

“Find a job you like and you will never work a day in your life.” - Gary Sochanski

One of my greatest takeaways from robotics so far: follow your dreams, and work will become play. Gary Sochanski makes this clear with all the students he has worked with. He does not just tell his students about the importance of FIRST, but he radiates the spirit of it. Mr. Sochanski is an electrical engineer. He is a parent. He is a mentor. He is an AdamBot. An AdamBot whose impact is unmeasurable with his help through FIRST, FLL, FTC, OCCRA, Relay for Life, and more. An AdamBot who has inspired every student with whom he has worked. An AdamBot who has cemented his legacy.

To begin, I want to give an image of Mr. Sochanski specifically within the AdamBots. For the past 13 years, Mr. Sochanski has utilized his experience in engineering and STEM to break down ideas into easy-to-understand pieces. He explains how each part contributes to the project and uses his engineering experience to show possible real-world applications. Mr. Sochanski has created an inclusive environment within robotics that has made students comfortable and eager to learn, which has inspired many to pursue a STEM-related career.

In addition, Mr. Sochanski has been essential in helping our team with community outreach. For example, last year, we were contacted by “Leader Dogs for the Blind,” asking us to fix some of their puppy incubators for newborn puppies. Mr. Sochanski took on this challenge and is working to improve all puppy incubators while ensuring that students are helping with the process. As a result, Mr. Sochanski is providing students with an example of FIRST knowledge application in a real-world situation.

Mr. Sochanski has also been an integral part of the FIRST community, encouraging many students and alums to volunteer at FIRST events. Additionally, he helps students beyond the AdamBots by encouraging team members to mentor younger FIRST-level teams such as FLL and FTC; Mr. Sochanski helps students with their mentorships by assisting students with any issues that arise within their FLL and FTC teams. He would come to the school frequently during the off-season to help students understand new methods for applying STEM knowledge to real-world scenarios. To illustrate, he helped us incorporate the AdamBots family into our high school spirit by helping the team develop a T-Shirt cannon for our school’s football games, showing students and fans a real-world scenario involving STEM knowledge.

Mr. Sochanski represents what it means to be a FIRST mentor. He helps students discover by breaking complex ideas down into small parts. He helps students innovate by letting them put their spin on every piece they work on. He helps students make an impact by showing them real-world applications. He ensures that every student feels included in STEM education - within our team and in the FIRST community. Lastly, Mr. Sochanski ensures that there is a fun environment within robotics!