

A FACILITATOR'S GUIDE TO WORKING WITH YOUNG WOMEN (AN
EDUCATION PROJECT)

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A FACILITATOR'S GUIDE TO WORKING WITH YOUNG WOMEN:

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ABSTRACT

There exists a disconnection between students of youth work, and facilitators of youth development. Every year in America, men and women embark on a journey to change the world by empowering youth. These individuals show up to their youth certification courses bright eyed and bushy tailed. Sometimes they even sit in the front row.

With goodwill in their hearts and determination in their blood, they listen closely, study hard, and read every text presented. And graduation confirms their readiness to effect change or does it?

Young people are dealing with several difficult issues, especially America's girls. Since girl issues have recently been brought to the forefront, many college textbooks inaccurately address them. This manual was developed to help aspiring youth workers working within a female population understand what is needed for effective programming to exist.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Is passion really enough? A young woman, fresh out of her undergraduate degree program, is hired into her dream job. The position was a youth worker for an all girl leadership organization. With ambitions to change the world, she arrives for her first day. The first task assigned to her is the reading of a facilitator manual. Will the completion of the manual better prepare her for the task at hand?

She has the drive, the passion, and the manual. Now all she needs are the girls, and effective programming will commence, right? Many students in the area of Human Services leave school rely on their desire to “effect change” to get them through the reality of stewardship, rather than the needed knowledge, skills, and dispositions. There exists this idea that if a coordinator is fun, treats the kids fairly, and fulfills all of the requirements, she will be effective in her job.

Problem Statement

What is the relationship between effective girl programming and the facilitator’s role?

Method of Approach

The primary purpose is to report on a practical educational project expressed as a facilitator’s handbook. The review of literature provides a summary of the program used to develop the handbook. Both the review and the handbook are responsive to the problem statement.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

Speaking of treating kids fairly, will working with an all female population make an attempt at fairness easier? When a program caters only to girls and young women, does gender sensitivity need to be considered? The Hadassah Foundation defines Gender Sensitivity as thoughtful deliberate attention to gender as an important component of diversity when creating, implementing, and evaluating programs. (Hadassah Foundation, 2007)

The Hadassah Foundation says that gender-sensitive programs would commit to the following practices.

1. Take into account different gender needs. Since the learning styles of boys and girls differ, it is important to plan with that in mind.
2. Conduct your program with an understanding of and willingness to meet the needs of the girls.
3. Be aware of the many labels placed on your young ladies and the identities they may assume because of it.
4. Acknowledge and share interest in the girls' experiences, perspectives, strengths, and accomplishments.

5. Remember that gender sensitivity is essential in single sex and coed programs.

(Hadassah Foundation, 2007)

Girls Incorporated (Girls Inc.) addressed gender sensitivity when creating their Girl's Bill of Right. Through research conducted using the Harris Interactive survey Girls Inc. found that sixty percent of girls say that they experience stereotypes that limit their right to be themselves. They also reported that sixty-nine percent of Black girls feel society expects them to speak softly and not cause trouble compared to fifty-four percent of White girls. (Girls inc., 2001)

While results from the Girls Inc. study were surprising and impactful, the realization that this type of research is limited becomes apparent. In another one of their reports, Girls Inc. provides a disclaimer by saying...

Even though research has noted the challenges girls face as they are suddenly confronted with conflicting expectations about what it means to be a young woman, the research community has not sufficiently accounted for the diversity of experiences encountered by girls of varying racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Much of the gender research that exists is based around the classroom. - Girls inc., 2001

In the book *Why Gender Matters* (2005), Sax agrees that the sexes should be educated separately. He also claims that girls and boys learn differently. In his experiences the tone a teacher needs to hold their student's attention varies from boys to girls. Although boys respond better to a loud firm tone, in girls a negative emotion is

triggered. Girls desire to be liked by their teachers and will conduct themselves in a pleasing manner. Boys are not there to make friends. Their concern is their performance in the subject, not if the teacher likes them or not.

An attempt to find more research related to girl programming lead to the Department of Juvenile Justice as key search terms. The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is the expert in prevention programming research for juveniles. Here again, much of the research was geared toward schools. The report begins by stating “school is expected to provide a safe environment and to play an active role in socializing children for participation in a civil society. (Gottfredson, Cantor, Gottfredson, Czeh, Crosse, and Hantman 2002)

A thorough investigation by the NIJ unveils that again research is limited. The NIJ reports that “much of what schools do has not been studied by scientists to develop knowledge of effectiveness.” In this area, the research is also limited. Another a venue must exist to identify what effective girl programming consists of.

