

# Paly Robotics

FRC 8 | 2022



## Diversity Plan



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# Diversity Plan

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## Team Overview

Paly Robotics, FRC Team 8, was founded in 1996 as a club of 20 students at Palo Alto High School. Over our 26 years of activity, we have grown into a team of 75 individuals with various ideas, skills, and backgrounds.

Paly Robotics is composed of 6 subteams—Art, Build, Business, Design, Software, and Strategy & Scouting. These subteams provide a place for people with a range of interests and skill sets to participate as members of FIRST.

In 2012, only one of Paly Robotics' 27 members was female and the team was unsustainable. Recognizing the importance of diversity, Team 8 has since taken steps to include different crowds. In turn, this has allowed us to better represent our surrounding community and continue to grow as a robotics team.

At the beginning of each year, we reach out to students at our school through presentations at freshmen orientations, classroom visits, and robot demonstrations. These efforts inform potential team members of Paly Robotics and FIRST opportunities. As a result, the team has seen a rapid increase in gender diversity—female and agender individuals now compose 40% of the team. In turn, this has yielded more opportunities, new ideas, and an overall stronger team.

Additionally, Paly Robotics currently hosts outreach programs that support underrepresented communities in STEAM. We partner with organizations that serve disadvantaged youth as we foster inclusion and equal opportunity in robotics. One of our outreach programs has been our LEGO Robotics Summer Program, through which we have been able to introduce over 60 students of underrepresented backgrounds to the build, design, and programming aspects of robotics.

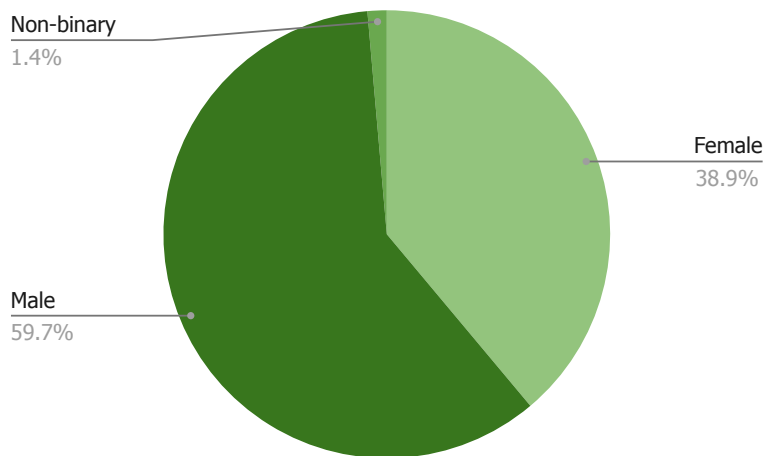
Team 8 strives to create an environment that supports and enables FIRST opportunities for an ever-growing number of people. We aim to continue to promote acceptance, inclusion, and opportunity within our team and beyond.

# Current Diversity

Diversity within Paly Robotics has significantly grown since our inception 26 years ago. Our team currently consists of 75 members that represent a wide variety of ethnicities, genders, and grade levels.

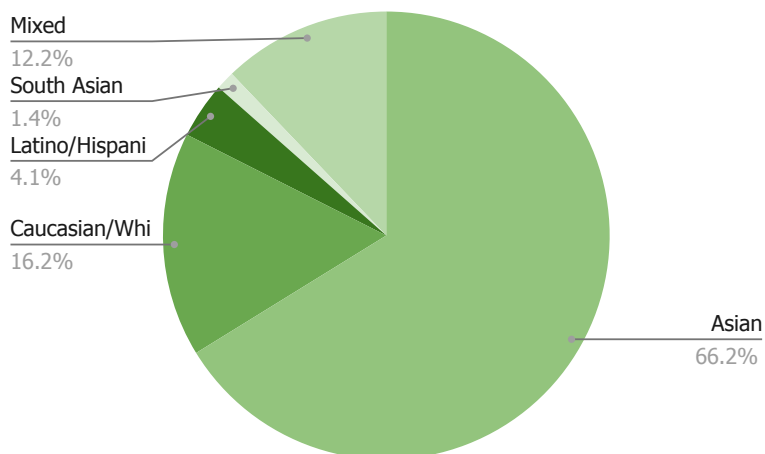
## Gender Diversity

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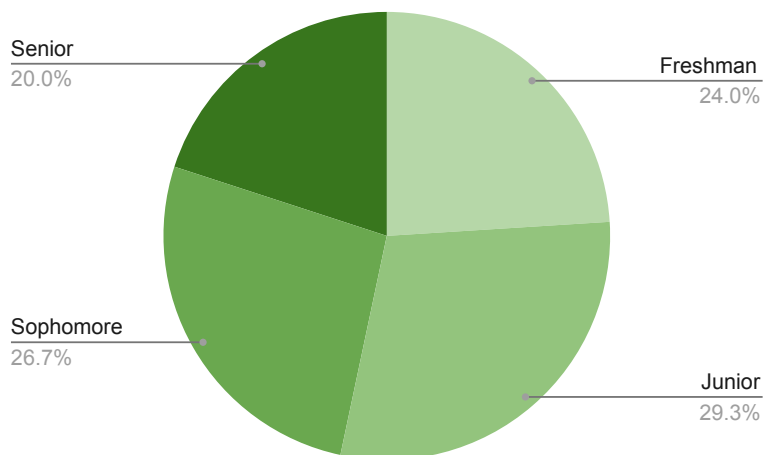
## Racial Diversity

Recognizing potential stigmas and barriers surrounding minority participation in STEAM, Paly Robotics strives to create an inclusive environment for individuals of all backgrounds, ethnicities, and cultures.



