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Service Learning Project for Sister Cities Girlchoir

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As part of the MAPP Applied Positive Interventions course at the University of Pennsylvania, student teams are paired with a service organization to identify needs and opportunities for positive change and provide recommendations informed by positive psychology research. Our team collaborated with the Sister Cities Girlchoir ("SCG"), a non-profit organization empowering girls to transform the world through choir music and performances and sisterhood. Following a situation analysis and literature review, our team generated an application plan intended to enhance one aspect of the weekly sessions with the girls. As part of its weekly 2-hour choir practice, SCG conducts Sister Circle Time, a brief time of roughly 25 minutes with the girls aimed at building supportive and positive relationships. A review of literature focused on resilience, character and leadership development, achievement and mastery, and connection led the team to propose 12 activities to the service partner. Three of these activities were further developed into a curriculum using an outline provided by SCG. Each of the recommended activities is designed to foster character development, gratitude, and belonging, while building positive relationships and connections between the girls.

Keywords

adolescent, youth, positive psychology, character, gratitude, positive relationships, resilience

Disciplines

Other Psychology | Theory and Philosophy

A Positive Psychology Service Learning Project with Sister Cities Girlchoir

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As part of the MAPP Applied Positive Interventions course at the University of Pennsylvania, student teams are paired with a service organization to identify needs and opportunities for positive change and provide recommendations informed by positive psychology research. Our team collaborated with the Sister Cities Girlchoir ("SCG"), a non-profit organization empowering girls to transform the world through choir music and performances and sisterhood. Following a situation analysis and literature review, our team generated an application plan intended to enhance one aspect of the weekly sessions with the girls. As part of its weekly 2-hour choir practice, SCG conducts Sister Circle Time, a brief time of roughly 25 minutes with the girls aimed at building supportive and positive relationships. A review of literature focused on resilience, character and leadership development, achievement and mastery, and connection led the team to propose 12 activities to the service partner. Three of these activities were further developed into a curriculum using an outline provided by SCG. Each of the recommended activities is designed to foster character development, gratitude, and belonging, while building positive relationships and connections between the girls.

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Situation Analysis

Breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty is a noble cause, and an important one. Children who spend at least half of their lives in poverty are 37% less likely to be consistently employed as adults, thus perpetuating the cycle of poverty (Poverty in Early Childhood, 2016). 2016). Of the many organizations working to break the cycle of poverty, one stands out for its focused and unique approach. Sister Cities Girlchoir (SCG) is an organization that is focused solely on girls from inner cities in Philadelphia, PA, Camden, NJ, and Baltimore, MD. SCG uses the magic of group musical performance to empower girls to reach their full potential and break the cycle of intergenerational poverty (Sister Cities Girlchoir, 2017). Empowering women and girls has been identified as one of the most reliable ways to break the cycle of poverty worldwide (Dasgupta, 2014). Through empowerment, girls can achieve their maximum potential, which can include not only finishing high school, a challenge for many in poverty, but also going on to college, thereby raising their standard of living and breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty (Chaaban & Cunningham, 2011). The twelfth class of the University of Pennsylvania's Master in Applied Positive Psychology (MAPP) program, Yellow Cohort, worked with SCG to enhance a specific component of its program, Sister Circle Time, focused on empowering girls from at-risk inner city communities through building stronger connections, character, and resilience.

Background of Service Sector

The 2015 rate of poverty in the United States was 13.5 percent according to the U.S. Census Bureau (UC Davis Center for Poverty Research, 2016). Of the ten largest U.S. urban

.areas, Philadelphia has the highest rate of deep poverty, defined as a family of four living on an annual income of $11,700.00 or less (Lubrano, 2013). Issues related to poverty include partner violence (Cunradi, Caetano, Clark & Schafer, 2000), increased the likelihood to become involved with crime, and poorer quality of health (Holzer, Schanzenbach, Duncan, & Ludwig, 2007).   While there have been number of ways proposed to help reduce poverty such as economic development, supporting maternal health, and increased social justice, a 2011 World Bank report examined the cost of excluding girls from productive employment in developing nations, concluding that investing in girls effectively increases annual gross domestic product (Chaaban & Cunningham, 2011).   This economic theory has been called the Girl Effect.   The SCG, headquartered in Philadelphia, and branching out to other poverty stricken communities, is a strong believer in the Girl Effect and has adopted its core concept of empowering girls.

The Organization

The Sister Cities Girlchoir is a non-profit organization founded in 2012 by Alysia Lee. Lee is a classically trained mezzo-soprano, performer and music teacher.   She graduated from the Sistema Fellowship at New England Conservatory in 2011. Today, Lee is the Founding Music Teaching Artist for SCG (Sister Cities Girlchoir, 2017).   SCG serves communities in Camden and Philadelphia through the Philadelphia location and Baltimore through the most recent location open early 2017 (A. Lee, personal communication, January 23, 2017).

The mission of the SCG is to build communities of musicians that empower girls to transform the world. The organization strives to achieve this by building resilience, leadership, mastery, and connection thought the choral practice.   SCG believes this empowerment will help break the intergenerational poverty cycle (Sister Cities Girlchoir, 2017).

SCG is modeled after El Sistema, a publicly financed music education program in Venezuela with a social change mission. There are over 50 Sistema-inspired programs in the United States, of which SCG is one (A. Lee, personal communication, January 23, 2017). Lee's decision to make SCG exclusively for girls was influenced by the Girl Effect theory (Chaaban & Cunningham, 2011).

SCG has two programs. One partners with schools to provide boys and girls with an afterschool choir program. The second program works with communities. This is a girls-only program where the girls from Camden, Philadelphia and Baltimore attend choir practice on Saturdays. Girls of all ages, from Kindergarten to 6th grade, participate in the SCG community program. The girls are divided into three groups according to their age, K-2nd grade, 3rd and 4th grade and 5th and up with about 30 girls per group. All three groups have class simultaneously, thus, there are about 90 girls practicing together (A. Lee, personal communication, January 23, 2017).

In addition to the two-hour choral Saturday practice of the community choirs, girls engage in an activity called Sister Circle Time. Sister Circle Time is a space to create connections, sisterhood, and solidarity, both between the girls and between the teachers and the students. It is also a space to smooth out any relationship issues that might come up, like they do in any group work. Sister Circle Time is a weekly activity with an effective duration of about 25 minutes (A. Lee, personal communication, January 23, 2017).

Sister Circle Time is led by the teachers. Each class has two teachers, a choral practice teacher and a piano player. The teachers are professional musicians hired and paid by SCG. . Lee plans the activities for Sister Circle Time, models them for the teachers, and creates a teaching packet. The SCG activities follow a yearly program that correlates to the school year.