In 2000, the first comprehensive attempt at measuring the effectiveness of Girl Programming was conducted. That year the Ms. Foundation decided to “dive in” and help their grantees in another way. They embarked on a research project to really explore how effective girl programming was being achieved.

The Ms. Foundation began in 1973. Originally it was to be used as the vehicle to redistribute profits from its affiliate, the Ms. Magazine. Its founders were Patricia T. Carbine, Letty Cottin Pogrebin, Gloria Steinem, and Marlo Thomas. The foundation itself began gaining much support and became the leading women’s fund. The Ms.

Foundation's most recognized contribution is the "Take your Daughters to Work Day" campaign.

Other accomplishments include the following:

- Distributing millions of dollars in grants each year to local, state, and national organizations to seed and sustain innovative programs for women and girls.
- Creating a national movement of activists and organizations dedicated to girl's and women's issues through training, networking, and mentoring activities.
- Changing the face of philanthropy by creating new collaborative grant making models which are now replicated nationwide.

(ms. foundation, n.d.)

Funding may have been one reason why this research had not been attempted previously. With the interest of other foundations and donors, the Collaborative Fund for Healthy Girls / Healthy Women was created. This team raised \$4 million dollars for this research. The \$4 million was divided among new and existing organizations promoting girl empowerment. Over the next three years, grantees would receive funding to access any resources needed to participate in the study.

The largest part of the budget was reserved for a learning component. The Collaborative Fund began this journey with several questions to be answered by the research. After several meetings and discussions, a research agenda was developed containing a set of outcomes to be reached. A learning team including researchers, front line workers, and graduate students, was appointed to create the participatory evaluation process.

The Ms. Foundation was familiar with the idea of including girls in the planning and implementation of activities and events. So it became necessary to involve them in the research process. Girl involvement was a big part of the hypothesis they set out to prove. With participation from the girls, input from the front liners, and curiosity from the graduate students, this research was based off real day to day operations.

After five years of fundraising, committee meetings, roundtable discussions, and hands on observing, the study came to an end. In 2005, the Collaborative Fund successfully completed their project. The Ms. Foundation's research indentified four factors that must be present for positive girl programming to occur. They are each listed below.

Ms. Foundation's Research Findings include the following

- Safe Space

A commonality among the organizations was that their participants often came from hostile environments. Safe space is necessary to provide an alternative to the daily grind. Safe space also created a forum to discuss the fears and emotions that result from growing up in less than safe surroundings. The space that an organization provides must allow the girls to find their voices and be themselves.

- Leadership

The programs that were most effective consider each girl to be an asset. The belief presented to each young

woman is that they are indeed leaders. Images consistent with positive visualizations of women, (opposite of what is commonly seen), are reoccurring. The result appears to be a positive self image and the realization that a leader exists within.

- Social Change

Activism is a critical element of girl's struggle for identity and recognition by family, peers, and community. Girls see themselves as agents of change.

- Intergenerational relationships

Along with positive images of females, positive female role modeling is also needed for healthy girl development. Programs have been successful in these areas by ensuring that proper staff is hired to work with the girls. However, building the intergenerational relationships has proven to be more challenging to fulfill. (Fullwood, 2000)

Ms. Foundation research and assertions are impressive. The Collaborative Fund sensed a need among youth serving organizations and accepted the challenge to resolve it. The time, funding, and strategy used to conduct such research greatly benefits youth workers. It goes beyond those things taught in many youth worker certification courses.

Pearls for teen Girls began their organization under the premise "For Girls by Girls." It since has been change to a strong belief in true Youth –Adult Partnerships.

Pearls lessons are guided by the Leadership Compass. The compass highlights five areas in a girl's life which will help her strengthen the leader within. The five areas of the compass are as follows

- Striving to Achieve- Encouragement to be strong academically
- Loving Myself – Self Esteem
- Helping Hands in the Community – Community Service
- Building Relationships with others – Healthy relationships with parents, friends, pearls sisters, boyfriends
- Believing the Sky's the Limit – Goal Setting and Reaching your dreams

With the skills gained in each of these areas, girls are expected to become leaders in their family, their school, and their community.

