

NEVERTHELESS, SHE

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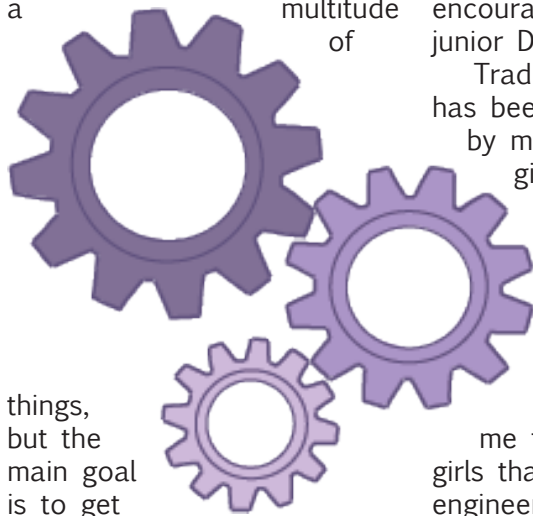
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In the last few years, young women have become more and more involved in their schools, especially in areas that have traditionally been dominated by boys. At Liberty North in particular, young women have been taking the initiative when it comes to engineering with a club called SWENext (Society of Women Engineers).

“SWENext is a club for women who are interested in engineering, which is not what you normally see because engineering is usually with guys. It is really cool to see girls getting involved in that kind of thing,” junior Emilie Dekleijn said.

SWENext a club that does a multitude of



things, but the main goal is to get female students interested and exposed to the many engineering opportunities that

are open to them.

“We do three main things. First, we participate in science and engineering projects. Last year we did battle of the brains which was really successful for us and we did great in that competition. This year, we have been working on robots that we have been bringing to events. The second thing that we do is get in contact with mentors. Our sponsor, Mr. Kisker, brings in lots of professional female engineers to talk to us about possible careers and our futures. The third thing that we do is we reach down. We go to different outreach events at middle schools and elementary schools to encourage schools in STEM,” junior Delaney Clawson said.

Traditionally engineering has been a field dominated by men, but SWENext gives young women an opportunity to see that it is a field they can get involved in as well.

“I think it is important to me because it shows me that there are other girls that are interested in engineering and that it is not just a guy thing like most people think it is,” Dekleijn said.

Liberty North is quite lucky to be able to have a club like SWENext. While SWENext is a national organization, it is hard to find another group like North’s in the area.

“There is not really another significant girls engineering club in the Kansas City area so we are a very unique group because most other schools do not have this,” Clawson said.

For many girls at Liberty North, SWENext is a very important group that has changed their views about the engineering field.

“I think it is important for young women to get involved in engineering because it can teach you a lot and it shows that you are capable of anything concerning science and math. Those are typically viewed as very hard and challenging careers and paths to take, but by being around other people who are interested in the same things, you can see you are not really alone and that there are many different things you can do to get involved. It is important to get into engineering and stuff because it shows that you can take a challenge and that you can rise to those challenges and still succeed,” Clawson said.

A female engineer performs a demonstration for members of SWENext. Within Liberty Public Schools, hands-on demonstrations and learning have been embraced in classrooms. “Students learn to enjoy STEM



topics they might not have chosen to participate in on their own. We are knocking down preconceived notions that ‘I’m not good at math, coding, etc.’ because they are so motivated to solve the problem they don’t mind learning the skill it takes to do so,” Project Lead The Way Teacher Cammy Neth said.

A student at Liberty North also recently founded the Female Empowerment Club to give young women at the school a new sense of pride.

“This club has a lot to do with self-esteem because a lot of girls just do not believe in themselves so they do not do things like speak in public,”

It’s important to O’Hare that all women are given the same opportunities and rise up to try

new things.

“I just want to be able to empower them and give them courage and independence,” junior Alyssa O’Hare said.

While female

Female leadership in clubs at LNHS



Statistic from LNHS administration

empowerment in male-dominated careers is important, female empowerment, in general, is a key focus, and some of the girls at Liberty North have recognized that.

“With my club, in particular, it is important to get to know other girls and make relationships with them and trust them so you have a group where you do not feel insecure and can feel empowered,” O’Hare said.