The first half of the program year is focused on the girls getting to know each other. Sister

Circle Time can consist of the full group working together or breaking into smaller groups, often

by age, with small group work and reporting back to the larger group. Varying the work

dynamic is important for Sister Circle Time as it broadens the types of activities that can be

implemented. Some activities might be more beneficial working in the larger group, while

others can be age-sensitive and more appropriate to implement in smaller groups, segregated by

age (A. Lee, personal communication, January 23, 2017).

Lee has detected opportunities to further build Sister Circle Time, including:

- Developing an overarching plan that ties the full year together. SCG follows the
  school year calendar, which means that in September when the year starts, there is
  a stronger need for integration as new girls join the choir. By January bonds
  between the girls have begun to form and Sister Circle Time can focus on other
  topics like building internal resources for personal resilience.

- Creating activities that build on prior weeks' activities to strengthen learning and
  be an incentive to attendance.

- Bringing positive psychology fundamentals and exercises to Sister Circle Time,
  preferably though a hands-on approach.

- Teaching tools to help the girls build resilience and strengthen their decision
  making abilities.

Application of Positive Psychology

The teaching team at Sister Cities Girlchoir believes in the power of the message through

song, as well as in the beneficial effects to the individual, the group, the audience, and the larger

community. They select music with meaningful and purposeful lyrics, from composers who the

girls can relate to, and the girls occasionally amend the lyrics to send their desired message. .
Sister Cities Girlchoir is aspiring to ensure it can make a difference in the lives of these girls by
supporting their growth toward their best possible selves, empowering them to overcome the
cycle of inter-generational poverty, and leave positive impacts on the world. It is with this goal
and context in mind, that SCG seeks to identify relevant concepts from the field of positive
psychology to its work with the girls.

In the field of positive psychology, Seligman (2011) has put forth the PERMA model of
well-being that consists of five pillars: positive emotion, relationship, meaning, accomplishment
and engagement. Analyzing SCG's potential impact on the well-being of the girls through this
framework, it is reasonable to speculate it is a source of well-being for them. The girls can
increase positive emotions through the singing and togetherness. They can experience
engagement through the mastery of the choral practices. They can build meaningful
relationships with each other and non-parental adults like the teachers. They have a chance to
experience achievement through presentations and public appearances. And, they have a chance
to give back to their community through performances which can give them meaning.
Furthermore, Croom (2015) states that participation in music practice can add to each of the
aspects of wellbeing.

The Sister Circle Time of SCG is an excellent example of how the Girl Effect will have
lasting benefits for the girls. Considering the potential impact on well-being SCG's choral
practices is having and in discussions with Lee, it was determined to focus the positive
psychology action plan on the Sister Circle Time program of the Sister Cities Girlchoir, and not
on the choral practice. Positive psychology can be further used to help facilitate growth, build
connections between the girls, build individual and group resilience, and build character.

Literature Review

The situation analysis revealed that the choir practice of the SCG is likely to be a source of well-being for the participants.   Thus, it was determined that it would be most impactful for the organization to create positive psychology interventions for Sister Circle Time. The following literature review was conducted to determine the best way to supplement the curriculum of Sister Circle Time of the Girlchoir.   Several topics were reviewed to determine what would be an effective action plan.   The topics reviewed include resilience, character and leadership, connections and achievement of mastery.

Resilience

As the body of research on resilience has continued to grow, various strategies for cultivating resilience, specifically in younger populations, have been explored.

Resilience has been defined as the ability to positively adjust when faced with or following adversities or challenges (Masten, Cutuli, Herbers, & Reed, 2009), and the ability to bounce back and adapt (Reivich & Shatté, 2002).   Masten et al. (2009) explain that resilience develops in childhood throughout the usual developmental stages.   Reivich & Shatté (2002) identified a set of six core resilience competencies which contribute to an individual's ability to effectively bounce back from adversity: emotional awareness and regulation, impulse control, optimism, flexible and accurate thinking, empathy and connection, and self-efficacy.

To cultivate resilience in children, researchers propose strategies that focus on preventing risk (i.e. neighborhood crime reduction), improving access to resources (i.e. parent education), mobilizing processes (i.e. building self-efficacy) or creating opportunities to access healthy extracurricular activities (Masten et al. 2009).   Opportunities for resilience-building strategies can be incorporated into the existing Sister Circle Time component of the Sister Cities Girlchoir.

Mobilizing processes can have a lasting impact as it is a lifestyle change or one that can build over time. Fredrickson's "positive ratio" represents the ratio of positive to negative emotions we experience, and increasing one's level of positive emotions to increase this positive ratio is a strategy to increase resilience (Fredrickson, 2009). Other strategies suggested, include fostering mentor-type relationships, building self-efficacy, encouraging friendships in pro-social activities, and support of cultural traditions (Masten et al., 2009). Supporting the development of positive relationships can be conducted in a variety of ways, which will be discussed in the *Connections* section of this review.

As previously mentioned, Seligman's (2011) PERMA theory of well-being consists of positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment.   Each of the five pillars of the PERMA model contribute to wellbeing.   Positive emotions include measures of happiness and life satisfaction.   Engagement is described as an experience where ones loses track of time or is fully absorbed in the activity at hand. Positive relationships include sharing acts of kindness. Meaning occurs when one feels the sense of belonging to something greater than oneself (Seligman, 2011).

Fredrickson's broaden and build theory can also be incorporated to help build more positivity with activities using visualization, acts of noticing kindness, and counting blessings (Fredrickson, 2009). The teachers can be taught to reinforce optimism, use a language of strengths, help create opportunities for the girls' success by reinforcing the core values that they believe in the students (Blankstein & Guetzloe, 2000), and to build and model resilience in themselves (Reivich & Shatté, 2002).

Character and Leadership

One of the aims of SCG, as shared with this team, is to develop character and leadership skills. According to the Stanford Center on Adolescence, there is limited scientifically validated information on the cognitive mechanisms by which character skills necessary for success are developed in adolescents (Stanford Center on Adolescence, n.d.). A review of the existing literature indicates a relationship between the development of character and leadership skills, considering that the development of leadership skills is dependent on a strong sense of self-identity and self-esteem, which can be a result of character education (Kokotsaki & Hallam, 2007; Teasley, Tyson, & House, 2007).

Through their program of group music-making, including its component of building positive relationships among the girls, SCG has created a strong base from which to educate for and develop character skills in the girls it serves. Music-making, particularly group music-making, has been reported to positively enhance self-esteem, self-confidence, social skills, feelings of self-achievement, overall satisfaction, and the development of personal skills including mutual respect and accountability (Kokotsaki & Hallam, 2007; Yin So, 2013). SCG has laid the foundation for the development of leadership skills and their role character development.

