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### What Drives Me?

“What drives me?” Before I answer this question, I have to ignore all that I’ve previously learned, ignore what society has taught me, ignore the expectations of others, and look inside myself. When has something felt truly genuine and authentic to me, unafflicted by the demeanors of society and all the self-doubt in my head? I have but only one answer to this question. The concept of math.

Specifically, I’m fascinated by robots. The functionality and reliability of robots make me wonder about the infinite things it’s capable of, only limited by human minds. My amazement first sparked when I was chosen to be on the Robotics team at Juab School District and was appointed team captain a year later. Although I had no prior knowledge of robotics, my basic foundation in math allowed me to catch on rather quickly. Programming the robot in itself requires precise mathematical engineering that moves the robot efficiently and consistently. For example, while programming, a key concept that can determine the outcome of the entire process is geometry. The shape of the wheels, the angles that the robot is traveling, and the perimeter of the robot are all things that need to be considered for it to function properly. This experience led

me to continue my mathematical ventures and expand my plane of interest by focusing on different aspects of math.

After competing at FBLA in Intro to Financial Math and placing 6th at state, I was inspired more than ever to pursue my mathematical endeavors. It has made me realize that there was so much more to math that I've yet to discover and explore. Fueled by my curiosity, I applied to the Summer Illinois Mathematics Camp over the summer to learn different approaches to solving problems. I am also planning to enroll in Trigonometry and Calculus during the school year to further improve my understanding of mathematical concepts. I understand that there are countless possibilities and theories concerning the topic of math. Although I cannot possibly master them all, I believe that by making an effort and traveling the world in quest of more knowledge, I will be able to accomplish my goal of expanding my knowledge. As I dive further down into the hole known as math, I began to realize that I can use my understanding to help others. Specifically, people with autism. People influenced by this disease learn differently, interact differently, and move differently. However, by engineering robots and using them as tools beneficially, we can teach people with autism how to socialize and learn effectively. As stated in *NYTimes*, it says, "Research has found that the robots help improve educational and social skills." This not only proves that robots can change the world for the better, but also make a big difference in our community as well.