



Dear Parent or Guardian,

We are excited to introduce you to an opportunity to further connect with and inspire students through a hands-on learning experience in STEM and robotics. Unified Robotics is offered as an after-school club at our school. Students with all levels of ability are invited to be a part of this amazing program that not only will ignite a passion for robotics, but also provide social and friendship opportunities in an inclusive program with their peers. No experience in technology or robotics is required, and this is a great place to introduce your student to the world of robotics.

In the fall of 2015, King's High School alum Delaney Foster was inspired to create this program for her sister Kendall, who is on the autism spectrum. Delaney recognized the lack of hands-on opportunities in STEM for students with intellectual disabilities. The program initially was held at Roosevelt High School with students from Ballard, Garfield, and King's High School participating. At the end of 2015, the program, already having experienced rapid growth, held its first championship at Roosevelt High School and started its partnership with Special Olympics Washington.

Since this founding in 2015, Unified Robotics has strived towards fostering inclusion in education and career exploration, with a specific emphasis on STEM. Unified Robotics encourages the development of inclusive environments, strategies and outlooks that allow a broader range of individuals to contribute and participate.

Unified Robotics implements this ideology through partnering students with and without intellectual disabilities together to create competition-ready robots from LEGO MINDSTORMS kits. Our program welcomes all levels of students to join a one-to-one partnership, therefore an experience with robotics is not a prerequisite.

In six weeks, teams design, build, and program their robot before entering it in the end-of-season championship hosted at Pacific Science Center. During this period of time, leadership encourages teams to explore even the zaniest of ideas and focus on their own individual progress. While the robots eventually compete in a championship, we strive to maintain an environment promoting acceptance and neurodiversity. Even at the championship, students celebrate their accomplishments in the presence of like-minded, supportive individuals with VIP judges presenting an equal quota of awards for creativity or sportsmanship as for ranking.

Overall, our program prides itself on its ability to positively affect the self-images all of our participants, leaders, volunteers, and mentors. Whether you're a volunteer or a competitor, you will leave the program with an improved sense of ability and purpose. Nothing attests to this fact better than the comments of our past participants, with founder Delaney Foster's sister Kendall's comments most accurately capturing this effect. When asked about the most meaningful impact of Unified Robotics in her life, she simply responded with the sentence, "It makes me happy."

Please enjoy the next several weeks of collaboration and exploration that Unified Robotics will deliver.

Sincerely,