It was the determination of the young people that forced change during the civil rights movement in the 50's and 60's. Students were upset with the inequalities and injustices of our government. Our youth today are no different! They are aware of the societal ills and have several ideas about how to effect change. Often, projects are placed in the hands of the Pearls girls. With some adult guidance, girls design the project in the way they see best to make a difference.

To transform a girl from a participant to a fully participating Pearls girl, safe space is necessary. Pearls groups occur once per week on the same day, at the same time, in the same place. The girls can count on that and look forward to it. Although several groups take place during the week, a girl is assigned to just one group and can only attend that group.

This is required for purposes of forming the group and bonding. Pearls sessions are closed to parents and other adults. Girls are strongly encouraged to communicate their issues with parents, but often time will not. They prefer to open up in group, and will be less reluctant with other adults around.

Once a secure bond is in place, girls will feel free to share intimate thoughts, experiences, and concerns. With the expectations raised by the coordinators, the girls begin to hold themselves accountable. If a young woman is not living up to what it means to be a Pearls girl, her Pearls sisters should feel comfortable calling her on that. In order for intimate stories to be shared, difficult questions to be answered, and girls to be held accountable, there must be respect for all.

Confidentiality has to be enforced at every Pearls group as well. The one golden rule that every Pearls girl is familiar with is “what is said in group, stays in group.” If it is brought to the attention of a coordinator that things shared in the group have leaked out, it is to be taken very seriously. It has to be addressed. Each girl should have the security of confidentiality.

As the coordinator, the responsibility is to ensure the safety of each one of the girls. The coordinator also creates the group. Even on the facilitator’s worst day, they must walk into group as anxious as the kids are. Young people sense when a person is not being genuine or truthful. A coordinator must always consider the whole groups needs. And the groups’ needs will sometimes out weigh the needs of the planned activities.

Chapter Three

Conclusions and Personal Impressions

Conclusions

More research is needed to determine a formula for effective girl programming. The work created by Girls Incorporated is a great foundation for future discovery in this area. It was there innovation that has provided a blue print for programming that had not existed in years past. Until further research is conducted, youth organizations that provide girl programming should use Girls Inc.'s findings as a guide.

Author's Personal Impressions in using Girl's Programming

Although safe space, youth adult partnerships, leadership training, and social change are the keys to effective girl programming, one cannot not discount the need for a passionate facilitator. All of these things together are what creates great girl programming. True youth adult partnership can only exist when the adult partner really believes in and values the youth partner. It takes determined coordinator to continue to point out the leader within to a kid who just cannot see it yet. Youth are most empowered when their coordinator stops facilitating and starts assisting them with their community service project

Personal Impression. Passion is what gives me the drive to meet all of the requirements of effective girl programming. There will be more good days than bad. The passion a youth worker has for helping kids is what will get you from one good day to the next!

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Appendix

Program Coordinator Handbook

I dedicate this handbook to Dessa Jordan and Desiree Cocroft. By being available and hands on, they taught me things the book could not!

Michelle Brock

Handbook Introduction

My first day as a youth worker began with the reading of a facilitator manual. It was a very technical manual, similar to a school book. Feeling as though I had read all of the textbooks required to graduate, I thought it was useless. The manual did little to explain how my day to day operations would run.

I used the aforementioned manual as inspiration for this handbook. My objective is to give a person unfamiliar with girl programming a clear picture of what is needed to complete their assigned tasks.

Are you ready to embark on this meaningful journey? Your current assignment – To build the self esteem of the children you serve and help them identify the leader within.

Please use the next few pages as your guide.

Facilitator Kit

Similar to a chef's knife set or an EMT's emergency kit, you will need a kit of your own!

Your kit will come in handy when things don't go as planned, your facilitator kit should include...

- Marker Kit
- Masking Tape
- Scissors
- Colored paper preferred, but lined will do
- Paper Clips
- Forms or Handouts for new participants
 - o Contract for data collection
 - o Pearls Promise
 - o Leadership Compass

It is best to carry your facilitator kit in a rolling duffel bag. With all of the traveling back and forth to group, it will help cut down on back strain. A 30" bag is big enough to carry your supplies and snacks to group.

You want a bag that is durable and can be used in all types of weather.

Behavior

It is important to enforce respect. Everyone should feel safe in your group!

