Cougars Gone Wired endeavors to constantly refine our methods, enhance our knowledge, and attract and inspire future generations. With 10 years of experience, Team 2996 continues to stand, grounded in our belief that an effective team values its roots, develops leadership in its members, and builds lasting relationships within its team and throughout the community.

Our team is led by 12 student Vice Presidents (VPs) who lead in various fields of business and technology, combining our skills and knowledge in a way that sets us apart from other teams. Every decision is student made, with mentor advice and input. We encourage different viewpoints because everyone has something to contribute as well as gain through collaboration. We started with 36 students and 11 mentors and have managed to retain the feeling of a tight-knit family as we have grown to almost 60 members and 18 mentors.

Since our founding in 2008, we have reached thousands of people through our avid community outreach and impressive STEM programs. In just the last three years, we have accumulated nearly 9,000 community outreach and volunteer hours. Additionally, a local Steampunk-themed art show opening provided us an outstanding opportunity to showcase individual systems of the robot. Always searching for new ways to inspire the next generation, we constantly develop new robotics demonstrations and outreach programs to positively impact our community, and cultivate our reputation beyond our city. This fall, we were invited to present at the Dinosaur Resource Center in Woodland Park as one of the main attractions during the 2nd Annual Fun With Science Day.

Growing our reputation with sponsors has created opportunities for students on the team. Multiple sponsors such as the National Association of Women In Construction (NAWIC), Harris Corporation, and Vertec have set up meetings with students to talk to professionals about pursuing STEM and business fields, as well as offering members jobs and internships.

A focus on magnifying our impact has led us to create new and higher quality demonstrations and expand our outreach to many age groups. One of our curricula was created for several groups of elementary school students with special needs or from low-income areas, through the Colorado Springs Adventure Clubs and Therapeutic Recreation Center. Intrigued by our ability to inspire younger generations, the Denver Technology Conference invited us to

present about how we develop enthusiasm for STEM activities through FIRST, which also yielded multiple prospective sponsors for our team. In addition, our legacy events such as the Cool Science and What If? Festivals, Boo at the Zoo, and library district Summer Adventure Parties continue our engagement of youth in the region year after year.

As we incorporate younger generations into the mission of FIRST, we inspire excellence and enthusiasm for STEM. A recommendation from a judge at the Colorado Regional helped us establish a connection with 12 Stone Academy, a homeschool group of kids ages 7 to 14. After numerous sessions working on robot development at their classroom in Black Forest, we introduced the class to multiple opportunities to show off their own robots and gave them a glimpse of what FIRST has to offer when they displayed their FTC-like robots at our FLL Jr. showcase, our yearly FRC Scrimmage, and the Denver Regional. Our 6th annual FLL Jr. showcase represented teams at all levels of FIRST; with 6 FLL Jr. teams presenting, 2 FLL teams and 1 FTC team demoing, and our FRC team running the event.

To better prepare students for robotics in high school, we hold our week-long Making A Difference (MAD) Summer Camp to teach middle school students the basics of engineering and teamwork. The program continues to improve and expand, with enrollment increasing from 14 students the first year to 20 the second. Responding to growing interest, this year we are planning to add a second session. We are also working with the 12 Stone Academy in Black Forest to create a STEM-based summer camp, so that they can work on building their experience to create an FTC team. Several incoming Freshmen have joined CGW as a result of these camps.

After being approached by a team at the Utah Regional with questions about improving their business structure, we created a solution to help teams with similar challenges. Immediately upon returning home, we sent out a survey through the Denver Regional Coordinator, resulting in the first ever Business Exchange, where Team 2996 facilitated an open discussion dealing with fundraising, sponsorship communications, and team structure.

We continue to create goals and work towards excellence in every sub-team. Leadership is making short-term and long-term goals to improve education and communication. Tech teams are documenting their knowledge and experience, creating an extensive resource library

in an endeavor to create a solid foundation for the next generation. Our Special Projects sub-team, which builds the practice field, is looking for opportunities to mentor teams in different regions so that more teams have the opportunity to attend a scrimmage during build season. VPs are also working together to teach every member about each part of the robot and how the team functions so all members can address questions posed by the community at demonstrations and judges at competitions.

By attending events and leading demos, our outreach subteams plan to further expand STEM related knowledge throughout the community. Business leaders aim to expand the heart of FIRST through demos and our MAD Summer Camp.

We are recognized for our spirit of coopertition and gracious professionalism. At last year's Regionals, over 30 teams came to us for assistance with everything from borrowing tools to programming advice. By building a full practice field every year, we enable teams to test their robots in a competition environment. We end build season by hosting the Colorado Scrimmage, where we had a record 21 teams in attendance last year. The same practice field is then brought up to the Denver Regional so all teams can practice between matches.

Alumni strive to share their experience and give back to the team that taught them. In fact, four of our CGW graduates have come back to mentor the team. Many alumni participated in our interview process that puts potential VPs in a position to test their capability for the job. Alumni also assist during our annual mock game, when we train everyone, VPs and rookies alike, so that the first few days of build season run easily. This is one of the ways we build community early in the season.

Eating meals together is another way our team connects. Each year parents provide meals through Cougar Kibble to ensure we are well fed every night of build season, and we cherish their involvement in our team. Many parents also contribute as mentors, with valuable ideas. It was a parent mentor who suggested we recognize and thank our head coach, Mr. McLean, by nominating him for The Crystal Apple, a prestigious teaching award in our school district. The award recognizes teachers who demonstrate excellence in education and impact their community. In addition to coaching the team, Mr. McLean has taught many of our students in class. For ten years now, he has shown incredible dedication to our team and FIRST.

After ten amazing years, we look to our future with promise and hope. Using our foundation of community service, we continue to search out new ways to spread the values of FIRST and our passion for STEM. Building on our strong influence in the community, we continue to spread our outreach, even beyond our city limits. One of our best qualities is our passion, which we work to share with future FIRST participants, drawing them into our team's family. Extensive real world knowledge gives us valuable business and technical training, so we can inspire and develop future leaders. How does a group of high school students impact their world? By putting value in our roots, learning from our mistakes, and building lasting relationships within our team and throughout the community.