How do we develop character in adolescents? The Stanford Center on Adolescence is in the process of empirically verifying the actual mechanisms by which character develops in adolescence (Stanford Center on Adolescence, n.d.). There is other literature, however, which reports on the results of character development education of adolescents. It is important to first understand why the development of character during this stage of life is important. Adolescence is the main transition period between two major life stages. First is the transition from

elementary school to middle or high school, second is the beginning of the transition from childhood to adulthood. The education and development of character strengths can provide a structure to these major life transitions and is associated with positive outcomes including heightened subjective well-being, fewer symptoms of depression, increase in tolerance and kindness, and the development of leadership skills (Shoshani & Slone, 2012).

Character education can help develop a strong sense of personal and moral identity, providing a foundation for motivational strength and a clear purpose in life. Development of a purpose in life begins to occur during adolescence; character strengths education during adolescence can help create a moral identity, thereby guiding the development of purpose in life (Qashmer, 2016). Character education and moral education naturally overlap, the latter being an outcome of the former. Overall, considering the impact character education can have on moral identity, a sense of purpose, and self-esteem, character education is important in preparing adolescents for the challenges they will face in adulthood (Qashmer, 2016).

A program focused on music-making, which develops a sense of self-achievement, self-confidence, personal relationship skills and enhances self-esteem is a natural format for character education (Kokotsaki & Hallam, 2007). Character education, which is naturally focused on building the traits which provide life satisfaction, is naturally aligned with the concepts of positive psychology, which can inform the methods by which we educate for character (Köse, 2015).

Park and Peterson (2006), both well-recognized for their work in the positive psychology movement, recommended a character education program focused on the *Values in Action* Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS), specifically the version designed for youth (VIA-Youth). . While an assessment such as the VIA-Youth is an excellent way to determine each adolescent's

individual strengths profile, that may not be achievable in an after-school or extra-curricular program. Proctor and colleagues (2011) posit that a comprehensive character strengths education program, such as one based on the entire VIA spectrum, may be even more beneficial by enabling students to explore their own identity in the context of the full range of 24 strengths (Proctor et al., 2011). In this way, adolescents are able to understand and explore the all the character strengths, self-selecting those which they already identify with and learning to spot strengths in others (Proctor et al., 2011). Character education fosters the development of moral ideals and a moral identity, intrinsic motivation, and a sense of purpose in life critical for the ultimate transition to adulthood (Qashmer, 2016; Shoshani & Slone, 2012).

Achievement and Mastery

A significant component of achievement relies on how it is defined and measured at the individual, social, and organizational levels. In the context of our service organization, Sister Cities Girlchoir, it is important to consider how participating girls *perceive* their ability to succeed, as well as how success is evaluated in their environments. In establishing definitions of success, we can understand the ways in which to reframe negative beliefs about the self and better determine strategies for succeeding across contexts.

Students' perception that the purpose of academic engagement is to develop and improve their knowledge and mastery has been associated with a range of positive outcomes, including increased academic self-efficacy, a preference for difficult tasks and persistence with such tasks, an incremental view of intelligence, liking of school, and positive general well-being (Ames 1992). Self-efficacy is a major influence on academic achievement in a variety of ways: children's beliefs in their capacity to regulate their own learning and academic attainments contributed to scholastic achievement both independently and through promoting high academic

aspirations and prosocial behavior and reducing vulnerability to feelings of helplessness and depression (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996; Pajares, & Schunk, 2001). Strategy instruction and verbalization, social models, performance and attributional feedback, and performance-contingent rewards have also been shown to positively increase self-efficacy (Bandura et al, 1996; Schunk, 1995).

Learning goals that are specific, short-term, and viewed as challenging but attainable are more effective in building self-efficacy in students than are goals that are general, long-term, or viewed as unattainable (Pajares, & Schunk, 2001). Current research on achievement goals generally includes three types of goals: mastery, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance. When pursuing mastery goals, individuals tend to rely on internal frames of reference to judge success and failure at a task, whereas performance goals rely on social comparison. Mastery goal structure places value on developing competence and is more closely associated with students' beliefs and behaviors, while performance goals place value on demonstrating competence through outperforming others or surpassing normative standards, where performance-avoidance goals are pursued to avoid appearing incompetent or less competent than others (Patrick, Kaplan, & Ryan, 2011). Extrinsic rewards or impositions can undermine intrinsic motivation and this depleted sense of autonomy creates internal conflict which has the potential to reduce our sense of self through the externalization of focus, which can be detrimental to our well-being (Brown & Ryan, 2015).

In the context of positive interventions, intrinsically motivated, self-concordant activities increase the frequency of engagement and lead to better outcomes in several domains of behavior change (Schueller, 2014). In studies on self-regulated learning strategies, girls displayed more goal-setting and planning strategies and surpassed boys in their ability to structure their

environment for optimal learning (Pajares, 2002). Strengths-oriented approaches have shown to

bring about more sustainable change than weakness-oriented ones (Schueller, 2014), and

strengths-informed goal-setting exercises can be a great way to enhance the efficacy of goal-

setting activities. Strategies for goal-setting can incorporate a number of positive psychology

constructs; for example, determining core strengths using the VIA-Youth (Park & Peterson,

2006; viacharacter.org) can be used to supplement goal-setting activities as a way to increase

self-efficacy and contribute to successful outcomes and an increased sense of mastery.

Connection

Another vital pillar for SCG is building connections. In addition to building resilience,

developing character and leadership, and cultivating mastery and achievement, the Sister Cities

Girlchoir can be a space for the girls to foster high-quality relationships with their peers and with

non-parental adults, including teachers. SCG deliberately implements activities to enhance the

quality of the relationships between the parties (A. Lee, personal communication, January 23,

2017). Lee hopes to gain tools to use in the Sister Circle Time to further foster positive

relationships.

Strong and healthy relationships are particularly important considering three characteristics

of this population, the specific age group, the gender and the communities they belong to. We

will briefly examine the benefits of connection from these three angles. Furthermore, strong

connections build resilience.

Regarding the age group, social connections that the adolescents are building now, not only

increase their current well-being, but also will have an impact on their well-being over time

(Jose, Ryan, & Pryor, 2012). Furthermore, research points to strong friendships, or peer crowd

affiliations, being a protective agent against social anxiety and depression in adolescents (La

Greca & Moore Harrison, 2005). Lee's objective to have a positive long term impact on the girl's lives can be in part accomplished by the fostering high-quality in the bonds between the girls.

Regarding gender, Lee worries about negative competitive same-sex relationship patterns that the girls might see in the media. She wants to create a sisterhood of support and for the girls to learn to have positive same-sex relationships (A. Lee, personal communication, January 23, 2017). Research seems to support her concerns. A study carried by scholars from McGill University points to adolescent girls having more negative reactions than adolescent males to achieving more than their same sex friend (Benenson & Schinazi, 2004). Considering the possibility that the choir will, even unwillingly, have some competition, it is important to mitigate the negative reactions girls can have to this though relationship building activities and interventions.

