

Breyana Edwards

What Inspires me

I find inspiration in everyday occurrences. When looking at videos, pictures, and books, I see the potential to create new paths and make things bigger and brighter. The Naval Horizons introduces various STEM careers for young adults. The Naval Horizon has always had students involved and admired by the outstanding Engineers they have. Throughout all of the videos I have watched, I learned many exciting things, and I am so invested in the different topics. The engineers gave me so much reassurance that engineering is something I love, and just like Mr. Rob Sparrock said, "I envision doing this job for another 15- 20 years... I am not sure what will make me stop doing it". I genuinely enjoy the challenges of being an upcoming engineer and thank the brilliant engineers for continuously inspiring us.

I aspire to be a Mechanical Engineer because I enjoy its unique hands-on activities. Engineering requires me to use my imagination and think outside of the box. Sometimes it can be frustrating when something doesn't work the way I want it to, but I have learned to keep trying until I am successful. I grew up surrounded by male role models. I saw my dad, my brothers, and my cousins doing mechanical things, like working on cars, taking apart engines doing construction work around the house, or doing other fun tasks. It never occurred to me that girls couldn't make valuable contributions in the STEM field.

I now understand that females are underrepresented in STEM, except in computer science engineering. The world is big and bright and filled with unnumbered possibilities, and little girls should have more female engineer role models to motivate them. I intend to be one of them.

I was first exposed to robotics in the sixth grade. It did not initially grab my interest because I had no understanding about what was going on around me. Gradually, I began to develop specific skills and understand the overall goals of robotics projects. This initial exposure to robotics and engineering led me to the First Robotics Competition (FRC). Now, as a high school student with four years of FRC experience, I understand FRC is one big family with mentors, students, and friends that help design, build, and provide you with great ideas when needed. I always thought that robots were cool, but now I see that robotics are a big path towards my future.

I was inspired to make a difference by the many male engineers I saw around me. I always thought that girls could do the same activities as boys, whether building robots, planes, cars, trucks, or new ideas. Showing others girls, younger and older, that females – along with males -can be engineers too. I want to break gender norms by demonstrating that anyone can accomplish anything she devotes enough energy to. What inspires me to keep going is the future generation having more female role models, making a difference in the world. Being a part of the world's future, we need more females to show a difference by encouraging little girls, giving them the rite of passage, and displaying the path of becoming an engineer. I want them to have other inspirations than me, where females in STEM come forward and speak out on these various careers.

I was fortunate to have many positive experiences that led me to engineering. My can-do attitude won me the admiration of distinct male engineers. My early exposure to robotics got me interested in mechanical engineering. I had the opportunities to lead two teams, learn to ask questions when I didn't understand, and puzzled out the answers to problems on my own and with help made me realize that I want that for myself. I also wish the same for younger girls. Having these fantastic opportunities to be

the best I can be and exciting kids about learning everyday basic learning skills. The Naval Horizon program will give me the opportunity to pursue a career in mechanical engineering, and become the best role model I can be for future generations of girls in STEM.