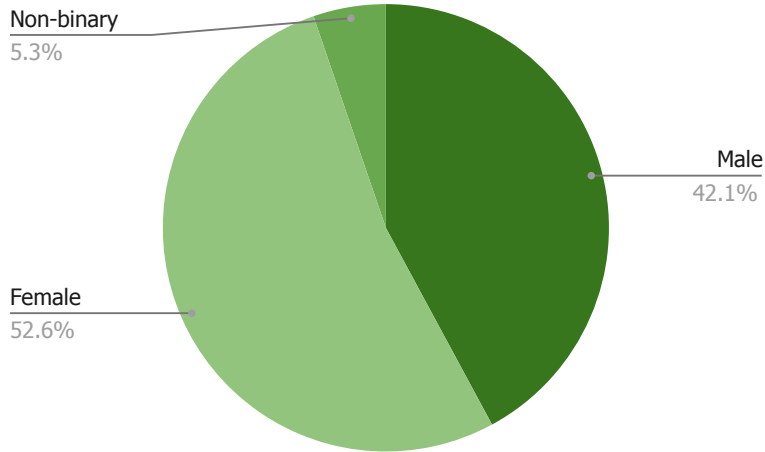
## Grade Diversity

In order to create a sustainable, balanced program, Team 8 promotes equal grade participation through our extensive recruitment and training processes. To raise interest in our program, we present to over 600 incoming freshmen at student orientation, visit classes to talk about our team, and host robot demonstrations.



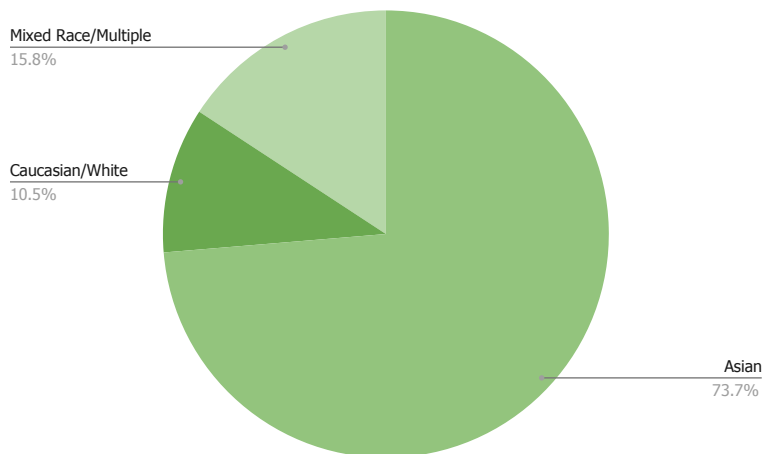
# Leadership Diversity

Paly Robotics believes that developing a diverse and inclusive community begins with team leadership. Over the years, our student leaders have represented a broad range of backgrounds and ideas, in turn, inspiring and diversifying the next generation.



## ***Gender Diversity***

Paly Robotics' rapidly increasing female participation is a reflection of the gender inclusion within our leadership—52.6% of our 2021-2022 leadership team is female.



## ***Racial Diversity***

Paly Robotics works to develop a leadership team that consists of a variety of perspectives and backgrounds.



# Diversity Growth

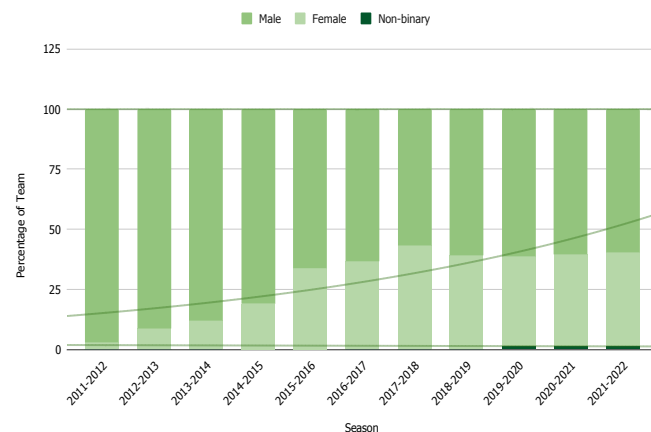
In the past few years, Paly Robotics has taken strides to promote an inclusive and accepting STEAM experience for all, both within our team and across the global community. We aim to share the opportunities of FIRST Robotics with individuals of all backgrounds, interests, ethnicities, genders, and grades.

