

2025 FIRST® Annual Impact Report

# CHARTING A COURSE FOR THE FUTURE





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# INTRODUCTION

Since its founding in 1989, *FIRST*® has grown into a global network spanning more than 110 countries. As the world's leading youth robotics community, we empower young people to build a better world through STEM.

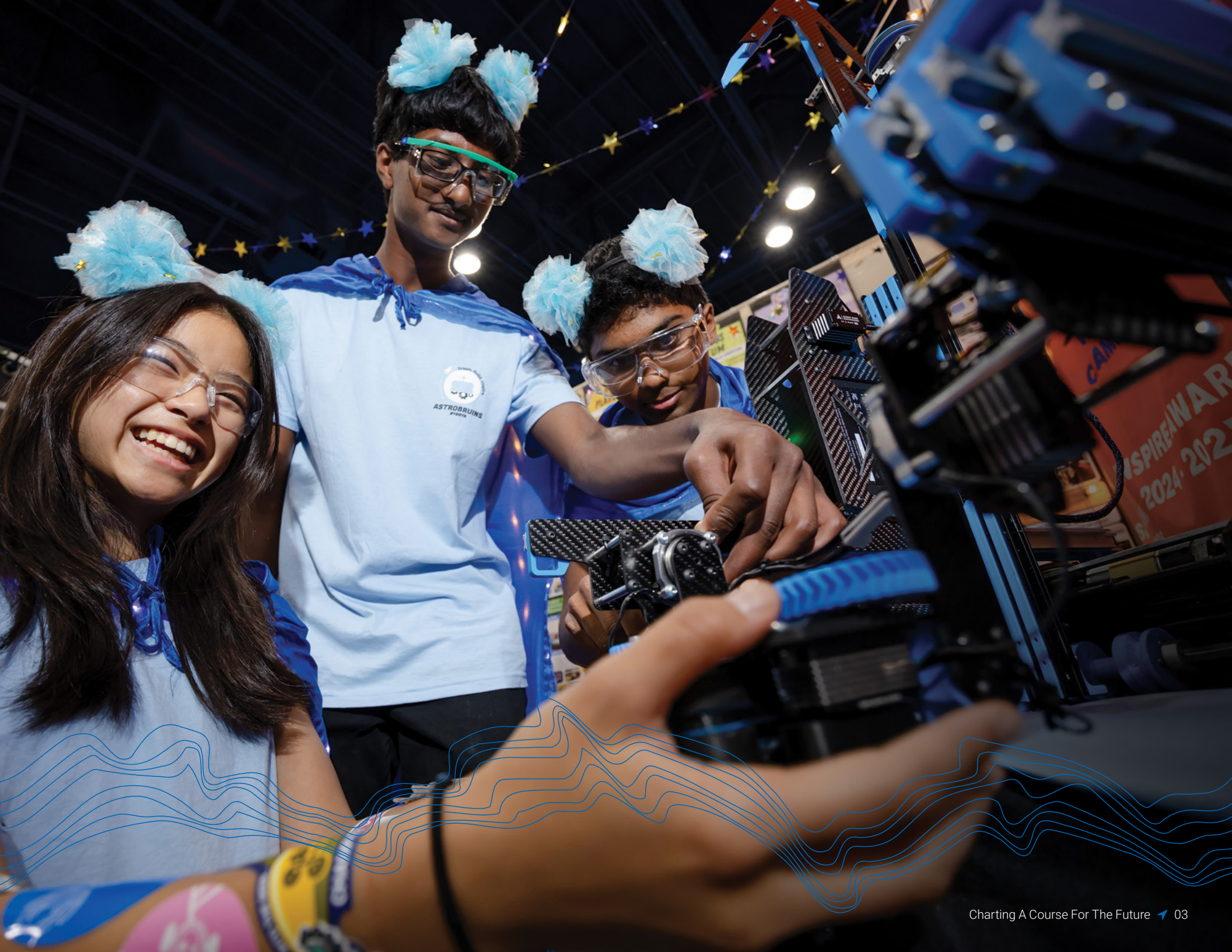
Today, our programs are equipping the next generation with the skills, confidence, and curiosity to explore new frontiers — **proving every student can get anywhere by starting with *FIRST*.**

Our mission took us deep beneath the surface with *FIRST DIVE*™ presented by Qualcomm. Throughout the 2024–2025 season, participants around the world embraced discovery, innovation, and teamwork as they explored the wonders of the ocean and uncovered what’s possible when they dive deeper into STEM. Together, we uncovered insights that continue to strengthen our programs, expand access, and advance our mission.

This year’s annual report reflects those discoveries with season highlights, impact data, and feature stories that show how, together, **we’re helping young people chart their own course for the future.**

This Annual Impact Report covers the period of July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025.











# A NOTE FROM *FIRST*® LEADERSHIP

Every generation faces uncharted paths, but today's young people are growing up in a world evolving faster than ever before. Through *FIRST*®, they're not only learning to navigate change — they're learning to drive it.

Since 1989, *FIRST* has helped students turn curiosity into capability. Our proven programs (see page 22) combine the thrill of competition with the foundations of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). In classrooms, workshops, and arenas across the globe, students collaborate to solve problems, take applied risks, and learn to fail safely in an environment that values persistence as much as success.

Findings from the *FIRST* Longitudinal Impact Study (see page 6) show that participants significantly outperform their peers in long-term outcomes. Ten years after participation, 18 percent were in college, 17 percent in graduate school, and 60 percent in the workforce, with college degree attainment rates near 90 percent (far above the national average of roughly 55 percent). Participants were also roughly twice as likely as comparison students to show an increase in key STEM outcomes, including STEM interest, career interest, knowledge, activity, and identity.

This year's season, *FIRST DIVE*™ presented by Qualcomm, invited our community to look deeper, explore new challenges, and discover what's possible when innovation meets imagination. With your support, more than 853,000 young people worldwide participated in *FIRST* this season — a 9 percent increase over last year — and countless more students, families, and community members experienced the excitement of this sport.

We also reached new audiences through storytelling that showcased our global impact. Our *Get Anywhere* campaign (see page 10), released in October 2024, celebrated how *FIRST* empowers young people to chart their own paths no matter where they lead. The March 2025 film premiere of "Rule Breakers" (see page 16), inspired by the *FIRST* "Afghan Dreamers" team, brought that message to screens worldwide — sharing a story of courage, innovation, and hope. In collaboration with *FIRST*® Global, LEGO® Education, and partners around the world, we continue working to bring the *FIRST* experience to students everywhere.