Girls and women seem to encounter more difficulties in their same-sex relationships. Another study carried out with males and females between the ages of 10 and 15 points to females' current relationship with the closest friend being of shorter duration than those of males. Furthermore, more females than males had already done something to hurt their friendship. At the same time, females reported more distress than males when considering a possible end to their friendships. Female closest same-sex relationships seem to be more fragile than those of males (Benenson & Christakos, 2003).

This fragility makes SCG's connection-building goal slightly more difficult to achieve, but no less important. These bonds can help the girls build confidence at this crucial age. . Empirical evidence points to girls with high-quality friendships reporting lower eating pathologies and less body dissatisfaction than girls with lower quality friendships (Sharpe,

Treasure, & Schmidt, 2014). Through the friendships fostered in SCG, girls can build protective barriers against low self-image.

As mentioned before, many of the girls involved in SCG come from at-risk communities. . A longitudinal study collected data from birth until the age of 16 from a diverse population (both males and females, African American and Caucasian), who were at-risk of violence from family or caregiver. This study supports the idea that friendships, peer intimacy, and companionship can have a mitigating effect on this type of adversity. Relationships can help build the resilience needed for positive school engagement outcomes. Peer conflict, however, exacerbated the effects of adverse childhood circumstances on dropout from school (Moses & Villodas, 2017)

Considering the mentioned benefits that high-quality relationships can have in adolescent females that may come from at-risk communities, we consider relationship building is the most important component of the SCG experience for the girls. For this reason, we feel any activity or intervention implemented in the Sister Circle Time component of SCG must have relationship building at its core.

Our subsequent action plan will focus strongly on building connections, in addition to strategies for cultivating resilience, developing character and leadership skills, and mastery attaining a sense of mastery and achievement as a way to enhance the wellbeing of the girls participating in Sister Circle Time and further empower them to be positive change-makers.

Application Plan

Literature reviewed suggests that fostering positive connections has a significant positive impact on overall well-being. Therefore, and as a result of conversations with Lee, it was decided that all activities would adhere to the central theme of fostering positive connections and a sense of sisterhood as a way of promoting the Sister Cities Girlchoir (SCG) founder's, goal of building strong, positive relationships between the girls participating in SCG. In addition, the activities also enable participating girls to build on other psychological skills important to their well-being. Using information gleaned from the review of relevant literature, the Service Learning Project (SLP) team brainstormed a list of possible activities and, with Lee's input, selected three activities to be further developed for incorporation into SCG's Sister Circle Time curriculum, these were:
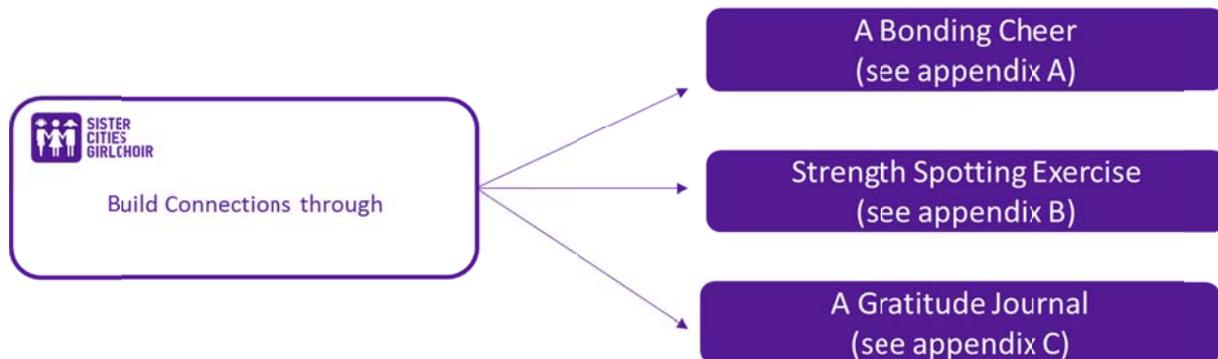
The Sister Circle Time activities are prepared for the use of the teaching staff following a template SCG currently uses for Sister Circle Time as a way to provide continuity to SCG's existing work and methods, and to facilitate the easy implementation of the proposed activities for the instructors. Sister Circle Time is already successful, and it is important to build on that success, rather than create new and unfamiliar materials.

Building connections through a bonding cheer (Appendix A)

   The bonding cheer is an activity that utilizes a cheer created by the group as a closing ritual as a way of cementing connections within the group with the goal of increasing well-being for the girls of SCG. Martin Seligman's (2011) PERMA model of wellbeing consists of five pillars: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. Seligman states that each of these elements contribute in some way to one's experience of wellbeing (Seligman, 2011). Positive psychology approaches can add to the unique opportunity at Sister Cities Girlchoir to integrate aspects of each of the pillars PERMA. During the closing rituals of Sister Circle Time, after choir practice, the teachers conduct activities to enhance connection and identity, to increase positive emotion, recognize accomplishments, and foster engagement. . While a great activity to close the weekly activity, these rituals also help longer term. Rybanska, McKay, Jong, & Whitehouse (2017) have found that rituals help enhance executive functioning skills such as staying on task and delayed gratification. These types of skills can boost abilities for flexible thinking, impulse control, planning. Positive emotions, including increasing the positive emotion to negative emotion ratio, also help build resilience (Fredrickson, 2009).

   Selecting closing rituals that build on one another as the girls create positive relationships can increase resilience and optimism. One way that the teachers at Sister Cities Girlchoir can incorporate a strengths-based message of belonging and purpose can be through a cheerleading activity to reinforce a message of inner strength and belonging through a fun activity. Engaging in positive events can help build good mental habits and engaging in these events as a group can build personal connections (Fredrickson, 2009). A sample bonding cheer is attached and includes aspects reinforcing well-being such as a supportive network, acknowledgement of

achievement, inclusive and togetherness, meaning, while eliciting positive emotion and accomplishment.

The teachers can prepare for the facilitation of the bonding cheer by reviewing the sample provided. Its length is short and can be posted in the room as a sample. A review of it prior to demonstrating is sufficient to provide a sense of the activity. It will not take long, after repeating it several times, before it becomes easy to remember. The girls can be invited to think about what lines they would like to delete, modify or add to. Movement, gestures, or steps can also be added as time goes on. Once they develop their own cheer, they can use it to close each session.

Closing rituals as part of Sister Circle Time can help solidify connections and the aspects of positive psychology being introduced. Expressing gratitude helps with coping of stress and trauma (Lyubomirsky, 2007). The weekly practice of expressing gratitude through a group-created closing ritual that focuses on the benefits of the group, can increase self-esteem, self-worth, and encourage savoring of positive life events and emotions (Lyubomirsky, 2007).

