



Gailey created a keychain using a 3D printer.

Reported by: Madeline Jones

Features Section Editor

**T**he sound coming from the 3D printer radiates throughout room 415. There are a multitude of discussions from people around the room about their projects. The bright light from the projector shines as students continue to develop new ideas for solving problem statements.

Freshman Amber Gailey engages in Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM) related activities in order to accomplish her goal of becoming an engineer despite the stigma against females in STEM careers.

"Amber is an excellent student. She is intrinsically motivated to learn, and displays a quiet confidence in class that screams of her bright future," Engineering teacher Gary Pierson said.

Gailey is a part of the Robotics team, as well as Women's Empowerment Club, The Genders, Sexualities and Allies Club (GSA) and competitive theater.

"I really like competitive theater because it helps me get out of my bubble and talk to more people and present in front of people. Robotics is really fun too because I met some really cool people, and I'm learning some new skills related to the field I want to go into," Gailey said.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, women make up roughly 16% of engineers and architects in 2023.

"I think females should have more representation and more respect in STEM and be more viewed as equals. Everybody should realize we're all here to do the same thing," Gailey said.

About 15 out of the 30 members of the Liberty Robotics team are female, and they found it increasingly

important for girls to engage with outreach opportunities in order to help close the gender gap.

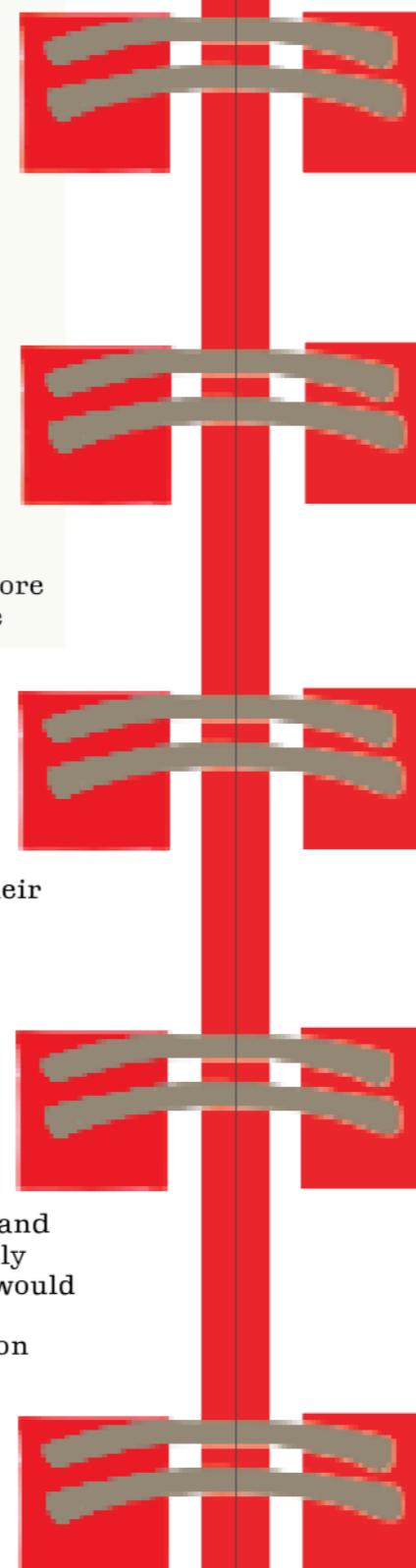
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According to Dyslexia Awareness, over 50% of NASA employees are reported as dyslexic. They are intentionally sought after because of their excellent problem-solving abilities and 3D and spatial awareness.

"I like math more than ELA because I have dyslexia, so it's harder for me to do ELA," Gailey said. "I just enjoy math more and I also like the technical side so I thought engineering, and a little bit more specifically mechanical engineering, would be fun."

According to Construction Briefing, over the course of a decade, 70% of women in engineering left the profession while only 35% of men left.

"We're (women) here and we exist, and it's not 'oh wow you want to do this, you are so special and unique. A lot of women don't get



the opportunities to be able to follow their dreams in many different ways, not just in STEM," Gailey said. "In a lot of places, women don't get as many opportunities as they deserve."

According to AAUW, there hasn't been any feasible research showing any cognitive biological differences between males and females in math. However, many girls lose confidence in math by the time they're in third grade, while males are likely to state they're strong in math by second grade.

"If women entering the workforce don't have mentors of the same gender, they are too often, and too early, leaving the field," Pierson said. "However, if these stigmas continue to whittle, the number of girls staying in the program, like Amber, will increase over time, which means the younger generations will be more likely to see themselves in the field, and stay."

The SWE-KC (Society of Women Engineers) will be



Freshman Amber Gailey on November 10 while working on her assignments for her STEM classes, she is in STEM activities because she enjoys it. "I really like numbers. I like designing things and I like understanding how things work," Said Gailey.

Photo by Iyari Hyde

hosting an event called Introduce a Girl To Engineering Day (IGED) on Feb. 21. IGED is an outreach program in which introduces middle school and high school students to a variety of engineering disciplines through speakers, discussions and hands-on activities provides this mentorship.

"STEM fields need more women for sure," Pierson said. "We definitely see a



predominance of women going into the biomedical fields, but I would love to see more girls taking my classes and planning to study engineering at university. A diverse set of ideas will propel us well into the future."

More information about IGED can be found with the link below.



[IGED](#)

