**Bees: the Amazons of the insect world**

By Ashley Chronis, De La Salle Holy Cross College Junior

If you want to know what girl power means, just look at the Amazons. These women from Greek mythology were an all-girl tribe, living almost entirely without men. Or, you can look at bees. These Amazons of the insect world are pure girl power. Whatever needs to be done in the bee world, gets done through girl power …

Here are the daily chores on the girl-powered hive’s to-do list:

1. Build the hive

Girl bees are the architects and builders of the hive. As they mature their wax glands produce wax which they use to go and build the honeycomb and cap pupae.

1. Clean the hive

Since bees love cleanliness there are bees that tidy the hive and even find and dispose of dead bees and other dirty things.

1. Cool the hive

Hive coolers are quite important. When the hive gets too hot, these bees fan their wings to cool down the hive. Some even go outside and fan fresh air in to the hive.

1. Fetch water

Some bees go outside and collect water from rocks, the edge of ponds and puddles. Water is desperately needed when it is really hot outside; if it gets too hot, in the hive the larvae could die, so the bees spread a thin layer of water over the eggs to keep them cool.

1. Secure the premises

For a bee to become a guard bee, it needs to develop a mature stinger so it can sting any threats. These bees are very important, because without them the hive would be invaded or destroyed. These tough girl guard bees stand guard at all of the hive’s, entrances only allowing the hive’s other bees in, not any from another hive.

1. Collect food

Forager bees are the most well-known bees. These bees are must find pollen and bring it back to the hive. Since forager bees fly around a lot, their wings become quite worn and tattered, so becoming a forager bees is one of the last jobs a girl bee will get.

1. Put the collected pollen away

Since the girls have collected the pollen, they now have to pack the pollen into the honeycomb and make it into a ball shape. This is important because when the pollen ball is complete, the queen bee lays an egg on the ball and a bee seals the egg in until it hatches.

1. Keep the queen happy

Some bees are considered lucky because they get the important job of looking after the queen. The job consists of cleaning and feeding the queen.

1. Feed the drones

Some bees have to look after the boys. These worker bees have to feed and clean the lazy drones because all the drones can do is reproduce, talk about a really dependent boy. But without the drones, bees would be extinct, (and so would we) so feeding the boys is just a small price to pay.

1. Make more bees

The queen has the most important job and that is making sure that the hive keep growing by laying lots of eggs. All the queen does all day is lay eggs and basically lives a cushy life for to two to five years.

Now, compare the worker bee’s to-do list, which is really busy, to a drone’s to-do list …

1. Party

Drones get waited on hand and foot (or should that be wing and sting) and are only there for reproduction. Sounds like the ideal life for them … until the girls start running out of food. Then the boys get kicked out (sorry, boys!).

Bees really are the Amazons of the insect world in their own way. But there is one way we mustn’t ever let them imitate the Amazons: by becoming extinct. Without bees, we would become extinct. Scientists predict that humans would struggle to survive without bees. Since the animals we eat depend on the plants bees pollinate, we really need bees. If bees die out, we die with them, so we need to protect the bees. They are the reason for the colour in our lives.

(693 words)