As we look to the horizon, our work continues to be guided by our four strategic priorities: fostering innovation, eliminating barriers to participation, amplifying global awareness, and building a sustainable organization. Together, these form the foundation of a future where every young person can discover their potential and use STEM to build a better world.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Chris Moore, Chief Executive Officer  
Laurie Leshin, Ph.D., Chair, *FIRST* Board of Directors  
Dean Kamen, Founder



**Chris Moore** is the  
chief executive officer  
of *FIRST*



**Laurie Leshin, Ph.D.**  
is the chair of the *FIRST*  
Board of Directors



**Dean Kamen** is the  
founder of *FIRST*



# PROVING THE *FIRST* THEORY OF CHANGE





*FIRST* understands interest, rather than academic proficiency, is a greater predictor of children pursuing studies and careers in STEM fields. Our evidence-based programs use strategies known to increase student interest and engagement in STEM and develop holistic skills, such as teamwork, problem-solving, and communication. These approaches, along with the *FIRST* Core Values, all lead to sustained STEM interest, attitudes, and actions post-high school, college, and into careers.

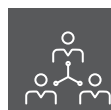
## STRATEGIES



### STRATEGY

#### Hands-On Learning

Hands-on experiences go beyond robot-building. Students learn other critical skills as they participate in our programs.



### STRATEGY

#### Caring Mentors & Supporters

*FIRST* programs are powered by adult supporters who share knowledge, carry out the *FIRST* Core Values, and champion young people to think big.



### STRATEGY

#### Teamwork With Real-World Relevance

Students collaborate as teams on thematic challenges relevant to their lives and the world around them.



### STRATEGY

#### Celebratory Events

*FIRST* participants engage in culminating celebrations where students can showcase what they created and learned.



### STRATEGY

#### Career Exposure

*FIRST* helps bridge the gap from curiosity to career confidence, helping students discover new career opportunities across industries.



### STRATEGY

#### *FIRST* Core Values

Teams learn to compete with integrity and kindness and to help others in need.



## A SUITE OF HANDS-ON, STEM LEARNING PROGRAMS

*FIRST* combines the rigor of STEM learning with the fun and excitement of traditional sports and the inspiration that comes from community. Participants benefit from a suite of programs that have a proven impact on learning, interest, and skill-building inside and outside of the classroom.



**FIRST  
LEGO  
LEAGUE**

**Spark Early  
STEM Curiosity**

Ages 4-16; Grades PreK-8

*FIRST*® LEGO® League introduces STEM to children through fun, exciting hands-on learning. Participants gain real-world problem-solving experiences through a guided, global robotics program using LEGO® technology, helping today's students, families, and educators build a better future together. *FIRST* LEGO League's three divisions inspire youth to experiment and grow their critical thinking, coding, and design skills and showcase what they learned.



**FIRST  
TECH  
CHALLENGE**

**Turn Ideas Into  
Innovation**

Ages 12-18; Grades 7-12

*FIRST*® Tech Challenge students work together with their mentors to design and build robots to compete in a dynamic and exciting challenge released every September. Teams program classroom-scale robots to follow autonomous commands before student drivers take control in two-on-two matches. On and off the field, students develop STEM skills, engage in community outreach, practice engineering innovation, and build confidence to help them succeed.



**FIRST  
ROBOTICS  
COMPETITION**

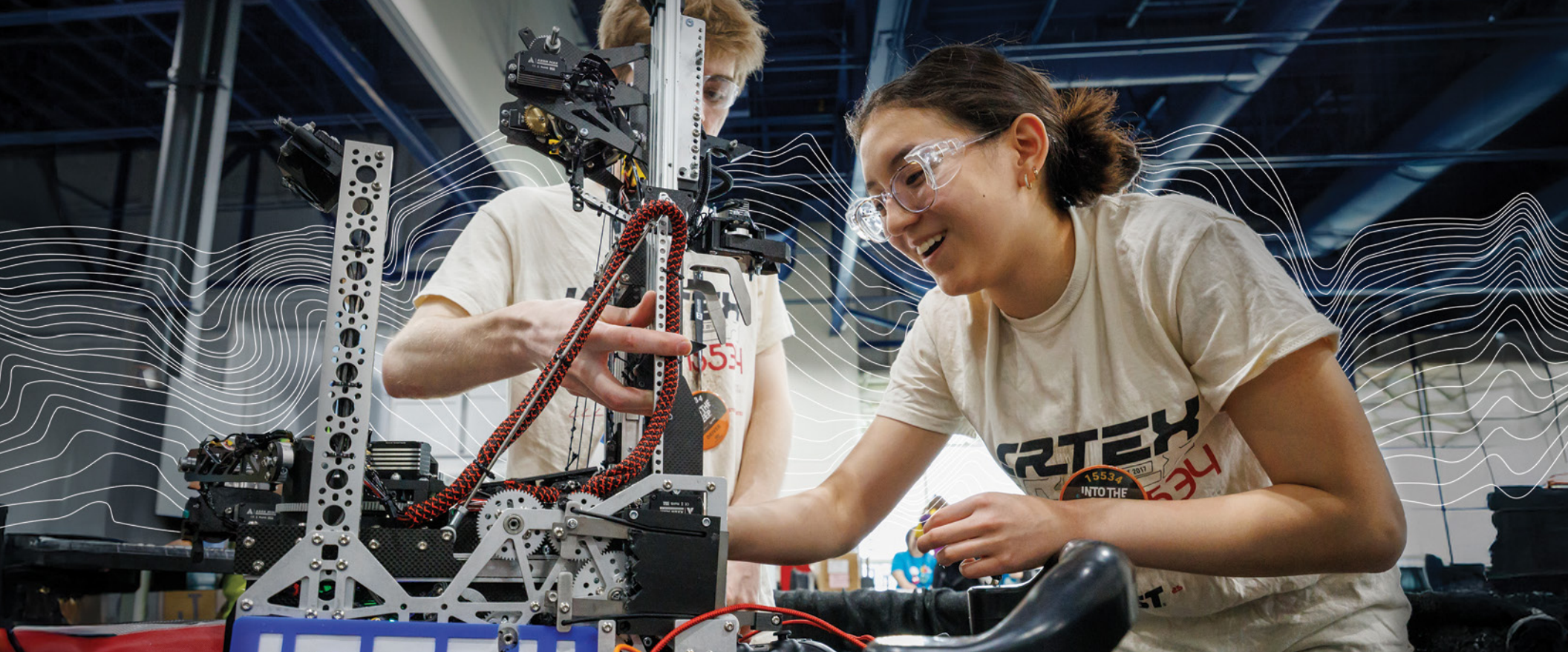
**Engineer the  
Future of STEM**

Ages 14-18; Grades 9-12

Each January brings a new challenge for *FIRST*® Robotics Competition teams. Starting with a Kit of Parts, they design, program, and build industrial-sized robots to play an action-packed game on a themed field as part of a three-team alliance. Guided by mentors and sponsors, students learn engineering and problem-solving skills as they compete for awards, create a team identity, raise funds, hone teamwork skills, and advance appreciation for STEM in their community.

