

underwater DREAMS

Underwater Dreams, narrated by Michael Peña, is the true story of how the sons of undocumented Mexican immigrants learned how to build underwater robots. And go up against MIT in the process.

This is how it transpired. Two energetic high school science teachers, on a whim, decided to enter their high school, a Title I school where most of the students live in poverty, into a sophisticated underwater robotics competition sponsored by the NASA and the Office of Naval Research, among others. Only four boys signed up for the competition, but once assembled, with enthusiasm and verve, they started calling oceanic engineers and military contractors for design help. They were advised that their underwater robot would require glass syntactic flotation foam. Short on money, all they could afford was PVC pipe from Home Depot. And some duct tape.

After a few test runs of their robot (aptly named Stinky), the team was confident that they would not come in last at the event, so they all piled into a beat up van to head to the competition. The boys entered the main pool area, seeing college teams in matching gear, with robots sponsored by the likes of Exxon Mobil. Feeling a bit overwhelmed, the boys put Stinky in the water for a test run. Only the PVC did not hold up. The robot leaked. And sunk.

The boys put their heads together and hilariously came up with a brilliant solution. 12 hours later, armed with 8 super-plus tampons to plug the leak in Stinky's mechanical housing, the robot was lowered into the pool again. Only this time, Stinky performed admirably.

Fast forward to a shocking result. This rag-tag high school team of undocumented Mexican boys did what no one thought possible. The competition, however, was only the beginning. These boys forged a legacy that could not have been imagined.

Narrated by Michael Peña. Written and Directed by Mary Mazzio. Executive Producers: Michael Peña, Laurie Tisch, Jackie Bezos, Mike Bezos, Hope Pascucci, Mike Pascucci, Jeb Bush, Jr., Christine Vachon, and Sarah Lenti. Funded by the Bezos Family Foundation and the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund, with additional support from the Virginia Piper Charitable Trust and others.

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