

Everyone has someone in their life that has inspired them to be the best they can be. For our team, that person is Brad Thompson. He is dedicated to not just our team but anyone he can help, and tries to be the best role model he can to those around him.

As our team's new lead mentor, Brad faces the many struggles of running a team. He organizes transportation, acts as a liaison between the team and our high school, attends every meeting and event, helps run our multiple social media accounts, drives us to events, and much more. But despite his many responsibilities, he always has a smile on his face and a positive attitude that never ceases to liven up long and tiring meetings or events. He is always happy to help students if he can and it is not unusual to hear, "Brad!" yelled across the room when students cannot get something right and need assistance. Whether it be programming, writing, designing, or building, he is willing to do whatever he can in order to assist students, including making sure they get home safely by waiting for everyone to leave meetings before leaving himself.

Not only does he care a great deal about our team, but he also cares about other FIRST programs. Brad is not just the head mentor for our team, but is the head mentor for two FLL teams as well. In the past two years, under Brad's guidance, the teams have won gracious professionalism and teamwork awards. Jeanie Shin, mother of an FLL student says, "Brad has given our students the ability to communicate efficiently and effectively in order to work together to get a task done. In doing this he has also laid the foundation for friendship, mentoring, and appreciation for learning." Not only does Brad coach these future engineers, but he inspires them to work hard and develop character while having fun.

Brad is not dedicated to only FIRST students, but teaching all children. Within our high school, he teaches several technology classes and is the head of IT. He also runs a summer camp to teach middle schoolers about programming. He began the summer camp several years ago as a way to get students excited and interested in STEM, and it is clear that it has worked, considering more students attend every year. Outside of school, he goes to Scout events such as Space Jam, the Midwest's largest gathering of Boy and Girl Scouts and distributes Scout badges for programming and robotics. This year alone, he has given 175 badges to scouts. Brad devotes himself to STEM education on many platforms, not just limited to FIRST.

Brad Thompson cares immensely about teaching students and promoting them to be the best they can be. He inspires everyone around him in a positive way, making him an excellent role model for both children and adults alike.