There are two types of groups.

-Voluntary

An afterschool group where the participants come by their own will.

-Involuntary

A group usually occurring as apart of the regular school day, and the participants are required to attend.

In both groups, girls may exhibit some disruptive behavior. It is best starting day one to show the girls that you do have control of the group. You want to modify any disruptive behavior before it escalates. A simple calling of a girls name to get her attention can be helpful.

It may be hard to do this during the first couple of sessions. But memorize as many names as you can, starting with the first session. Learning the girls' names will let them know that you do pay attention to what is happening in your group. Calling a person by name adds value to the relationship. They will know that you do care, and are not their just to do your job.

When the group as a whole is disruptive, there are some techniques you can use to get them back on track.

1. Snack Removal
 - There has not been a young lady who did not look forward to a pearls' snack. Let the girls know that they get three strikes. Once they have been reprimanded a third time, they lose their snack for the day.

2. Field Trip

-Explain to your girls that you do not feel comfortable taking them on a trip representing Pearls if they cannot display appropriate behavior while in their Pearls group. Anyone who cannot follow the rules will not be able to attend the next field trip. If the whole group cannot get through the lesson plan, their field trip will be cancelled.

3. Activity to earn Pearls Bucks
 - Pearls bucks are one of the highlights of being a Pearls' girl. Tell the girls that the Pearls Buck earning activity will be held off until the end. If they do not finish the necessary lessons, they will not get to play for Pearls bucks.

4. Gain Extra Reward
 - Rewards work as nice incentives for making good decisions. Some rewards can be...
 - a. Special Snack- Cousins Subs, McDonald's parfaits, pizza, etc.
 - b. Fun Day-Pearls bucks activities, movie day, ice cream social, go outside
 - c. Field Trip-Let the girls actually earn a field trip. One that is not planned already.

When you have attempted the things above and a girl continues to be disruptive, the type of group may determine what your next step will be.

Voluntary group

If a girl is not taking group seriously, you will want to remind her that it was her choice to come to group this day. Ask her to regain self control or leave the group. As long as no additional disrespect is shown, invite her to come back to Pearls when she is truly ready to be apart of the group.

Involuntary group

Remember that involuntary groups are groups that take place during the regular school days and all girls in the identified grades are required to attend. You can also send girls out of this group, but only temporarily.

These girls need to be sent to the office or back to their classroom. Due to a staff shortage, it is not usual for the girls to be sent back to group.

If sending girls out of this group is a constant disruption, you will want to collaborate on a discipline plan with the school administration.

If anticipated ahead of time, they may be able to designate staff that the discharged girls can sit with.

Behavior Contract

Participants need to understand that good decision making is not only necessary in Pearls. It is important that the girls apply the skills they gain in Pearls to their daily lives.

Behavior issues in school have been brought to the attention of Pearls' coordinators. As a result, the Behavior Contract was developed. Please see below.

Pearls Behavior Contract

While we do not always have issues with behavior during Pearls sessions, it has been brought to our attention that some young ladies are not using good judgment throughout the entire day.

Pearls is an afterschool program for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade girls who are eligible to be apart of afterschool activities. Although our Pearls' coordinators are only working with students for two hours per week, we expect that our girls take the skills learned and use them in their daily lives.

At (name of site/school) we work as a team and it is up to the administration to accommodate our requests for special fieldtrips or additional sessions. When girls in our group are not behaving the way that is expected of them, our whole group loses out.

I love having your daughters in Pearls! My team and I get to share some great information with them while watching them become mature young ladies. For the girls that have been with me since last school year, I have seen tremendous growth. Those who are new this year are already showing great development, however we need a little more focus.

I am asking the parents/guardians and students to read this contract together. We will need both of your signatures on it. Please have your daughter return it at her next Pearls session. After your daughter has returned this contract, she will receive a Pearls bracelet signifying her commitment to positive behavior.

Our Pearls girls agree to ...

- Act respectfully towards (name of site/school) Staff, Pearls Staff, Bus Drivers, and other Pearls girls.
- keep from using curse, swear, or hateful words. We only want to use language that is respectful of all. My motto is "Let's lift each other up, not tear each other down."
- Not to engage in any violent activity such as fighting, punching, kicking, or hitting.
- Sit down while riding on the bus. To use indoor voices while talking with their friends on the bus. And obey all the rules specified by the Bus Rules and Regulation contract.
- Remember that rumors and name calling hurt peoples feelings. There is no need for it. We are all responsible for how we react to things.
- Speak with their parent, teacher, pearls coordinator, or another trusted adult when a disagreement seems too hard to talk out or ignore.
- Understand that when you miss a pearls' group you are missing important announcements and information that will help you and your group.