*Ages may vary by region.*





## PROVEN STEM OUTCOMES

From local classrooms to international competitions, *FIRST* transforms education and inspires the next generation of leaders. These results from the *FIRST* Longitudinal Study show the depth of our impact:

**83%**

of *FIRST* alumni pursue  
STEM majors by year four  
of college

**51%**

of female *FIRST* alumni  
declare a major in engineering  
or computer science by year  
four of college

**63%**

of *FIRST* alumni are  
currently employed in  
a STEM field

**\$62,000**

is the average salary of early career  
female *FIRST* alumni, compared  
with a \$43,000 peer average

### Key Findings: 10-Year *FIRST* Longitudinal Impact Study

Brandeis University's unique, decade-long study followed *FIRST* participants and their peers over 10 years. The final report shows sustained *FIRST* impact, including increased STEM engagement, career interest, and college persistence among *FIRST* alumni.

- ✓ STEM interest and attitudes transform into behaviors and actions beyond high school, where the majority of *FIRST* participants major in STEM.
- ✓ STEM-related gains are even more significant for female participants in *FIRST* than male participants, opening pathways into male-dominated fields.
- ✓ Early career indicators show *FIRST* participants are significantly more likely to be employed in a STEM field when compared with the national data set.

Read the full Longitudinal Impact Study at [www.firstinspires.org/impact](http://www.firstinspires.org/impact)

SOURCE: *FIRST* Longitudinal Study: 10-Year Final Report, Brandeis University, 2024

The study included 551 *FIRST* students and 371 comparison group students. The comparison group included students who did not participate in *FIRST* programs but were enrolled in science and math classes at the same schools. All students received a baseline survey and follow-up surveys each year. Overall, 72 percent of students remained in the study at year 10.



# STUDENTS WHO START WITH *FIRST* GAIN THE SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE TO GET ANYWHERE

Gen Z is increasingly interested in STEM, but too many still lack the exposure, mentorship, and hands-on experiences that help them see a future in these careers. While 75 percent express interest in STEM, only 29 percent say STEM roles are their top career choice – a clear gap between curiosity and opportunity.

Misconceptions about STEM being narrow or only for highly specialized roles further discourage students from exploring programs that build the adaptable skills employers need today. Without access to these experiences, young people risk limiting their own potential in STEM and beyond.

## How These *FIRST* Alumni Scored Their Dream Jobs – by Starting with *FIRST*

Introducing some outstanding *FIRST* alumni – successful leaders in product design, engineering, and innovation who exemplify the positive outcomes of *FIRST* programs. Their journeys highlight the range of opportunities *FIRST* can inspire, driving students to recognize their skills and envision exciting futures after high school. At a time when many young people are uncertain about their career paths, these alumni prove *FIRST* is a powerful solution – equipping students with the confidence, experience, and skills to get anywhere.

## OUR “GET ANYWHERE” CAMPAIGN DROVE NEW AUDIENCES TO ENGAGE WITH *FIRST*

Launched by *FIRST* in October 2024, the “[Get Anywhere](#)” campaign was designed to reframe how students, parents, educators, and businesses think about STEM. The brand campaign translated these messages into storytelling efforts that elevated the importance of STEM education to a national audience, featuring *FIRST* founder Dean Kamen and *FIRST* alumni – including Sarah, Logan, and Erin – with roles in STEM career fields.

The “Get Anywhere” campaign, which reached tens of millions, was recognized with two [Telly Awards](#) (Not-For-Profit and Education & Discovery categories) and six [Anthem Awards](#) (Art & Culture category).

### BY THE NUMBERS

**41M+**

media impressions

**300K+**

video views

**2M+**

social media impressions







**Sarah Heimlich, Senior Product Manager at John Deere**

Sarah has been involved with *FIRST* for 20 years, beginning as a student team member and later giving back as a mentor and coach. Her long-standing commitment to the organization reflects not only her passion for STEM but also her dedication to help the next generation of innovators thrive.

Today, Sarah serves as a senior product manager at John Deere, a *FIRST* Strategic Partner, where she plays a key role in advancing agricultural technology. By applying the collaboration, problem-solving, and technical skills developed through *FIRST*, Sarah helps design and bring to life cutting-edge innovations like the autonomous tractor. This technology is transforming the way farmers and agriculturalists work and shaping the future of sustainable farming.

**"Some of the most important skills I learned from *FIRST* were the willingness and curiosity to learn. This not only helped me excel academically but also contributed to the success of my professional career as I branch into the agricultural technology side with John Deere."**





### Logan Hickox, Design Engineer II at Nike


Logan's experiences with *FIRST* taught him the importance of creativity, collaboration, and perseverance — skills that have shaped his career path and remain central to his success today. Currently a design engineer at Nike's renowned Bowerman Footwear Lab, Logan applies the lessons he learned through *FIRST* to push the boundaries of performance footwear.

By blending engineering precision with imaginative design, he helps create innovative products worn by world-class athletes, including LeBron James and Serena Williams. Logan's journey proves the skills gained through *FIRST* can translate to unexpected and extraordinary careers, influencing global culture, sports, and design.



"Above all, I think *FIRST* allows you to be yourself. It encourages positive growth and helps you get to that next step you want to achieve in life. Never in my wildest dreams would I have thought I'd be working at Nike World Headquarters."





Learn more about  
*FIRST* alumni at  
[firstinspires.org/alumni](https://firstinspires.org/alumni).



**Erin Mitchell, Commercial Avionics at RTX**

Erin has been part of the *FIRST* community for 15 years, beginning as a student team member before returning as a mentor and coach to help other young innovators discover their own potential. Through her *FIRST* experience, she developed a strong foundation in teamwork, problem-solving, and hands-on technical skills — all of which have served her career journey.

Today, Erin works at RTX, a *FIRST* Strategic Partner, in commercial avionics, where she plays an important role in advancing technologies that ensure millions of people can experience safe air travel every day. By applying the skills cultivated through *FIRST*, Erin contributes to building systems that make modern air travel possible, reliable, and safe. Her story shows students how the lessons learned in *FIRST* can take flight into impactful careers that touch people's lives all over the world.

“Joining *FIRST* really gave me a lot more exposure to what I could be when I grew up. My robotics coaches truly were the catalysts for me to say, ‘I think I can try anything.’ Through *FIRST*, I learned it was okay to be ambitious and to state my ambitions. People want you to be heard and they want you to feel valued.”



# IMPACT SPOTLIGHT: *FIRST* TEAMS ARE MAKING WAVES

Every year, our community shows that being part of *FIRST* is *More Than Robots*®. It's about the growth you experience, the connections you build, and the positive change you help create in the world around you.

