

## Woodie Flowers Submission for David Brinza

When the students on FRC Team 980 think of a hero, we think of our mentor Dr. David Brinza. His success can be measured by the lives he has changed as a mentor and dedicated FIRST volunteer for the past decade.

Brinza started mentoring Team 980 "Thunderbots" in 2003 becoming lead mentor in 2007. He has a strong influence on students, teaching problem solving skills, creativity, and persistence. Brinza stresses the importance of never giving up and demonstrates a fierce work ethic. He tutors students in math, chemistry and physics. He makes sure that the students learn the importance of working as a team and that no one person is greater than the combined efforts of many. Above all he is enthusiastic in everything he does.

Brinza teaches his students not only to produce good work, but to be good workers as well. There was a special focus on the lessons of persistence with the success of the Mars Curiosity Rover's spectacular landing on Mars and ongoing mission. Brinza, Principal Technologist for the Radiation Assessment Detector (RAD) and a 30-year JPL employee invited his team along to watch Curiosity land "live". Brinza living and working on "Mars time" included some 48 hour shifts while never missing a team meeting. LeRoy Nelson Registrar and Scholarship Chairman – SCRRF, recognizes Brinza's selflessness by saying, "He is always generous with his time and energy to support FIRST teams, even when he is working on tight deadlines at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory."

His enthusiastic efforts reach far beyond the members of his team. He has volunteered at FRC Regional and World Champion events. He's been a FIRST Technical Adviser, Robot Inspector, LARobotics

Board Member and Fall Classic host. James Beck, California Regional Senior Director, says that "He possesses a big heart and willingness to do anything to help the students achieve at their highest level. I have asked him to fulfill many varied roles at...events and his enthusiasm and love of FIRST allows him to complete all with that smile." John Smith—Lead Mentor of Team 2404 and CEO of NEY says "Dave is and continues to be an example of what a FIRST mentor should be."

Excited about giving back, Brinza also teaches his students to give back. Many students return to mentor. "David is one of those mentors that you can tell will do anything in his powers for the students. It is with amazing mentors like David that the program continues to grow to new levels for our students and our future." says David Berggren, Regional Director of FIRST Southern CA.

Meredith Novak, FIRST Regional Director, Arkansas (former mentor of Brinza's sons) says "David is as excited about FIRST after all these years as anyone possibly could be." It is clear that Brinza is far more than just a mentor and helps many more than just his students. Leading by example, with a smile and teaching and reaching far outside the box, we hope that our hero David Brinza will continue to influence young lives for another decade.