

Tess - Finalist

Tess is the girl next door, funny, friends with everyone, knows a million ways to braid hair- even on the boys! She got her start in robotics when her two siblings were on FRC teams. Inspired to join 1511, she forged her own legacy.

After 3 years on the team, Tess is dedicated to advocating for STEM education. Last year, Tess jumped at the opportunity to attend the FIRST National Advocacy Conference in DC. While there, she confidently presented to 5 state representatives and their staffs regarding STEM initiatives including funding and educational policy. As a result of these meetings, Congresswoman Slaughter co-sponsored Senator Gillibrand's STEM Gateways Act. This inspired Tess to meet locally with State Senators Joseph Robach and Rich Funke, and Assemblyman Mark Johns. They discussed funding for afterschool STEM activities like FIRST and current bills for STEM grants for women and minorities. Since those meetings, All have written letters of support for a \$250,000 grant to start and sustain FIRST teams in New York schools. Tess believes being a Dean's List Winner will provide her more connections through FIRST and help her future advocacy efforts.

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Tess's presentation skills have developed with her leadership efforts. For the last 3 years she attended 1511's Leadership Boot Camp, a training that includes practicing public speaking, which became valuable when she promoted FIRST to potential sponsors and during robot demonstrations. She used these skills last year as a Chairman's Presenter and we won at the Finger Lakes Regional! As part of the Leadership Subteam for 2 years, she ran team meetings and made team administrative decisions. Tess created a student mentor/mentee program to help the new students feel welcome to the team and challenged the returning students to pass on their skills. She says, "When I started presenting Chairman's and joined Leadership, I learned so much that my confidence skyrocketed."

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Tess's success stretches beyond her accomplishments in robotics. She is taking 3 honors and AP classes this year and is a high honor roll student. Her lacrosse team voted her MVP. Her musical talents are prominent; she has been accepted to the Rochester Philharmonic Youth Orchestra, is part of 5 music programs at her high school, and plays 5 instruments. Involved and dedicated to many different activities, she effectively manages her time. Tess aspires to have a professional leadership role as an Orchestra Conductor, which would allow her to reach a different populus and help her solidify the A in STEAM.

Tess does everything on the team, coming in everyday: painting our robot crate, working on the Chairman's submission, creating promotional videos, making robot parts, being on secondary drive team, designing the robot, and photographing our events. She has been on Leadership, Marketing, Electrical, and Mechanical subteams and knows how to use all of the tools and machinery in the shop. Tess understands the altruistic nature of technology as she recently assembled 3D printed parts to create prosthetic hands for children.

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Tess spreads FIRST in many team community service activities and robot demonstrations. She created military care packages, delivered to the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. At the Open Door Mission, Tess donated toiletries to the homeless during the holidays. She walked for Cystic Fibrosis, helped Toys for Tots, and contributed to our FIRST Mega Drive efforts for which we won a \$10,000 national prize for Make a Difference Day. Tess gives back to FIRST by volunteering at Jr. FLL, FLL and FTC events. Tess lead and organized a robot demonstration at an ice cream shop and helped show off our robot at one of our largest demos, the NYS Fair!

We know Tess will continue her active involvement in FIRST while pursuing her degree in music. Her long term plans involve starting new FIRST teams in schools without teams and ensuring those teams have the necessary funding and support to thrive through her advocacy work. KACHOW!!!!!!!!!!!!

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