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## ***FIRST is More Than Robots®***

Founded in 1989 by inventor Dean Kamen, *FIRST®* (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) is a global nonprofit (501(c)(3)) organization that prepares young people for the future through a suite of inclusive, team-based robotics programs for ages 4-18 (PreK-12). Because our programs are *More Than Robots®*, *FIRST* participants are guided by a signature set of Core Values to conduct research, fundraise, design, build, and showcase their achievements. Our thrilling, sports-like challenges build their self-confidence and collaborative problem-solving skills and have a proven and lasting impact on STEAM learning and interest. Our participants and alumni gain access to education and career discovery opportunities, connections to exclusive scholarships and employers, and a place in the *FIRST* community for life.

## **Our Core Values**

The *FIRST* Core Values are fundamental to *FIRST* and unique to its programs. They emphasize friendly sportsmanship, respect for the contributions of others, teamwork, learning, and community involvement and are part of our commitment to fostering, cultivating, and preserving a culture of unity.

***Gracious Professionalism*** is part of the ethos of *FIRST*. It's a way of doing things that encourages high-quality work, emphasizes the value of others, and respects individuals and the community.

Through *Gracious Professionalism*, fierce competition and mutual gain coexist. Participants compete intensely while treating each other with respect and empathy. There is no trash talking, nor disingenuous platitudes. Knowledge, competition, and empathy are comfortably blended.

The term was coined by Dr. Woodie Flowers, (1943 - 2019) Executive Advisory Board Chair Emeritus & Distinguished Advisor.

***Coopertition*** fosters innovation by promoting unqualified kindness and respect in the face of intense competition.

At *FIRST*, *Coopertition* means that teams help and cooperate with each other, even as they compete. It's about learning from teammates, teaching others, collaborating with mentors, managing and being managed. *Coopertition* embodies the spirit of competing while assisting and enabling others whenever possible.

## Purpose, Vision and Mission

Our organizational statements are more than words on a page; they encapsulate our promise to build a thriving global robotics community and to remain at the very forefront of STEM education.

*FIRST* exists to prepare the young people of today for the world of tomorrow through real world applications of what is taught in the class room. Provide hands on experience, business methods and meeting with us the public, to explain that First is more than just robotics.

The Vision is to transform our culture by creating a world where science and technology are celebrated and where young people dream of becoming business, economic, community, science and technology leaders.

The mission of *FIRST* is to provide life-changing robotics programs that give young people the skills, confidence, and resilience to build a better world.

***“FIRST is More Than Robots. The robots are a vehicle for students to learn***

important life skills. Kids often come in not knowing what to expect – of the program nor of themselves. They leave, even after the first season, with a vision, with confidence, and with a sense that they can create their own future.”

– Dean Kamen