

# REBELLUG

by Jetro de Chateau and Danny Dirienzo

## **What is the name of your community?**

### **Where does the name come from?**

My community's name is RebellUG. It is named after the Rebel Alliance from Star Wars, since the community was founded by primarily Star Wars MOC builders. LUG stands for LEGO Users Group.

### **When and how did the idea for your community come about and what was its original purpose?**

RebellUG was originally just a name created for a group of six LEGO Star Wars YouTubers who partnered together for a collaboration called Clones Alone. Following this collab's release, myself and the other builders flew out to Brickworld Chicago 2016 for our first ever in-person meetup. It was after this convention that we decided to formalize RebellUG as a community and began recruiting new members. Its original purpose was to bring together Star Wars MOC builders to work on collaborations.

### **To what degree has that goal been fulfilled and how has it evolved over time?**

Since its inception, RebellUG has successfully

published ten unique collaborations—far surpassing what we originally envisioned. The goal of RebellUG has since evolved beyond collaborations to also include more opportunities for its members and the greater MOC-building community. This includes hosting contests, running monthly building challenges, and organizing convention displays. A great emphasis is put on providing social opportunities for members and fans.

### **How many people are working on the site and how did you meet?**

The RebellUG leadership team consists of 24 positions held by 11 different members. Members are able to occupy multiple positions; I myself occupy three. Most of us met virtually or at LEGO conventions. The members occupying leadership roles vary from time to time. Of the six founding members of RebellUG, two of us—myself and Spencer Hubert—still occupy leadership roles. The most essential positions are as follows: Design Lead (Spencer Hubert, US), Operations Lead (Noah Hennings, Germany), Collab Lead (Simon Liu, Canada), LAN Ambassador (Danny Dirienzo, US), Social Media Curator (Luka Grković, Croatia), Admissions and Retention Lead (Olav Grimstad,

Norway), Web Admin (Spencer Hubert, US), and Community Engagement Lead (Jet Ochoa, US). RebellUG's leadership thrives from our diversity, as seen by the five different countries represented in our key leadership roles.

### **What plans/goals do you have for the future of the community?**

RebellUG is currently working towards creating more member benefits, such as partnerships with BrickLink stores and additional member-only competitions. We have also put an increased effort into our public presence. Led by the community engagement committee and community engagement lead Jet Ochoa, RebellUG has fostered a public community environment in the "FOL Hangout" section of our Discord server. Recent additions to this include the "2hr monthly build challenge", "FOL Friday", and "Spotlight Sunday". The ability for FOLs (fans of LEGO) to share work in progress pictures of their builds and receive direct feedback from RebellUG members and community members has been the most rewarding part of this initiative.

### **How is your community funded?**

RebellUG is funded by the profits from our





online instructions store and our merchandise sales. Occasionally, we will also enter into a sponsorship deal with a third-party LEGO company, such as those that make custom printed figures, and that provides additional LUG funds. It is also important to note that many of our activities would not be possible without the support provided from LEGO as part of their Recognized LEGO Online Community program.

**How has Covid-19 changed/affected your community?**

As an online-based community, COVID-19 has had a minimal effect on RebellUG. It has cancelled nearly every convention that we regularly display at; however this has given us the opportunity to put together more online activities both for our LUG and for the greater community.

**How would you describe your relationship with LEGO?**

I have had a long-standing, loving relationship with both the toy and the company LEGO. Since I can remember, I have always been collecting LEGO sets. In July of 2012, I started my own Star Wars YouTube channel—Lego Buff Productions—in which I primarily focused on building large LEGO Star Wars battle scenes. To this day, I continue to collect and build. RebellUG was founded in 2015 and became officially recognized in 2018. It was then that I began my relationship with LEGO as a company in my occupation of the LAN ambassador role. Since then, I have had the opportunity to work at my local LEGO retail store as well as collaborate through RebellUG with the

LEGO marketing team on events held at the LEGO booth at Star Wars celebration 2019. All of my interactions with the company and the toy have been exceptional.

**What changes/improvements would you like to see in that relationship?**

I look forward to further growing my relationship with LEGO. It would be great to develop more connections within the different functions of the company. A long time bucket list item of mine has been to take a trip to Denmark to visit its headquarters and go on the highly coveted Inside Tour.

**Can you share any anecdotes about your community?**

Brickworld Chicago quickly became the main LEGO convention in the United States where RebellUG would display. Since I live in the

Chicago suburbs, my house became the hotel for the RebellUG members who attended, with most members flying in from other states and countries. My house became known as the “Buff ‘n Breakfast”, named after my YouTube channel, Lego Buff Productions. I have many great memories from these stays including creating LEGO YouTuber diss-tracks, jamming out to the video game Rockband, and crazy morning alarms and “wake-up routines”.

**How many members does your community have?**

RebellUG currently has 55 members across 10 different countries, though this tends to change every month. We vote on new member applications at our monthly meetings and our inactive members decommission to the role of Legacy Member.

**How much time do you spend to keep your community running?**

It is difficult to pinpoint exactly how much time is spent on keeping RebellUG running. When we have a collaboration launch or are in the middle of a community contest, I will often be putting in up to three hours each day. Outside of these occasional circumstances, I usually spend 30 minutes to an hour each day interacting. It is important to note that I view “keeping the community running” as interacting with RebellUG members in social chats in addition to administrative work. The interactions present within the community and the relationships formed serve as the glue that holds RebellUG together.

