

Jim Zondag's Woodie Flower's Award 2011

You know it's two days before ship day when you walk into our Botcave and see a caffeinated Canadian punk frantically working with students to assemble an award-worthy robot. Who is this buzzing worker-bee, eh? None other than our very own Jim Zondag.

As the Killer Bee's coach, counselor, and cheerleader, Jim fuels our team with his energy and is a powerful example and leader. A current 33 student, Katherine, states it bee-autifully, "Jim uses his knowledge and skills to cater to each individual student. He is someone that we all look up to." Jim works with students to show, not tell, them how to solve problems. He is constantly looking for chances to inspire, always willing to listen to questions and challenging students to solve problems with minimal guidance. His genius mind works in odd ways, but he always explains in terms that students understand.

Jim encourages communication and spearheads many aspects of the team, but getting students involved in FIRST is what he does best. He takes students to off-season competitions, works with our marketing group to locate and secure sponsors, and makes sure that every team member is involved in the robot-building process. Jim leads a wrap-up session to end every meeting, where students explain the work they accomplished, keeping the whole team on the same page.

Jim is revered for his leadership and unending kindness to other teams, alumni, and mentors. Not a month goes by without Jim promoting FIRST in our community. He is found at almost every Michigan FRC event in yellow shirt and antennae, jumping and cheering like a lunatic. Jim greatly influenced FIRST in Michigan, making competitions more efficient and affordable. He helped establish OCCRA, a local robotics league that encourages students to join FIRST. Jim demonstrates our robots to preschools, elementary, middle, high schools, and colleges. Every year, he introduces new students to FIRST at the Youth Engineering and Science Expo. At the 2007 Novi Kickoff, he was dubbed Outstanding Volunteer. Jim helps numerous FIRSTers with problems ranging from programming and team management, to robot fabrication. Jim helps a group of students lead LabVIEW seminars, teaching programming skills and strategy. This year he even started his own FLL team.

Along with being an awe-inspiring mentor, Jim is an avid evangelist of FIRST's message. He spreads the word of FIRST via television and radio interviews and newspaper articles. He organizes exhibition tournaments,

demos at the Chrysler facility, and writes company press releases. Another mentor of the Killer Bees, Tim Grogan states, "Jim is a genius. He is the key to the Killer Bees' technological amazingness."

Impossible to replicate, Jim Zondag is the spirit of the Killer Bees. One would be hard pressed to find anyone involved in FIRST with as much enthusiasm and devotion as Jim. He donates a large portion of his time not only to our team but to the entire FIRST community. This robotics athlete sweats honey.