Additional or alternate closing ritual activities, such as Strength Sharing, Positive Gossip, or Gratitude Reflection (Appendix E) can be substituted for or added to the bonding cheer.

Building connections through character strength spotting (Appendix B)

Identification of character strengths in others is a method of teaching character strengths that can result in the identification with character strengths in the self (Proctor, et al., 2011). . This activity promotes the identification of character strengths which can help develop self-identify and a sense of purpose (Qashmer, 2016). This activity set was chosen as a way of promoting positive connection and building positive relationships, as well as utilizing the foundation of SCG to teach character and develop character strengths, essential for the development of a sense of self and purpose. Development of a purpose in life begins to occur

during adolescence; character strengths education during adolescence can help create a moral

identity, thereby guiding the development of purpose in life (Qashmer, 2016). Development of

character strengths, as well as the use of character strengths as tools to build connections and

develop positive relationships, requires an awareness of the language of strengths and

identification of strengths in each individual.

Many valuable strengths assessment tools exist, such as the VIA-Youth (viacharacter.org),

although a formal strengths assessment may not be practical in this setting, given the lack of

technology and parental consent issues. Research suggests that activities and educational

programs that are comprehensive in nature, such as those that discuss and teach all potential

strengths, may provide even greater benefit than programs that are based on the results of an

assessment (Proctor et al., 2011). Enabling students to explore their own identity in the context

of the full range of 24 strengths articulated by the VIA allow adolescents to learn about and

explore the full range of strengths, self-selecting those which they already identify with and

learning to spot strengths in others (Proctor et al., 2011). By engaging in strengths activities, the

girls will be exposed to character education fostering the development of moral ideals and a

moral identity, intrinsic motivation, and a sense of purpose in life critical for the ultimate

transition to adulthood (Qashmer, 2016; Shoshani & Slone, 2012).

The strengths-spotting activity is one way that the girls can learn to identify their own

strengths as well as strengths in others, and by doing so understand the impact of the strengths on

their own lives as well as the lives of others. Identifying strengths in others can develop

camaraderie among the girls and serves as a way of lifting each other up, itself a positive

relationship building activity.

In order to effectively teach the language of strengths and facilitate the strengths activities, the teaching team will be better prepared if they first experience these concepts in a structured manner. The SLP team recommends the teachers each take the VIA-Pro assessment or the entire team take the VIA-Team assessment and then meet to share and discuss their strengths and insights from the assessment; both are available on the VIA website (viacharacter.org). In addition, the website has numerous teaching tools, such as a character strengths fact sheet, research articles, and a teacher's guide (see Appendix F for a list of resources, with hyperlinks). Not only will the teaching team be prepared to teach the language of strengths to the girls, the teaching team will benefit personally by learning to identify and use their own strengths as well as function better as a team.

Alternate or additional activities that build on character strengths include "Me at my Best", "My Best Possible Self" and the Strengths Collage (see Appendix E for list of alternate activities).

Building Connections through Gratitude – What Went Well (Appendix C)

The What Went Well activity was selected as a means of enhancing connections within the SCG community through cultivating gratitude, which enables the girls to practice greater awareness and experience greater positive emotion when it comes to their sisterhood bonds. Calling attention to "What Went Well" (Seligman, 2011, p. 33-35) creates an opportunity for girls to recognize the roles they play in one another's wellbeing, as well as experience the benefits of practicing gratitude, including increased subjective well-being, relational support, and pro-social behavior. Gratitude practices enable all participating girls to savor their connections and solidify them, as well as to call attention to what is good and going well in their lives, further

bonding them around positive emotions and events, which sets a better tone for their connections than dwelling on what's not going well.

Within the context of positive psychology, gratitude has been identified as a positive emotion (Fredrickson, 2009) and one of the 24 character strengths in the virtue category of "transcendence" (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Fredrickson (2009) describes gratitude as a *feeling* that emerges when people acknowledge another person as the source of their unexpected good fortune. Strengths "of the heart" (zest, gratitude, hope, and love) have been more robustly associated with life satisfaction than more cerebral strengths (i.e. curiosity and love of learning) (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004), making gratitude that much more important of piece of Sister Circle Time curriculum.

While learning how to cope with negatives is an important component of the girls' lives, focusing on "attending to, appreciating, and attaining life's positives" has a tremendous impact on wellbeing (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009, p. 482). Appreciation "may slow adaptation by guarding against social comparisons and increasing expectations" (Bao & Lyubomirsky, 2014, p. 376), and further building of positive emotion. In order to appreciate what we have and the positive changes we make, we have to increase our awareness. In the context of positive interventions, strengths-oriented approaches have shown to bring about more sustainable change than weakness-oriented ones, and intrinsically motivated, self-concordant activities increase the frequency of engagement and lead to better outcomes in several domains of behavior change (Schueller, 2014). In this vein, working on what went well allows girls flexibility in their responses and, given the overwhelmingly positive experience of participating in activities with their fellow sisters, stands as a more intrinsically motivated activity. An intervention focused on the girls' wellbeing and on gratitude around their experiences and connections, increases the

chances of follow-through and sustainment through a more intrinsically-oriented approach

(Schueller, 2014).

Sister Circle Time instructors can prepare for the activity by running through it themselves

(as described in Appendix C) as a way of showing the girls the many possible things that can go

into the category of "what went well". This can easily transition into a group-wide discussion

and girls can follow the example of the instructors and talk about the various successes of the

day—both big and small. This activity can be supplemented/replaced with the Gratitude Jar,

another format which allows girls to reflect on what they are thankful for, as well as the closing

ritual of Positive Gossip, which shifts focus to appreciating the good in one another and further

building connection (Appendix E).

Activity Implementation Guide

The SLP team anticipates that each activity will require the dedication of one or more

sessions to explain and set up. The SLP team recommends the teaching team peruse the

resources listed in Appendix G if they require additional information on each of the activities.

The recommended implementation guide is as follows:

- Weeks 1 and 2 – available time in these sessions will be devoted to the

  development of the closing ritual bonding cheer and accompanying movements

  (Appendix A). Each group will contribute to the drafting of the lyrics and

  rhythm. Each group is encouraged to add hand gestures or group movements. .

  Synchronous movement increases cooperation by means of social attachment

  among group members, weakening the barriers between the self and the group

  (Wiltermuth & Heath, 2009). Once the cheer is developed, it will occupy 2 -3

  minutes per week at the end of each session.