From innovators, to dreamers, to "Rule Breakers," our youth participants demonstrate what's possible when STEM meets passion, inspiration, and empowerment. Real-life testaments to the *FIRST* ethos of *Gracious Professionalism*® and *Coopertition*®, each season *FIRST* participants and alumni remind us that teamwork is the greatest catalyst for change and innovation.

These stories offer a glimpse of the powerful waves of positive change our community is creating.



# DIVING DEEP: THE ENERGY WIZARDS TAKE INNOVATION BENEATH THE SURFACE

During the 2024–2025 FIRST LEGO League SUBMERGED<sup>SM</sup> season, Team 57531 “Energy Wizards” from Peoria, Illinois, consulted ocean experts to refine the details of their underwater innovation.

This team of young engineers developed the Underwater Sample Line (USL), designed to continuously send collected samples to a research vessel while a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) stays submerged and continues its mission. Using the existing tether between the research vessel and the ROV like a zip-line to bring samples to the surface more quickly could potentially save researchers significant time and money as they explore the vast expanse of what lies beneath the surface of the ocean.

The Energy Wizards have submitted an application to patent the Underwater Sample Line and are eager to continue this impactful work.

***“I LEARNED A LOT  
THROUGH TEAMWORK  
AND FIRST CORE VALUES,  
WHICH WE USE IN  
EVERYDAY LIFE.”***

— Tanishqa, an Energy Wizards student team member





# THEIR UNSTOPPABLE SPIRIT: “RULE BREAKERS” FILM CELEBRATES *FIRST* TEAM AFGHAN DREAMERS

From building robots that captured headlines to developing low-cost ventilators in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the “Afghan Dreamers,” an all-girls *FIRST* Robotics Competition and *FIRST* Global Challenge team from Herat, Afghanistan, have become a symbol of innovation and persistence in the *FIRST* community and beyond. While their path was far from easy, their story remains a testament to the power of STEM education in shaping brighter futures.

In March 2025, their journey reached the big screen – including more than 2,000 theaters in the U.S. – with the release of “Rule Breakers,” a feature film inspired by the team’s pioneering spirit. Written and directed by Oscar and Emmy award winner, Bill Guttentag, and executive produced by the team’s founder, Roya Mahboob, the film offers a fictionalized account that blends the thrill and technical challenge of *FIRST* competitions with broader social and cultural realities the team had to overcome.

The story follows Roya Mahboob (portrayed by Nikohl Boosheri) as she empowers a group of young Afghan girls to pursue science and technology. With limited resources and wavering support, Mahboob forms Afghanistan’s first all-girls robotics team to compete on an international stage during the 2017 *FIRST* Global Challenge. As their success draws international media attention, it also brings public scrutiny — leading the team to lean on one another and the ethos of *FIRST*: *Gracious Professionalism*, teamwork, and innovation.

Since its release, “Rule Breakers” has drawn widespread acclaim for its storytelling and honest portrayal of the obstacles girls face in STEM. The Hollywood Reporter called it, “inspirational in the best sense of the word,” applauding Guttentag’s thoughtful direction and the film’s well-timed release during Women’s History Month. The movie also received honors at the Justice Film Festival and recognition for its trailer in industry awards.

For the *FIRST* community, “Rule Breakers” serves as a powerful reminder of what’s possible when young people are given the tools, mentorship, and platform to lead. The film exemplifies the heart of the *FIRST* mission: education access, global collaboration, and the belief that every student deserves the chance to build a better future.



The Afghan Dreamers and their coach prepare for competition at the 2018 *FIRST* Championship with their *FIRST* Robotics Competition robot.

For streaming information, visit the Angel Studios website at [www.angel.com/movies/rule-breakers](http://www.angel.com/movies/rule-breakers).



"INSPIRATIONAL IN  
THE BEST SENSE  
OF THE WORD."

— The Hollywood Reporter

SOME RULES ARE MADE TO BE BROKEN

# RULE BREAKERS



IN THEATERS MARCH 7

ANGEL  
STUDIOS

angel.com/rulebreakers



Afghan Dreamers co-founder and mentor Roya Mahboob (back row, center) celebrates the "Rule Breakers" premiere alongside the film's writers, producers, cast, and crew at the February 12 red carpet premiere event.





**"I'M PRETTY EXCITED; I'M REALLY CONFIDENT IN WHAT WE HAVE [BUILT]. I THINK WE'RE DOING REALLY WELL, AND I BELIEVE IN US."**

— Oliver, a Hammerheads student team member

## CONFIDENCE, COMMITMENT, AND CREATIVITY: THE JOURNEY OF TEAM HAMMERHEADS

FIRST LEGO League Team 61723 "Hammerheads" know a thing or two about perseverance and determination. Based out of Ron Joyce Children's Healthcare in Ontario, Canada, these students push the limits every season, inspired to outdo themselves year after year. What are they most proud of? Their consistency, confidence, and commitment.

"For many of these kids, *FIRST* is their only opportunity to be on a competitive team. And one of the reasons they are so competitive is because they know that if they fail and get back up and try again, they'll come out on the other side and succeed," said Mike Berube, team mentor for the Hammerheads.

Founded by a clinical leader for Hamilton Health Sciences' developmental pediatrics and rehabilitation program, Lindsay Bray, the intention behind Team Hammerheads was to provide the students with a fun and exciting challenge that they hadn't experienced before. When selecting *FIRST* as the STEAM program for her young patients, Bray focused on finding programming that would positively shape their futures, believing that hands-on STEM learning could inspire them to pursue exciting careers.

The team members of Hammerheads embrace the time and effort it takes to master STEM concepts, understanding the value of applying *FIRST*-learned skills to real-world challenges. Parents and coaches alike have praised Team Hammerheads' dedication, noting that their love of competition drives them to push forward through any hurdles. What stands out most in each team member is their confidence in their hard work and what they can achieve.

"I'm pretty excited; I'm really confident in what we have [built]," said team member, Oliver. "I think we're doing really well, and I believe in us."





# MORE THAN ROBOTS: CELEBRATING TEAMS THAT IMPACT AND INSPIRE

We get more of what we celebrate. To encourage *FIRST* teams to be *More Than Robots*, *FIRST* awards its highest honors to teams that go above and beyond building a robot for the game field. These judged awards are given to teams that serve as role models for others and help advance the mission of *FIRST*.



## PROJECT BUCEPHALUS DELIVERS ON THE TEAM'S MISSION TO "CREATE OPPORTUNITY, TRANSFORM THE COMMUNITY."

*FIRST* Robotics Competition Team 5985 "Project Bucephalus" from Wollongong, New South Wales, Australia, won the FIRST Impact Award at the 2025 *FIRST* Championship. The team exemplifies how *FIRST* programs can strengthen communities by making STEM opportunities more available in meaningful, locally-driven ways.