Team 8 views equal opportunity as an issue of utmost importance—a value that is reflected in our team's upward trend in gender inclusivity. Reflecting on the setbacks of the 2012-2013 season, Paly Robotics has since made efforts to promote equal access to FIRST programs. In 2012, female members made up only 4% of our team. Since then, the percentage of female members has increased to 38.9%, and students who identify as non-binary compose 1.4% of the team. This increased representation results from our recruitment process, including team presentations and robot demonstrations within our school, which serve to introduce STEAM to a wide spectrum of students and garner interest in our program.

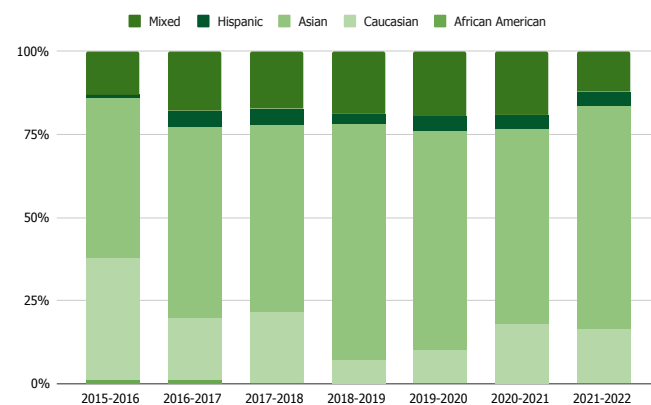
Additionally, we promote female participation in STEAM internationally through our 6-year long partnership with Townley Grammar School, an all-girls school in England. Our team hopes to continue expanding our existing programs while pursuing new opportunities to promote diversity and inclusion.

Paly Robotics continues to focus on providing an accepting environment for all students in order to make STEAM a pursuable opportunity for all.

## Gender Diversity Growth



## Racial Diversity Growth





# Diversity Promotion

Team 8 has maintained a strong focus on promoting all ideas, interests, and experiences by creating and supporting a wide variety of subteams, outreach initiatives, and opportunities for our members and community.

Paly Robotics has made a continuous effort to expand the boundaries of what is considered robotics within our community. Our six separate subteams—Art, Build, Business, Design, Software, and Strategy & Scouting—allow all students to explore their interests in diverse fields. The Art and Business subteams were established in 2014 and 2015 respectively, are testaments to the fact that robotics is an interdisciplinary activity in which people with varying interests can be successful. 56% of our Art members and 80% of our Business members report that they would not have considered joining FIRST without the existence of their respective subteam.

To ensure that robotics is a pursuable opportunity for everyone, we have strived to increase the inclusion of traditionally underrepresented minority groups through our outreach. Our annual LEGO Robotics Summer Program utilizes an engaging LEGO Mindstorms curriculum to introduce elementary and middle school students of a local disadvantaged community to robotics. The program, which runs entirely free of costs for participants, has served approximately 60 students in its 4 years of activity. Our team also furthers these efforts through our partnerships with the Lauren's House 4 Positive Change and Dreamcatchers, local mentorship programs



that serve underprivileged youth. These connections help us broaden access to robotics while providing a meaningful and inspiring opportunity to the youth in underprivileged communities.

For the past 7 years, the Paly Robotics Summer Camp has provided a unique experience for middle schoolers to explore STEAM. To open the world of robotics



to students of all socioeconomic backgrounds, camp fees are waived for those unable to pay registration costs. In 2019, 13% of campers attended for free.

Through our efforts to increase representation and access to robotics, Paly Robotics continues to foster the values of diversity and inclusivity within our team and community.

# Why Diversity?

Paly Robotics recognizes the importance of opening the world of robotics to people of all backgrounds. We believe that having members that represent a variety of perspectives, interests, and ideas encourages creativity, collaboration, and a positive team environment.

Team 8 acknowledges that there are stigmas surrounding participation in STEAM for many individuals and communities. To break apart these stigmas, we strive to provide a diverse and accepting environment for people of all backgrounds.

Creating and maintaining a diverse body of members and ideas is a key component of success as it encourages creativity and collaboration. In turn, this allows our team to operate effectively and sustain our impact. Incorporating a variety of perspectives is important to fostering a knowledgeable and cohesive working space, and Paly Robotics aims to uphold the values of inclusion and acceptance in our team's operations.

While Paly Robotics values diversity, our team does not believe that a specific background can define success. We value the benefits diversity can bring to the team over superficial statistics. Every individual offers different ideas, skills, and capabilities to Team 8, and we strive to continue providing STEAM learning opportunities to everyone in our community. A more diverse environment creates a better working space with a greater influx of ideas. Altogether, Paly Robotics strongly believes that diversity creates a better and more sustainable system of creative and accepting students.