- Beginning with week 3 (or after completion of the cheer) – introduce the concept of character strengths and begin teaching and discussion of the 24 character strengths, by VIA Classification (viacharacter.org). See Appendix F for a list of the 24 character strengths, grouped by classification. Two classifications could be covered in each session, for a total of two sessions to introduce the strengths. One way to begin the identification of strengths is to utilize the previous "Honoring the Women in our Lives" activity (A. Lee, personal communication, January 23, 2017) and ask the girls to identify one of the strengths from the group being discussed that is emulated by the women they are honoring. Once the concept of strengths has been introduced, in the next session the girls can begin to identify their own strengths as well as spot strengths in other, consistent with the Strengths Spotting activity (Appendix B).

- Beginning with week 5 (or upon completion of the initial strengths identification sessions) – introduce the concept of "What Went Well" (Seligman, 2011, p. 33-35; Appendix C) and distribute the gratitude journals (Appendix H). Explain the concept of identifying things that went well that day, and identifying what role the girls played in the outcome. The teaching team can facilitate some discussion among the girls of things that went well and how they influenced the outcome through their behaviors, including how they used their strengths. The girls can take their gratitude journals with them and record at least one event each day in the journal, identifying the event and how their behavior influenced the outcome.

- Once the strengths spotting activity and the gratitude activity are understood, one can be the focus of each session, at the teaching team's discretion. Each session will close with the closing ritual.

Measurement and Evaluation Instrument

In addition to an outline of the three activities, a brief observation guide was created for the instructors to record their perceptions of the quality of the relationships between the girls (see Appendix D). Teachers will input in the sheet each Sister Circle Time giving Lee the opportunity to gauge the effectiveness of the activities, tracking changes week to week. The purpose of this tool is to measure progress, if any, in the quality of the connections between the girls. Given teachers' limited time, the instrument was kept as short as possible. Each Sister Circle Time has two teachers; both will input their evaluations. Though the perception is highly subjective, having a second teacher fill it out provides an additional reference point. This instrument will also serve to guide adjustments needed in the curriculum for following years.

The observation should be filled out by both teachers after the class encounter. This is not intended to be a tool for presentations or other activities. This observation guide was intentionally designed to be brief, so as to not take more than 2 minutes for the teachers to fill out. A three-point scale was selected over a more nuanced 5 or 7 point scale, as a way of simplifying the process of completing it for the teacher. Simplicity was prioritized over providing more detailed information. The items to be tracked are:

- ✓ Two observable, by third-party components, of high quality connections, cooperation, and support (Dutton, 2013).

- ✓ Inclusiveness, designed to measure whether the girls are forming strong relationships, without some being singled out.

This instrument was created for SCG to measure connections in an easy and fast way. Like all instruments, this tool has its limitations. This tool has not been validated or peer reviewed. It is valuable to note that there are other tools that have a larger scale and have been validated. The PERMA profiler (Seligman, 2011) or EPOCH scale (Kern, Benson, Steinberg, & Steinberg, 2015) measure relationships as one of their components along with other well-being constructs and could be useful for SCG in the future.

In conclusion, this paper was prepared for Sister Cities Girlchoir following a situation analysis, a literature review, and discussions with Lee on goals to enhance one component of their program with activities based on positive psychology principals and evidence base. Sister Cities Girlchoir is an organization creating music designed to empower girls, foster connections, and continues to spread positive and meaningful messages to communities.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Bonding Cheer activity outline

Appendix B: Strength Spotting

Appendix C: Gratitude Journal

Appendix D: Teacher Observation Guide

Appendix E: Alternate Activities

Appendix F: VIA Character Strengths

Appendix G: Additional Resources

Appendix H: Gratitude Journal mock-up

Appendix A: Bonding Cheer

Activity	Closing ritual – Circle Time Bonding Cheer
Objective(s) & Context	To foster positive relationships through connections and belonging[1]
Duration	4 Circle time meetings two work on bonding cheer and coordinated movement. Subsequently, once the bonding cheer is ready, 2 minutes to sing at the end and close choir practice
Group Size	All (Combined)
Age Group	All (Combined)
Skills	Building a sense of connection and belonging, developing a sense of group identity and, through participating in the development of this group identity, increased support, self-esteem and sense of purpose[2].
Format(s) & Technique(s):	Initial two meetings – last half of Sister Circle Time, including closing; Subsequent meetings at Circle Time closing
Materials	Flip chart or white board to develop a bonding cheer/coordinated movement and to have on display during Sister Circle Time. Optional: Print out a copy of the bonding cheer/coordinated movement for each girl to keep her own copy.
Facilitation Tips	Initial two meetings develop bonding cheer/coordinated movement. Girls discuss what Sister Circle Time means to them and how they support each other to accomplish the mission of Sister Cities Girlchoir. Using individual concepts, construct a 4-5-line simple lyric to be sung to a familiar tune or recited as a bonding cheer (see sample, below). The girls then sing and move to the bonding cheer as their closing ritual, ending on a positive, collectively empowering note. *Example of cheer:* *I'm here for you and you for me* *We are strong and we are free* *We will shine and be the might* *To all who hear and see our light* *Sister Cities Girlchoir!*
Preparation	Prepare a short list of words or concepts that can be used to start the creative process for developing the lyric. Once the lyric is developed, write on white board or flip chart for the group.
Leading the Activity: Steps to Take	Gather the girls into a circle, clasping hands. Lead the bonding cheer and movement. Lyric development can be divided into two sessions of 10-12 minutes each, or a single session can be devoted to the activity in its entirety.
Debrief	Selectively gather feedback from girls on how they feel after doing the bonding cheer and movement.
Success Indicators:	Observe girls' behavior toward each other and sense of pride in their bonding cheer and movement.

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[1] Jose, Ryan & Pryor (2012)
[2] Kokotsaki & Hallam (2007); Yin So (2013)

Appendix B: Strength Spotting

Activity	Expressing/Spotting Strengths[3],
Objective(s) & Context	Fosters character development and builds well-being through the identification of strengths[4] and helps builds positive relationships through looking for the best in others[5]
Duration	10-20 minutes
Group Size	Any size, large or small
Age Group	All
Skills	Improves positive emotion, increases appreciation, requires reflection and focus on positive strengths
Format(s) & Technique(s):	Circle opening; as the primary activity in Sister Circle Time
Materials	List the 24 character strengths (see Appendix F) on a white board or flipchart paper, or create a more permanent "strengths" board with all strengths listed for continuous reference.
Facilitation Tips	Discuss with the girls that they all possess each of the 24 strengths, although the ones they use most often are their "signature strengths"[3]. They can broaden and enhance their strengths by thinking about how to use their top strengths in new ways.
Preparation	It is helpful if the teaching team reviews the VIA Character Strengths handout provided (Appendix F) and to take the VIA Assessment for themselves to understand how the strengths are measured and how they could be applicable to the girls.
Leading the Activity: Steps to Take	This is a 2-step activity, which can be undertaken across multiple meetings. Step 1 creates and awareness of character strengths. Encourage the girls to reflect on something they did, and how they used any one of their strengths, then lead a discussion where the girls each identify the strengths they used. Can be performed in the large group. Step 2 builds positive relationships by having the girls spot strengths in others and celebrate their use of strengths. Can be performed in small groups and is encouraged to be performed continuously in their interactions with the other girls.
Success Indicators:	Indicators can include each girl's recognition of her own strengths and how they are used in different situations and times throughout the day or week, as well as awareness of the strengths of others, resulting in enhanced positive exchanges and relationships between the girls.