Project Bucephalus delivers on the team's mission to "Create Opportunity, Transform the Community." For a decade, this team has run a formal "Teaching Program," traveling long distances weekly to deliver robotics classes to hundreds of students, many of whom face barriers to learning. Their "Unstoppable" initiative uses *FIRST* to help young people regain confidence, re-engage academically, and explore future pathways. Their work has sparked lasting growth of *FIRST* programs across the Wollongong region.

## THROUGH THEIR GENUINE PASSION AND TIRELESS EFFORTS, THE TEAM MEMBERS SPREAD THE LOVE OF FIRST.

*FIRST* Tech Challenge Team 18139 "Rebel Robotics" from Norfolk, Nebraska, received the 2025 *FIRST* Championship Inspire Award, which recognizes excellence in teamwork, robot design, and community outreach in *FIRST* Tech Challenge.

By creating a vision system that seamlessly integrates hardware and software, Rebel Robotics overcame the game challenge of precision versus speed. The team's comprehensive playbook motivates students, coaches, and mentors, creating a pipeline of future engineers throughout Nebraska. Through their genuine passion and tireless efforts, team members spread the love of *FIRST* across their state, truly inspiring everyone they encounter. Rebel Robotics was invited to represent the U.S. at the *FIRST* Global Challenge in October 2025.



# FIRST DIVE<sup>SM</sup> PRESENTED BY QUALCOMM



Our 2024-2025 season theme, **FIRST<sup>®</sup> DIVE<sup>SM</sup>** presented by Qualcomm, explored life beneath the surface of the ocean and encouraged our global youth participants to uncover their potential to strengthen their communities and innovate for a better world. The season's program challenges inspired *FIRST* teams to be curious and creative problem-solvers and build skills as they worked together to create innovative solutions through robotics.

## A SEASON IN NUMBERS

**853,000+**

students impacted

**5,400+**

official *FIRST* events

**114**

countries with *FIRST* programs

**493,000+**

volunteer, mentor, and educator roles

**39 million+**

volunteer, mentor, and educator hours



## SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

*FIRST* grew the number of young people the organization serves annually with life-changing robotics programs; **overall youth participation was up 9%** from the 2023-2024 season.

*FIRST* continued to influence culture as the **leader in youth robotics**, with appearances in media outlets such as Good Morning America, TODAY, Forbes, FastCompany, and Parents.com; and significant growth on social media: @first\_official\_ is now one of the top 5% most-followed Instagram accounts globally.

*FIRST* awarded **five outstanding community organizations with STEM Community Innovation Grants**, a competitive annual program that has granted more than \$3 million to community leaders since 2016 to develop innovative approaches to close the STEM education gap.

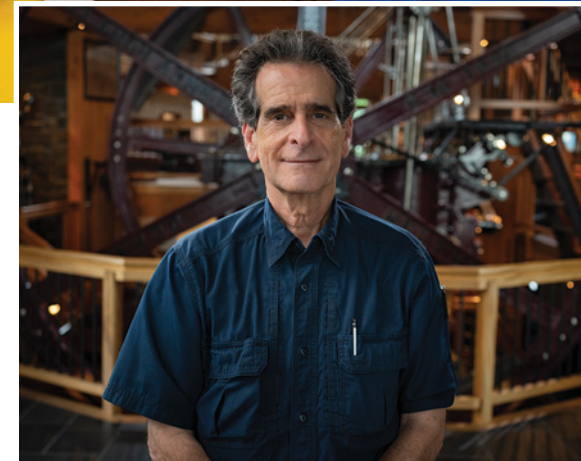
Global healthcare technology company **Medtronic**, a *FIRST* sponsor since 2006, **grew its support by becoming a *FIRST* Strategic Partner** to expand opportunities in robotics to all students through *FIRST*.

*FIRST* continued efforts to lower barriers to participation by developing educator and facilitator resources to support program implementation, including a **free Grades 7-12 Robotic Engineering Exploration Curriculum**.



*FIRST* celebrated key community milestone moments during the 2024-2025 season, including:

- **Walk Like Woodie Day (October 11, 2024)**, a day we honor the late Dr. Woodie Flowers, who helped establish the ethos of *FIRST* by coining the term *Gracious Professionalism* and nurturing its meaning in his every action.
- **36 Years of *FIRST* (March 20, 2025)**, when we marked the anniversary of our organization's founding with a new video sharing founder Dean Kamen's legacy of innovation.
- ***FIRST* Signing Day (May 20, 2025)**, a day to recognize high school seniors graduating in 2025 by sharing congratulations and next steps of the *FIRST* alumni, whether education, enlistment, employment, or entrepreneurship.





# FIRST® LEGO® LEAGUE







### Season Participation

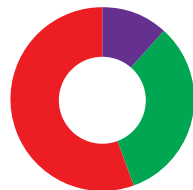
**650,000+**

students in **77 countries** explored STEM concepts and gained real-world problem-solving experiences through *FIRST LEGO League*.

**95%**

of *FIRST LEGO League* Challenge coaches indicated\* students **increased their confidence in approaching problems in math and science.**

\* Source: 2025 *FIRST LEGO League* Challenge end-of-season surveys



**76,000+**

Discover students

**213,000+**

Explore students

**360,000+**

Challenge students

In *FIRST LEGO League*'s **SUBMERGED**<sup>SM</sup> preK-8 participants explored the layers of the ocean, then put their STEM and collaboration skills to work to imagine and innovate. Younger students built a LEGO® model exploring ocean habitats, animals, vehicles, and places where research can be conducted and tracked what they learned, and some teams used code to bring their model to life. Upper-grade teams learned about how and why people explore the oceans and developed creative solutions related to the theme. They also identified a mission strategy and designed, created, and coded a robot to complete missions for the Robot Game.

### Spotlight



To commemorate the SUBMERGED season, hundreds of teams made a splash at several multinational ***FIRST LEGO League Open Events*** around the world. At the *FIRST LEGO League Open Africa Championship*, 80 teams representing 39 countries came together in Cape Town, South Africa, from May 7-9, 2025, making waves with their creativity, innovation, and lots of *Gracious Professionalism*.



# FIRST® TECH CHALLENGE





AGES 12-18 (GRADES 7-12)

Ages may vary by region.



Season Participation

**109,000+**

students in **81 countries** developed STEM skills, practiced engineering principles, and explored the value of teamwork through *FIRST* Tech Challenge.

