

# **Team 885 - The Green Team**

## **Expectations for Students and Their Parents**

November, 2012

This document describes in general the expectations for students who wish to participate with the team, and for their parents.

### ***Expectations for Students***

#### **Time Commitments**

The time commitment is flexible but significant for any student who wishes to play a meaningful role with the team. During the Build Season (January and February) we normally work on Friday evenings for 3 hours, all day Saturday, and on Sunday afternoon for 3 to 4 hours. Additional work sessions are possible, especially as we approach the "ship date" for the robot. The tournament itself occurs in Manchester, NH for three days -February 28, March 1, March 2.

We **do not** expect any student (or adult) to attend every session; we recognize the demands that people have on their time. Each participant is free to set the level of his/her involvement.

However, experience has shown that if a student attends less than half of the work sessions the experience is not likely to be meaningful. Furthermore, the leadership positions on the team definitely require a steady and reliable presence. Casual attendees will not be placed in leadership positions.

### ***Expectations for Parents***

The degree of involvement by parents is flexible, but it is strongly recommended that parents become involved with the team in some way. This benefits the team, the child, and the family.

Some possible ways that parents can be involved include:

- Participating in work sessions as adult mentors. Participation by a parent very often enhances the experience for the child. Some parents like to work directly with their child; for others just being on the same team is what counts.
- Assisting to provide a simple lunch for the team at our regular Saturday team meeting. (Normally a family would assist **once** during the build season.) These meetings are very interesting and we hope you will plan to attend one or more of them in any case.
- Organizing training in various topic during the build season, especially for the younger kids.
- Helping with transportation and team logistics, especially for the trip to Manchester. Helping other parents to bring children to and from work sessions.
- Helping with fundraising.

- Helping with paperwork and administration.
- Helping their child do research or problem solving outside of normal work sessions.
- Providing expertise, especially in the areas of engineering, programming, web design, publicity.

Parents should realize that we are not a baby-sitting service. Even if parents have strong demands on their time, they should plan to participate in some way if at all possible. Also, the workshop is not a play area, especially when tools are in use. Kids who create risky situations for themselves or others will need to stop; if not they will be asked to leave.

The team does not provide transportation. Parents are responsible for seeing that their child has a way to get to and from work sessions; ride sharing is often possible.

Except for Saturday noon, food **is not** provided by the team. If a child needs to eat at a work session make sure (s)he has the means. All participants should bring water to the work sessions; the water in the building isn't very good.

### ***Age Requirements***

FIRST FRC is basically intended for high school students, but we welcome interested younger members on the team. Many times 7th and 8th graders have made real contributions to the team and have gotten a head start as they head into high school.

We do sometimes find that the younger children are not able to sustain interest over a long workday. We hope to be able to organize some special activities for this group. Any parent contribution in this area would be most welcome.

VTC does have age requirements for using the machine tools. There will be more information about this at the Safety Trainings.

### ***Paperwork, Training, Administration***

It does take a certain amount of paperwork and administration to make the team possible.

- Releases are required by the team itself, by VTC, by BAE, and by FIRST.
- VTC **requires** a Safety Training **every year** for **every student and adult** who wants to operate the machine tools, with a record of attendance.
- FIRST requires all students to register on-line using the "STIMS" system. This is not the easiest system in the world to use, and we count on parents to make sure their child has registered in a timely manner.
- The team collects other information, such as emergency contacts for participants.

We ask all students and their parents to cooperate in completing the necessary paperwork; in past years this has proven much harder than it really should be.

This year:

- No one may operate the machine tools unless they have had the Safety Training.

- No one may be in the work area until the Team 885/VTC releases have been signed.
- Only those who have registered properly with FIRST will be allowed in the pit area at Manchester.

and most importantly:

- No student will be considered for any of the special teams (Drive Team, Scouting Team, Pit Team) unless their STIMS registration, all paperwork, and all required payments have been received by **February 1st**.

## ***Kickoff***

The season kickoff will be on Saturday, January 5, at a conference room at Gifford Hospital. The new challenge arrives by video feed from NASA. It is an exciting time, and all team members should plan to attend. Parents are most welcome.

There will be more information about this as we get close to the time.

## ***Team Finances***

There is no membership fee as such for being on the team. This year we are requiring a payment of \$30 per student to reimburse the team for a Tee-shirt and the cost of the dinner we sponsor in Manchester for our sister team. Parents who plan to attend the event in Manchester should pay for the shirt and dinner as appropriate. This fee can be waived for any family who does not have the means. However, please note that the fee needs to be received (or waived) by February 1 (see above.)

The budget for the team is \$8,000 to \$10,000 per year. Just the entrance fee itself is \$5,000. Other expenses include: parts and supplies, expenses at Manchester, web fees, etc. Many teams spend two or three times what we do.

We raise the necessary funds by asking local businesses, organizations, foundations, and individuals. This year we have received a very generous grant from CRREL in Hanover. If you have some connection to a potential donor, please let us know!

No donation is required from any parent, and your child's role on the team will not be affected in the slightest by a donation or lack thereof. (Only our "Board of Directors" will know who has donated.) However, we hope that parents who have the means consider making a modest donation; it will be a big help.

## ***What to Expect at the Regional Event***

The event is three full days, Thursday, Friday, Saturday - February 28, March 1, March 2. Most team members and many of the parents go, but not necessarily for all three days. A small group takes the robot down on Wednesday night.

The event is at the Verizon Wireless Arena. Nearly everyone who goes has a good time. There are over 50 teams present, each with dozens of team members, fans, parents, teachers, sponsors.

It is very loud, very exciting, especially if we get into the playoffs, as we often do. It is always amazing to see what other teams have done, everybody starting from the same place.

We stay at our "sister" high school, Bishop Guertin. They let us "camp out" there at no cost. There are showers. We cooperate in one or more dinners for both teams. It is an enjoyable moment for everyone. Being able to stay at BG is a real cost savings for the team; our relationship with BG goes back many years.

There is no admission charge to the event. Children need to bring money for breakfast, lunch, and incidentals.

Transportation to and from Manchester is by car pool.

There will be much more information about this as we get closer to the event.

## ***Communications***

Communication with all team members and parents is by Googlegroups. There are no mailed notices. Please make sure we have e-mail addresses for everyone in our records.

If we send out a notice that asks for a response **please respond** one way or the other. A "no, we can't make it" is just as important as "yes, we can.." Also, if you want to ask a question off-topic make a new thread; it is confusing for everyone to jump from topic to topic within the same thread.

Please reply appropriately; please do not automatically hit "reply" to reply to a message because the message goes to everyone. Get the e-mail addresses for key members of your squad. Some other key e-mail addresses include:

Suzy, Charlie Zani	zanivt@gmail.com (general notices, attendance, schedule)
Jon Boette	jboette@gmail.com
Jim Wick	jimwick.vt@gmail.com
Paul Feeney	Paul.Feeney@state.vt.us

## ***Scholarships***

Parents should be aware that there is a very extensive program of college scholarships available for committed members of FIRST teams. The scholarships are provided by the colleges; they know that being on a FIRST team is a strong predictor of success in college. Amounts range from a few thousand dollars to "full ride" scholarships valued at more than \$150,000.