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[3] Park, N. & Peterson, C. (2006) Moral competence and character strengths among adolescents
[4] Seligman, M. (2011) Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being.
[5] VIA Institute on Character www.viacharacter.org

Appendix C: Gratitude Journal

Activity	What Went Well[6] (aka Gratitude Journal)[2]
Objective(s) & Context	To enhance gratitude, cultivate optimism, and build positive emotion
Duration	2 sessions of 25 minutes each; can alternate with other activities or spend 5 minutes per session at closing
Group Size	Small groups of no more than five
Age Group	any age group/mixed age groups
Skills	This activity develops the strength of gratitude through personal reflection and builds awareness for the positive aspects of life
Format(s) & Technique(s):	This activity has two applications – 1) during Sister Circle Time, just before closing, and 2) during the week, at home, at bedtime
Materials	Journals (Appendix H) and pens
Facilitation Tips	Prior to breaking into small groups, the teaching team can model the activity by having Teacher A ask Teacher B, "What went well today?". Once Teacher B responds, Teacher A then asks why it went well and how Teacher B contributed to the outcome. Breaking into smaller groups, start by having one of the older girls ask one of the younger girls what went well that day. The girls can record in their journals their own response to "What went well?".
Preparation	Provide journal booklets for continuation of this activity at home (See Appendix H). Teaching team should practice this activity among themselves (perhaps for a week) before presenting to the girls.
Leading the Activity: Steps to Take	Encourage the girls to reflect on things that went well during the prior week and think about what contribution they had to the positive outcome. Write down at least one positive thing that occurred during the day and the possible reasons it could have turned out so good, including their own contribution to the positive outcome. This activity should be continued during the week at home 2 or 3 nights a week, for maximum impact.
Debrief	Each week following the initial week, the girls can break into groups and discuss what they wrote in their journals during the week about what went well.
Success Indicators:	Indicators can include an increase in positive emotions, gratitude and focus on the positive side of situations, resulting in a brighter outlook and increased appreciation of life.

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[6] Seligman, M. (2011) Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being.

Appendix D: Teacher Observation Guide

Date (mm/dd/yy): _____

1. Age group you worked with (Please circle code of the answer):

(1) K to 2nd grade	(2) 3rd and 4th grades	(3) 5th grade and up

Write the code corresponding to the prevalence or absence of the behavior during today's class only, not based on past behavior. . Please be as honest as possible. This questionnaire is not anonymous, but it does not reflect on your work as a teacher; its objective is to measure the quality of relationships between the girls.

0= Did not have opportunity to observe this	1= Few or none of the girls engaged in this behavior	2= About half engage of the girls in this behavior	3= All or most of the girls engaged in this behavior

	Average (do not fill out)	Choir Teacher Evaluation	Piano teacher evaluation
1. Enthusiasm Energy, eagerness and engagement in the activities and with each other.			
2. Cooperation Willingness to help each other, the teachers or any staff member.			
3. Support Supportive and constructive comments directed at each other or to teacher and staff. . Encouraged others to grow and flourish.			
4. Integration Willingness to work together. . No one was excluded. . No closed sub-groups groups that don't interact with each other.			
5. Respect Girls talk to each other, to teachers and to staff with respect.			
6. Strong bonds Friendship and moments of close connection between girls and with teachers and staff.			

2. **Optional**, use this space to share any concerns or feedback, if you wish to give any

This guide was modeled after the Character Lab Growth card, found at:
https://cdn.characterlab.org/assets/Character-Growth-Card-
cad815b0b3ba79c794bcfd3a89e2a8d5ac3057963fff02cee539d8d9af1b9777.pdf

Appendix E: Alternate Activities

This part of the appendix covers other ideas that were brainstormed and identified as alternate activities for Sister Circle Time. . They can be fully developed into Sister Circle Time activities at a later point and incorporated into the overall curriculum or can serve as complementary behaviors to be encouraged during choir practice.

"Me at my best"
Helps build community in the circle by having each girl share a story about a time she felt that she was at her personal best, contributing to enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence. . This activity can be performed at the beginning of the year as a way of getting to know one another or when new girls are added or as a way of further developing the community of the group. . If this activity is performed after the language of strengths is well-understood, the girls can include how they used a character strength in the situation.

Alternatives: Girls can all submit their stories and each Sister Circle Time close with a reading of a random selection one or two of the stories. . A gaming element can be added by having to guess which girl the story of "Me at my best" belongs to.

"My Best Possible Self"
Have each girl imagine her best self in multiple domains, dreaming about what life will look like in the future and write a description of that "best possible self". . This improves mood, motivation, and provides structure for organizing how each girl can work toward their future goals now. . If performed after the language of strengths is well-understood, the girls can include how their character strengths will help them achieve this future. . This can be a class activity or an assignment that is then shared the following week.

Strengths Collage: Individual or Group
Create the background for a collage from a half or full sheet of Bristol board for the group. . Each session, the girls will add one way they have used one of their strengths in the Sister Circle Time or during choir practice by writing this on a circle of brightly construction paper and adding to the board. . This activity can also be used to identify others' use of strengths and can be an interesting follow up or addition to the strength spotting activity described in the action plan.

Positive Portrait
This activity will have girls divide into dyads (potentially the established big sister/ little sister pairings) and draw a "positive portrait" showing their partner using their strengths. . This is to encourage strengths-spotting as well as enhance connection and gratitude for one another. . This activity can also be an interesting follow up or addition to the strength spotting activity described in the action plan.

Gratitude Jar
The gratitude jar will be filled at the end of Sister Circle Time—girls write down what they are grateful for in the context of SCG and Sister Circle Time and put in a collective jar. . At the

beginning of the next Sister Circle Time, girls read back the gratitude notes they placed into the jar the previous week to reinforce the past and present gratitude. The jar can also serve as a semester collection that becomes a gratitude sharing activity for the end of the term.

Activity Booklet

Girls are given a journaling booklet with positively-oriented prompts to encourage them to reflect on these concepts beyond Sister Circle Time. . This booklet will be for private use, but will provide prompts to enhance/maintain the sense of wellbeing of the girls outside of their time with SCG and promote the habit of self-reflective, positive journaling. . The prompts will focus on using their strengths, spotting strengths in others, exploring gratitude, and more. . This sort of booklet will allow girls to bring concepts covered in Sister Circle Time into their daily lives and enhance their self-efficacy through increasing how often they engage with the concepts.

