrators to FIRST, securing funding, and establishing a dedicated robotics facility on the Davis Senior High School campus. This year, the district approved a three-year robotics engineering curriculum written by Harvey. This STEM course is the first of its kind in the district, giving students opportunities to participate in hands-on projects and apply their learning to real-world challenges.

Furthermore, Harvey has influenced and spread FIRST programs all around Yolo County. For the past four years, he has been a member of the Sacramento Regional Planning committee, helping to organize the Sacramento regional and local off-season competitions. In Woodland, he worked with teachers and new mentors this past summer to form a new FRC team and introduce robotics to more students.

Steve Harvey's love for STEM is clearly shown through his unrelenting dedication to 1678 and FIRST on a whole. In addition to his day job as a teacher, Harvey spends over 500 hours coaching the team each year. Whether it be talking about robotics and getting contacts at a dinner party or guiding a prototyping team, Harvey dedicates his whole life to reaching out to students and developing programs that will give them the freedom to follow their passion for STEM.