**97%**

of *FIRST* Tech Challenge students say\* they **learned to persevere despite challenges or barriers.**

\* Source: 2025 *FIRST* Tech Challenge end-of-season survey

This season, *FIRST* Tech Challenge teams used their STEM and collaboration skills to explore the complex ecosystems in the depths of the ocean in **INTO THE DEEP<sup>SM</sup>** presented by RTX. Teams designed, built, programmed, and operated robots to compete in an ocean-themed two-on-two challenge. Over two-and-a-half minutes of game play with autonomous and driver-controlled sections, alliances competed to earn points by collecting and sorting samples into baskets, creating specimens, driving into the observation zones, and climbing the rungs of the submersible to ascend out of the deep.

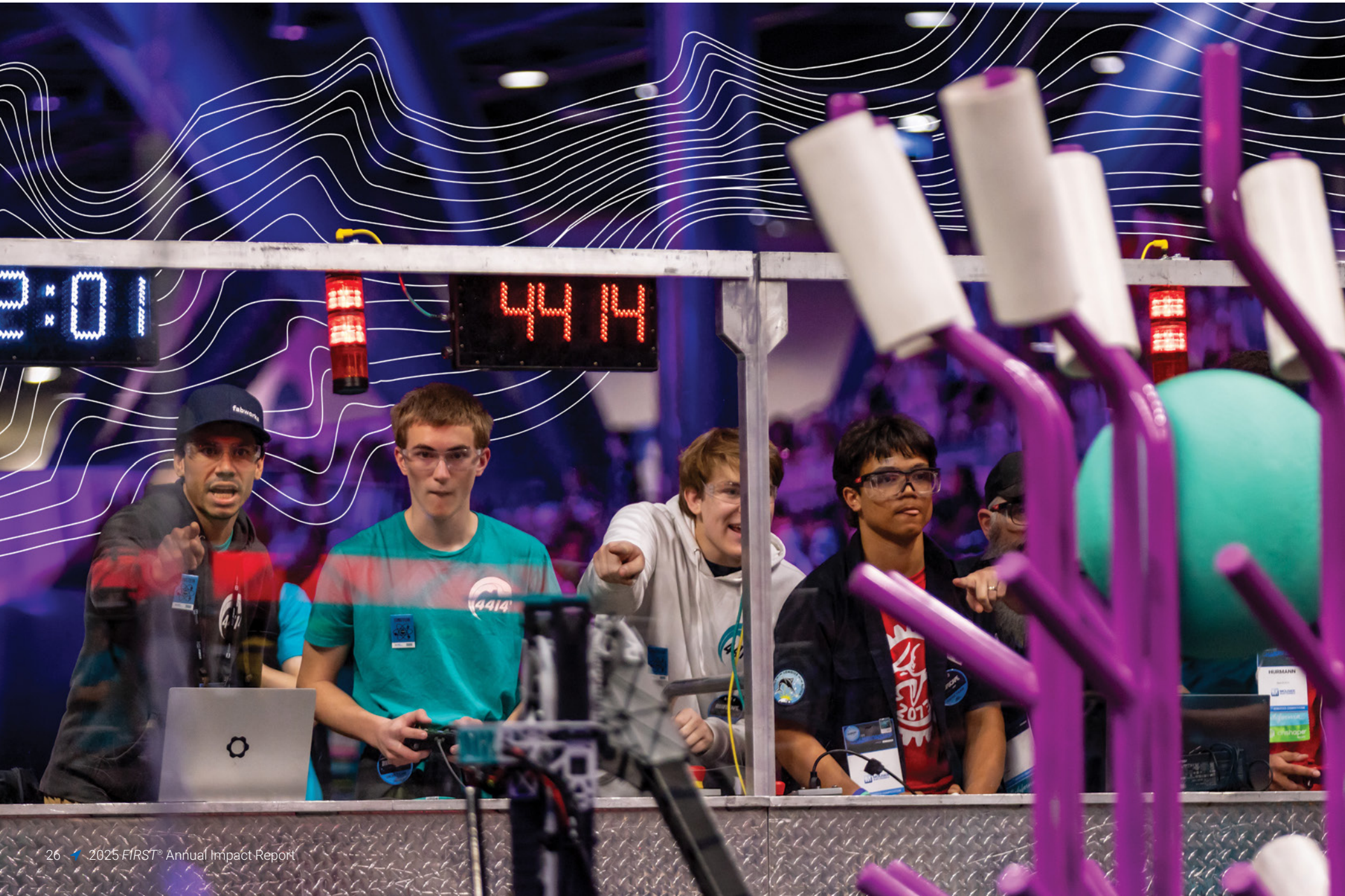
### Spotlight



This season, *FIRST* Tech Challenge piloted a **new event type, with eight Premier Events** hosted April-July, offering over 360 additional advancement opportunities for *FIRST* Tech Challenge teams to attend multinational events from their Regional Championships. At the European Premier Event, 98 teams representing 27 countries competed in Eindhoven, Netherlands, from July 1-5, 2025. Premier Events will continue next season.



# **FIRST<sup>®</sup> ROBOTICS COMPETITION**







PRESENTED BY **HAAS**  
Gene Haas Foundation

Season Participation

**93,000+**

students in **35 countries** unlocked real-world engineering concepts, self-confidence, and workforce skills in *FIRST* Robotics Competition.

**92%**

of *FIRST* Robotics Competition students say\* they **increased their problem-solving skills.**

\* Source: 2025 *FIRST* Robotics Competition end-of-season survey

In **REEFSCAPE<sup>SM</sup> presented by Haas**, teams used their engineering skills to strengthen one of the ocean's most diverse habitats and make waves to build a better world. During game play, two competing alliances were invited to score coral, harvest algae, and attach to the barge before time ran out. Alliances earned additional rewards for meeting specific scoring thresholds and for cooperating with their opponents.

### Spotlight



**FIRST** founder **Dean Kamen** and YouTube creator and engineer **Mark Rober** filmed a [video tour](#) of Rober's CrunchLabs showcasing the fun of innovating. The video aired during the REEFSCAPE season Kickoff at more than 160 live Kickoff events around the world on January 4, 2025.





# FIRST CHAMPIONSHIP SHOWCASES A SEA OF STUDENT STEM TALENT

## 2025 FIRST CHAMPIONSHIP PRESENTED BY BAE SYSTEMS HIGHLIGHTS

The 2025 *FIRST* Championship presented by BAE Systems brought together more than 50,000 students, mentors, volunteers, and supporters from 66 countries to celebrate innovation and collaboration. Across multiple days of competition in April at Houston's George R. Brown Convention Center, more than 1,000 *FIRST* robotics teams demonstrated the power of STEM to unite and inspire.

**50,000+**  
attendees

**19,000+**  
student competitors

**66**  
countries  
represented

**1,056**  
*FIRST* teams

**1,300+**  
event volunteers





▲ Chris Moore, chief executive officer of *FIRST*, tours the pits to connect with students, volunteers, and supporters and see the creativity and dedication behind their work.