Closing Ritual #1 Strength sharing

Helps build positive relationships as the girls share their strengths with others. . Like a magical gift, go around the circle allowing each girl to identify one of her strengths and he person they would like to share that strength with. . This must be done after the strength spotting activity and once the girls are familiar with the strengths and have identified strengths in themselves and each other. . This can be a complementary exercise to any of the strength based exercises.

Closing Ritual #2: Positive Gossip

Helps build relationships and appreciation in one another. . At the closing, a few of the girls can share a piece of positive gossip about another girl, for example, "Did you know [name] got an A on her math test?" This can be an on-going activity in Sister Circle Time or other time together.

Closing Ritual #3: Gratitude Reflection

Helps build an awareness of things to be thankful for and raises optimism, creating a habit of noticing the good things in life. . The girls reflect on one thing that went well that past week and take the time to honor someone that facilitated or helped this positive event occur. . This activity can also be performed in small groups. .

Appendix F: VIA Character Strengths

Following is a list of the 24 character strengths identified by the Values in Action Institute on Character (viacharacter.org) [7].

Wisdom and Knowledge – Cognitive strengths that entail the acquisition and use of knowledge

- Creativity [originality, ingenuity]: Thinking of novel and productive ways to conceptualize and do things; includes artistic achievement but is not limited to it
- Curiosity [interest, novelty-seeking, openness to experience]: Taking an interest in ongoing experience for its own sake; finding subjects and topics fascinating; exploring and discovering
- Judgment [critical thinking]: Thinking things through and examining them from all sides; not jumping to conclusions; being able to change one's mind in light of evidence; weighing all evidence fairly
- Love of Learning: Mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge, whether on one's own or formally; obviously related to the strength of curiosity but goes beyond it to describe the tendency to add systematically to what one knows
- Perspective [wisdom]: Being able to provide wise counsel to others; having ways of looking at the world that make sense to oneself and to other people

Courage – Emotional strengths that involve the exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition, external or internal

- Bravery [valor]: Not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain; speaking up for what is right even if there is opposition; acting on convictions even if unpopular; includes physical bravery but is not limited to it
- Perseverance [persistence, industriousness]: Finishing what one starts; persisting in a course of action in spite of obstacles; "getting it out the door"; taking pleasure in completing tasks
- Honesty [authenticity, integrity]: Speaking the truth but more broadly presenting oneself in a genuine way and acting in a sincere way; being without pretense; taking responsibility for one's feelings and actions
- Zest [vitality, enthusiasm, vigor, energy]: Approaching life with excitement and energy; not doing things halfway or halfheartedly; living life as an adventure; feeling alive and activated

Humanity - Interpersonal strengths that involve tending and befriending others

- Love: Valuing close relations with others, particularly those in which sharing and caring are reciprocated; being close to people
- Kindness [generosity, nurturance, care, compassion, altruistic love, "niceness"]: Doing favors and good deeds for others; helping them; taking care of them
- Social Intelligence [emotional intelligence, personal intelligence]: Being aware of the motives and feelings of other people and oneself; knowing what to do to fit into different social situations; knowing what makes other people tick

Justice - Civic strengths that underlie healthy community life

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[7] http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Character-Strengths/VIA-Classification

- Teamwork [citizenship, social responsibility, loyalty]: Working well as a member of a group or team; being loyal to the group; doing one's share
- Fairness: Treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice; not letting personal feelings bias decisions about others; giving everyone a fair chance.
- Leadership: Encouraging a group of which one is a member to get things done, and at the same time maintaining good relations within the group; organizing group activities and seeing that they happen.

Temperance- Strengths that protect against excess
- Forgiveness: Forgiving those who have done wrong; accepting the shortcomings of others; giving people a second chance; not being vengeful
- Humility: Letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves; not regarding oneself as more special than one is
- Prudence: Being careful about one's choices; not taking undue risks; not saying or doing things that might later be regretted
- Self-Regulation [self-control]: Regulating what one feels and does; being disciplined; controlling one's appetites and emotions

Transcendence - Strengths that forge connections to the larger universe and provide meaning
- Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence [awe, wonder, elevation]: Noticing and appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in various domains of life, from nature to art to mathematics to science to everyday experience
- Gratitude: Being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen; taking time to express thanks
- Hope [optimism, future-mindedness, future orientation]: Expecting the best in the future and working to achieve it; believing that a good future is something that can be brought about
- Humor [playfulness]: Liking to laugh and tease; bringing smiles to other people; seeing the light side; making (not necessarily telling) jokes
- Spirituality [faith, purpose]: Having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of the universe; knowing where one fits within the larger scheme; having beliefs about the meaning of life that shape conduct and provide comfort

Appendix G: Additional Resources

Values in Action – VIA Institute on Character (viacharacter.org)
- VIA classification of character strengths
    - http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Character-Strengths/VIA-Classification
    - http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Portals/0/VIA%20Classification%202017.pdf
- VIA Infographics
    - http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Portals/0/Character%20Strengths%20Infographic.jpg
    - http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Portals/0/Poster.pdf
    - http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Portals/0/Character%20Strength%20Word%20Infographic.jpg
- VIA for Educators
    - http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Professionals/Character-Development
- VIA Me! (youth strengths report) Teacher's Guide
    - http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Portals/0/Teacher_Guide.pdf

Information and downloadable resources for healthy relationships for grades K-12
http://futureofsexed.org/fosestandards.html.
More information on character education available in
    Character Plus http://www.edplus.org
    Root of Empathy http://www.rootsofempathy.org/
    Positive Action https://www.positiveaction.net/
    Print outs for character strength https://characterlab.org/

Appendix H: Gratitude Journal

The gratitude journal is a way for the girls to document a time when things went well and recognize their part in the positive outcome. These journal sheets can be printed two to a page, cut and stapled in packs of 6 sheets for the girls to take and use at home several days a week. Print set-up sheets sample of the journal pages and cover is provided below.

Fold over back of cover
Delete before printing

What Went Well

This Journal Belongs to

_____

Fold over back of cover
Delete before printing

What Went Well

This Journal Belongs to

_____

What went well?

How did I contribute to this positive outcome?

What went well?

How did I contribute to this positive outcome?

What went well?

How did I contribute to this positive outcome?

What went well?

How did I contribute to this positive outcome?

What went well?

How did I contribute to this positive outcome?

What went well?

How did I contribute to this positive outcome?

What went well?

How did I contribute to this positive outcome?

What went well?

How did I contribute to this positive outcome?