

**2013 Woodie Flowers Submission for mentor Rodger Dohm
by Matthew Matze**

Rodger Dohm, Team Spyder head advisor, believes in all of us, explaining that “we are the hope and the future of the world, as the new leaders of tomorrow.” He passionately focuses on what we can become, inspiring us to achieve what we set our minds to.

Year-round he pushes us to create and share innovative ideas that seem impossible and challenges us in our successes and failures to find new solutions. He motivates us to enter multiple competitions from local fairs to all types of robotics competitions, such as the Del Mar Fair, Poway Parade and AVATAR, just to name a few. His motto, “Everyone likes to be part of a winning team” is exemplified from students winning over two thousand awards, ranging from Tournament finalists to Best of Shows.

His mentorship has created a 100% student driven, entrepreneurial model where the students run the team, raise the funding, fabricate all the parts, and make all of the decisions collaboratively through a consensus model so that student’s take ownership of every process and product we create. He keeps a parental distance encouraging students to treat others through the FIRST gracious professional model. The team vision of “Inspire Engineering throughout the Community” is part of Mr. Dohm’s life as he is driven fostering a FIRST value climate that extends beyond the school through numerous student engaged community outreach, such as presenting at Quick-Pak and the 2013 World Tech Innovation Market Conference.

He is always positively lifting up students’ self-esteem and confidence through praising them for their creativity integrating STEM in the design process through setting and meeting goals. He communicates visually throughout the design process beginning with brainstorming techniques, research, technical expert consultation, and 3D modeling. He teaches the direct application of math and physics concepts into the engineering, design and build process, as seen in our 2013 robot and PLTW engineering STEM courses.

Mr. Dohm’s enthusiasm of STEM is contagious throughout the team and community. I am a perfect example of this excitement as I was inspired to join the Team Spyder created and mentored ASES middle school robotics program in 6th grade and became president in my junior year. Through Mr. Dohm’s influence, we are opening a PLTW Engineering STEM Academy as a Pathway in the fall of 2013, and have created 5 ASES, 7 FRC, and 5 FLL robotics teams and grown our team from 7 members to over 60 students, 10 mentors and 40 volunteers. He continues to train student alumni mentors and actively secures sponsors, STEM internships and scholarships for students. He is always advocating for us to mentor others in STEM.

According to Mr. Dohm it’s all about FIRST values and not really about the robot. The robot is the hook to learn leadership, teamwork, STEM, the design process and gain relationships needed for the 21st Century to compete in a global society.