

LIVE YOUR DREAM GIRLS' CONFERENCE

Diana Babington & Lori Scolaro

The LIVE YOUR DREAM GIRLS' CONFERENCE took place on November 3, 2018 at Dutchess Community College. This year's conference was probably one of the best we have ever presented. Over 80 middle school girls were in attendance. And, for the first time, we added eighth grade girls to the sixth and seventh graders who normally attend. The thought behind adding 8th graders is based on our hopes that girls will return all three years in middle school, so that they are exposed to different workshops, activism activities and Girl Talk leaders, providing another chance to help they realize their dreams of the future.



This year the girls experienced workshops on self-discovery, anti-bullying, yoga and karate for girls, poetry, as well as science and math workshops. They learned about the journey of eels on the Hudson River and the difference between service and therapy dogs (a unanimous favorite of the girls). One of the girls' favorite workshops from the past, Fashion Forward, made a return to our lineup after a 4-year absence. Heard around the campus were the laughter, awe and wonder of these lively 11-14 year old girls. It was so gratifying to watch girls take risks in a karate session, watch their awe-inspired faces learning about eels, and figuring out how to navigate the Fruit Bowl game.

This year's Big Sisters led the girls in get to know you and game playing activities. They also helped the girls construct self-portraits at the start of the day. They are the link between the ladies who volunteers their time and the women leaders of our lunchtime program.

We hosted over 20 women leaders for our Lunch with Women Leaders and hoped to inspire the girls to dream BIG while meeting women with interesting stories and lives.





Over 25 AAUW members, friends of the committee and activism activity coordinators joined us to provide adult help in navigating the day's activities. One volunteer told me...."I'll be back for the whole day next year. This was so much fun and inspiring".

Through Activism Activities, the girls were exposed to organizations that help our community and the world, including Meals on Wheels, The Children's Home of Poughkeepsie, Hudson Valley Girl Scouts, Grace Smith House and our own Leading to Reading and Days for Girls groups. Knowing that there are others who may have less than them, is a powerful activity for the girls during the day.



We have heard from parents about their own desire to return next year and participate in the Parent Workshops which provided interesting insight into their daughter's lives, with helpful tips how to keep their children safe in today's media saturated world.

Lori and Diana's dream has been to create workshops about self-awareness as well as an awareness of their future and the world they will inherit for middle school girls. This year, we feel that we have truly realized that dream as girls were exposed to workshops from both areas.

Thanks to the support of the AAUW Writers' Tea and Auction and the Divas and Dreamers fundraiser, we have enough funds to pay off all our debts and have seed money for next year. We can not present this initiative in the way we have, to the young girls of the Hudson Valley without your support and help. For that we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Here it is December and we are already planning for November 2, 2019. We hope that you will consider joining us for this fabulous, life-changing day.