

Stephen “Flo” Florence is a role model not only for students on our team, but for all FIRST students. Having a long history with FIRST and STEM education, Flo is greatly committed to making students the best they can be.

In 1999, Flo and a Purdue University freshman started a FIRST robotics team with the goal of providing local students an opportunity to become involved with STEM. It’s been 17 years since, yet Flo’s excitement for learning and passion for our team hasn’t wavered. For almost two decades, Flo has worked tirelessly to foster interest for STEM and promote teamwork among students. At team meetings, Flo is committed to engaging every team member and encourages students to be leaders. For these reasons, Team alumna Kira Brennan has said, “Flo is always there for students, practically 24/7, and is concerned with everyone's interests and development and individual success, as well as the success of the team. I think he's one of the best role models I've had in my life.” Besides affecting the individuals on our team, he also affects our team as a whole by inspiring all our students and always keeping them in a positive mindset, no matter what.

Flo is committed not only to our team, but to every FIRST team he works with. He has started countless teams, including over 20+ FRC teams, and even more FTC teams and FLL teams. In addition to the many teams, Flo has also been extremely vital in developing local FIRST events. Brian Bettag, head mentor of team 1646 has said, "Flo has been the driving force of having robotics in the Greater Lafayette area schools as he was instrumental in getting many of the local programs started." Besides starting many of the local programs, he also began a class at Purdue University called Purdue FIRST Programs (PFP), a class that gives university students an opportunity to mentor FIRST students in FLL all the way to FRC.

Flo’s passion for STEM extends into many facets of his careers. As an engineering teacher for years, a regional director for Indiana FIRST, and a technical services manager for Purdue, Flo has had many occupations, and has strived to promote his personal interest for STEM education in each and every one. One of the reasons Flo is such an influential leader is that he shares his passion for STEM education with WBI members. He is always very happy, calm and jovial, and this attitude is what inspires his students to be the best they can be. Because of this, alumnus Ian Hutchinson has stated, “The thing about Flo is that he's always excited, so when you're around him, it's hard not to get excited too. It's contagious.” He brings his attitude with him to competitions, and events allowing him to be such a great role model to his students.

Flo <3 other teams

- Started FLL and FTC teams and FRC teams, alluminosity, Cage Match,

- “Flo has been the driving force of having robotics in the Greater Lafayette area schools as he was instrumental in getting many of the local programs started.” -Brian Bettag (Head mentor of Jeff)

- Helps struggling teams (PFP)
- Flo <3 FIRST/STEM
- competition behavior
  - Regional Director
  - Job at purdue

conclusion