***"FIRST has brought competitive youth robotics to life for 36 years, transforming it into the only sport where every kid can go pro. The life-changing impact of FIRST has been on display all week at FIRST Championship. From their heart-pounding matches on the fields to inspiring displays of innovation and teamwork, our participants are building the network and the skills needed to take them anywhere they want to go in their career."***

– Chris Moore, CEO, *FIRST*



***"At BAE Systems, we believe in empowering the next generation of innovators to take on the world's most pressing challenges. The 2025 FIRST Championship was a celebration of the ingenuity, teamwork, and determination that will define the leaders and problem-solvers of tomorrow. We are honored to support this extraordinary event and the students whose talents and ideas are shaping a brighter future."***

– Tom Arseneault, president and CEO, BAE Systems, Inc.



◀ The Gene Haas Foundation was the recipient of the **Founder's Award**, presented each year by *FIRST* founder Dean Kamen to one organization or individual for exceptional service in advancing the ideals and mission of *FIRST*.

Thank you to our 2025 *FIRST* Championship sponsors who appear on [page 40](#) of this report.



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Our sponsors, suppliers, donors, and other contributors are the steady current moving *FIRST* and its global impact forward. Their generosity fuels our programs, expands access, and empowers young people to navigate their own paths with confidence. We are deeply grateful for the supporters recognized in these pages, each anchoring our mission and helping young people reach new horizons through *FIRST*.

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“Love the *FIRST* mission. I’ve obtained skills that have followed me into my profession – pharmacy. Thank you, *FIRST!*”

– *FIRST alum and donor*



"I have observed firsthand how the *FIRST* program really augments education/learning for kids of all ages!"

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#### Other Contributors

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*FIRST* thanks our supporters and has made every effort to ensure complete and accurate listings. If we've made an error, please accept our apology and let us know at [recognition@firstinspires.org](mailto:recognition@firstinspires.org).



"Together with *FIRST*, we're committed to closing the talent gap in STEM fields and building a future workforce of innovators with the skills, confidence, and leadership to make a positive impact on the world."

— Dantaya Williams, executive vice president and chief human resources officer, RTX



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# PROGRAM DELIVERY ORGANIZATIONS

Our *FIRST* Program Delivery Organizations carry the mission of *FIRST* across the globe, guiding students, mentors, and volunteers as they navigate their individual journeys through STEM. Through their leadership, dedication, and local expertise, young people everywhere gain the opportunity to learn, innovate, and thrive. We are proud to recognize these partners for inspiring the next generation of science and technology leaders.

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## ALGERIA

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Bilim Kahramanlari  
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Voka ●●  
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Builders of Tomorrow ●●

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Boston Tech Initiative Corp. ●  
NE FIRST ●●  
WPI Robotics Resource Center ●

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### MINNESOTA

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Mississippi ●●

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FIRST in Missouri ●

### MISSOURI – EAST

FIRST in Missouri ●

### MISSOURI – FIMO

FIRST in Missouri ●●

### MISSOURI – KANSAS CITY REGION

KC STEM Alliance ●●

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KC STEM Alliance ●

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College of Engineering,  
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Montana Robotics Alliance ●

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University of Nebraska – Lincoln  
4-H Youth Development ●●  
Metropolitan Community  
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### NEVADA

FIRST Nevada ●●●●

### NEW HAMPSHIRE

FIRST New Hampshire  
Robotics ●●●  
NE FIRST ●

### NEW JERSEY

FIRST Mid-Atlantic ●  
FIRST Tech Challenge  
New Jersey ●

### NEW JERSEY – NORTH

FIRST Mid-Atlantic ●●

### NEW JERSEY – SOUTH

Rowan University ●●

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Land of Enchantment  
Robotics ●●●

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Robotics, Inc. ●●

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NYC FIRST ●●●●

### NEW YORK – POTSDAM

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University ●●●

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School of Engineering  
& Mines ●●

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Outreach ●●●

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Oregon Robotics Tournament  
& Outreach Program ●●●

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Pennsylvania FIRST Robotics ●

### EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

FIRST Mid-Atlantic ●

### PENNSYLVANIA – CENTRAL

Appalachia Intermediate  
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### PENNSYLVANIA – EAST

FIRST Mid-Atlantic ●●





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## RIPPLE EFFECT: 2025 FIRST VOLUNTEERS, MENTORS, AND COACHES

As part of our global robotics community, *FIRST* mentors, coaches, and event volunteers work side by side with *FIRST* participants to develop their leadership and problem-solving skills and foster self-confidence. When they share their skillset, champion participants, and demonstrate the *FIRST* Core Values, they are role models to the next generation of leaders and innovators.

At the 2025 *FIRST* Championship, we honored a few outstanding event volunteers, mentors, and coaches from each of our programs for their contributions of time and talent to the *FIRST* community:

### FIRST Robotics Competition

#### Volunteer of the Year Award

Thad House (Pacific Northwest, U.S.)

#### Woodie Flowers Award

Francisco "Paco" Guerra (Monterrey, Mexico)

### FIRST Tech Challenge

#### Volunteer of the Year Award

Chris Silvano (Oklahoma, U.S.)

#### Compass Award

Patrick Mulcah (Minnesota, U.S.)

### FIRST LEGO League

#### Volunteer of the Year Award

Cameron Schriener (Georgia, U.S.)

#### Coach/Mentor Awards

Liia Tammes (Vaela küla, Estonia)

Sonja Fick (Oberkochen, Germany)

Daniel Bryant (Utah, U.S.)

Ciou Jyun-Yuan (Taichung, Chinese Taipei)

Sarah Cerra (New Mexico, U.S.)

Leigh Northrup (North Carolina, U.S.)

#### PENNSYLVANIA – NORTHWEST

Penn State Erie, The  
Behrend College ●

#### PENNSYLVANIA – SOUTHWEST

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Services, Inc. ●●●

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#### TENNESSEE – WEST

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#### TEXAS – FIT

*FIRST* in Texas ●●●

#### TEXAS – HOUSTON

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#### TEXAS – WEST

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at El Paso – College  
of Engineering ●●

#### UTAH

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and Technology ●●

#### VERMONT

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*FIRST* Chesapeake ●●

James Madison University ●●

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*FIRST* Wisconsin ●●

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FPT University ●

#### ZIMBABWE

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Technology/*FIRST*  
South Africa ●●

\*Local Partner Representative

● *FIRST* LEGO League Explore  
● *FIRST* LEGO League Challenge  
● *FIRST* Tech Challenge  
● *FIRST* Robotics Competition



"The impact of *FIRST* on today's youth is unparalleled. By supporting *FIRST* and helping students prepare for whatever lies ahead in their lives and careers, Haas is proud to play a vital role in shaping the talent and character of tomorrow's leaders."

— Kathy Looman, director of education, Gene Haas Foundation







# FINANCIALS

*FIRST* reported an operating surplus for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025. This positive result was primarily driven by strong interest earnings on cash investments, continued support from our generous sponsors, and modest program growth. Similar factors contributed to the surplus in FY2024.

In FY2025, *FIRST* served 9 percent more youth participants than in the prior year. Consistent with long-standing practice, we continued to direct the maximum possible share of funds to directly benefit *FIRST* participants. Delivering high-quality programs to as many young people as possible remains our top priority; however, economic pressures and inflation have presented ongoing challenges.

To address these challenges, *FIRST* actively pursued opportunities to manage expenses through disciplined cost control, strategic sourcing, and effective cash management — while continuing to benefit from the generosity of our sponsors. We also maintained investments in critical initiatives, including our Youth Protection Program, Information Technology, Program Evaluation, and Education Initiative.

Looking ahead, *FIRST* plans to leverage prior-year operating surpluses to support strategic priorities focused on expanding the reach and impact of our programs, reducing barriers to participation, and advancing global awareness and innovation.

As in past years, support from our contributors remained strong. Thousands of individuals, small businesses, corporations, and foundations worldwide sustained or increased their commitments to *FIRST*. Notably, many provided unrestricted donations, giving *FIRST* the flexibility to manage rising costs and address key organizational priorities. This continued generosity enabled us to provide meaningful, life-changing experiences to hundreds of thousands of youth participants across the globe.



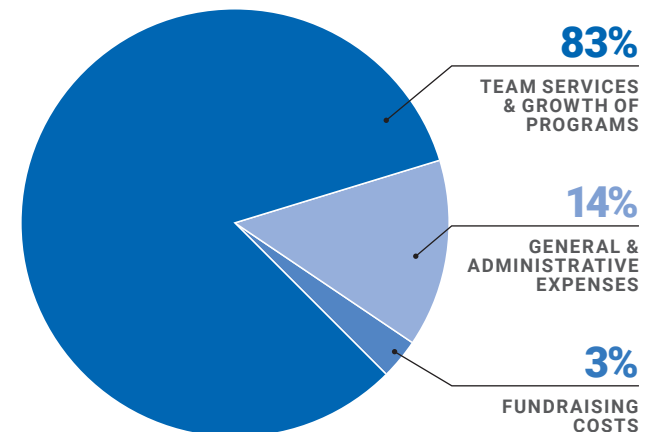
## Charity Navigator Four-Star Rating

*FIRST* has a top-ranked four-star rating from [Charity Navigator](https://www.charitynavigator.org/ein/222990908) for consistently executing its mission in a fiscally responsible way.

SOURCE: <https://www.charitynavigator.org/ein/222990908>

## Expense Allocation

See Financial Statements, [page 46](#).





STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES	JUNE 30, 2025		JUNE 30, 2024	
OPERATING REVENUES AND SUPPORT				
Program Revenue	\$ 36,656,430	41.04%	\$ 33,711,658	40.12%
Contributions and Grants	12,390,841	13.87%	15,366,461	18.29%
Other income, net of expenses	3,340,964	3.74%	2,625,564	3.12%
Net assets released from restrictions	36,927,824	41.35%	32,325,498	38.47%
<b>Total operating revenues (losses) and support</b>	<b>\$ 89,316,059</b>	100.00%	<b>\$ 84,029,181</b>	100.00%
EXPENSES				
<i>FIRST</i> Program Expenses	74,337,123	82.61%	71,663,083	86.07%
Net cost of building space occupied by unrelated not-for-profit organizations	299,419	0.33%	313,435	0.38%
General, administrative, and supporting services	12,493,902	13.88%	8,834,845	10.61%
Fundraising and Development	2,858,176	3.18%	2,447,985	2.94%
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$ 89,988,620</b>	100.00%	<b>\$ 83,259,348</b>	100.00%
NON-OPERATING REVENUE				
Realized and unrealized gains	639,910	18.42%	175,243	7.12%
Interest income	2,833,812	81.58%	2,284,614	92.88%
<b>Changes in Net Assets from Non-Operating Activities</b>	<b>\$ 3,473,722</b>	100.00%	<b>\$ 2,459,857</b>	100.00%
Total Change in Net Assets (Surplus/(Deficit))	2,801,161		3,229,690	

STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION	JUNE 30, 2025		JUNE 30, 2024	
ASSETS:				
Cash and cash equivalents*	\$ 13,963,295	19.12%	\$ 20,280,927	26.32%
Short-term investments*	9,955,220	13.63%	3,411,598	4.43%
Long-term investments	33,310,118	45.62%	28,882,408	37.49%
Pledges, receivables, program supply inventory, and other assets	9,996,555	13.69%	18,952,406	24.60%
Net property, plant, and equipment	5,796,793	7.94%	5,516,225	7.16%
Total assets, end of year	\$ 73,021,981	100.00%	\$ 77,043,564	100.00%
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS				
Total liabilities, end of year	\$ 7,612,331		\$ 8,322,517	
Net assets:				
Without restriction	39,451,414	60.31%	36,650,253	53.33%
With restriction - temporary in nature	25,958,236	39.69%	32,070,794	46.67%
Total net assets, end of year	\$ 65,409,650	100.00%	\$ 68,721,047	100.00%
Total liabilities and net assets, end of year	\$ 73,021,981		\$ 77,043,564	

For each of the two fiscal years summarized above, FIRST received unmodified (unqualified) opinions from its independent auditor, BerryDunn.

\*NOTE: The cash and investments are comprised of both unrestricted funds and donor temporarily restricted funds. The total liquid assets balance available to FIRST, for operating purposes, at June 30, 2025, is equivalent to approximately five months of FIRST operating expenses.

The financial information presented here is condensed and does not include the value of all donated services and materials. Audited Financial Statements (AFS) are readily available on our website at [firstinspires.org/about/annual-report](https://firstinspires.org/about/annual-report).

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Listing current as of November 2025



# FIRST® IS THE WORLD'S LEADING ROBOTICS COMMUNITY PREPARING YOUNG PEOPLE FOR THE FUTURE.

## PURPOSE

FIRST exists to prepare the young people of today for the world of tomorrow.

## VISION

To transform our culture by creating a world where science and technology are celebrated and where young people dream of becoming science and technology leaders.

## MISSION

To provide life-changing robotics programs that give young people the skills, confidence, and resilience to build a better world.

## CORE VALUES

### Discovery

We explore new skills and ideas.

### Innovation

We use creativity and persistence to solve problems.

### Impact

We apply what we learn to improve our world.

### Inclusion

We respect each other and embrace our differences.

### Teamwork

We are stronger when we work together.

### Fun

We enjoy and celebrate what we do!



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