In the case that these agreements are broken, we may ask your daughter to leave Pearls. We will handle each incident on a case by case basis. The decision may be (name of site/school), Pearls', or both collectively.

Please be advised that although it is not every Pearls girl displaying unwanted behavior, I am asking that all of them agree to this contract. I feel that everyone should wear the bracelet as a reminder to make good decisions. Before we handed out these contracts we had a group discussion with your teen.

Please feel free to give me a call if you have questions or concerns. I can be reached at 414-793-XXXX (cell) or 414-265-7555 ext. XXXX (office)

By signing this Contract, you state that you agree with the above.

Pearls Girl's name printed _____

Pearls Girl's signature _____

Parent/Guardian signature _____ Date: _____

An explanation is given to the girls to identify the purpose of the contract. A contract is complete once a girl and her guardian have signed it.

Upon receipt of the completed contract, each girl is given a Pearls' bracelet. The bracelet serves as a symbol of personal accountability. It is a reminder of their commitment to make good decisions in all aspects of their life.

Common Personality Types

Main Attraction

This young lady is always trying to impress everyone. She will risk getting in trouble to get attention. Even worse, she will make fun of others to get a laugh.

Solution: Learn her name quickly. You will need it to get her attention when she begins to speak out of turn. Do not give her much room to divert from the focus of the group. When planning, keep her in mind. Ask very specific questions so that you are able to limit her jumping off task.

Identify her good qualities. If you need to, pull her to the side and address the behavior. Start the conversation by highlighting the things she does well. Then proceed to tell her about how her short comings are over shadowing the things you highlighted.

End the conversation with a request for improvement. Let her know what you expect to see from her from this point on. The next time she acts out in group, be sure to remind her of your expectations.

Most important is the safety of all of the girls. If this "main attraction" continues to make others feel uncomfortable, she should be asked to leave the group.

Teacher's Pet

This young lady will usually be the youngest in your group. Her independence has not kicked in yet, and like an elementary school child, she wants to share everything with you. It is also very important to her that you like her.

Solution: Always acknowledge this young lady when she is trying to get your attention. If there is down time, attentively listen to her story. If time is limited, be sure to express your interest in what she wants to tell you, but explain that now

is not a good time, and why. You can provide a time later that she can talk to you, however if you do, be sure to keep your promise. If you forget, she will think that she doesn't really matter much to you and will be less likely to trust what you say.

Withdrawn

There are two main cases where girls act withdrawn from the group. They like the activities, but lack trust or they only joined because their friend asked them to. In both cases, it is unfair to those who are actively participating.

Solution: Give the withdrawn girls a session or two to warm up to the rest of the group. Encourage them to participate and reiterate that this is a safe environment. Share with them the unfairness of their lack of participation. Acknowledge your experience with girls only joining to be with friends.

Be clear about Pearls being voluntary and you only wanting people here who really want to be here and participate.

Hyper Active (non diagnosed ADHD)

She is also a "main attraction" personality, but more in a physical way. The groups are design to include a lot of hands-on learning. A hyper active girl will fall out of her chair during the check in question, and laugh loudly at inappropriate times. She jumps, runs, and dances any chance she gets. She is determined to get your attention and everyone else's.

Solution: You handling of her would be very similar to that of our "main attraction." You must ensure the safety of the group. If you have to, ask her to step out and gather herself. She can return once she has regained her self control. If she begins to repeat the behavior, it may be necessary to ask her to leave the group until she is ready to really behave as a Pearls participant.

Mandated Reporting

Pearls' has a rule that is universal across all groups. "What is said in Pearls stays in Pearls." This rule is effective in getting the girls to open up to one another. It also is the foundation on which trust is built. From trust, we move to building relationships, and bonding.

Although this rule applies to the coordinator as well, be sure to tell the girls that there are some exceptions. Make sure the girls know that you are a mandated reporter. Tell them that by law, you are required to share anything that will bring harm to them or someone else.

Explain how you care about them, and it is important that they are safe. If they are having problems, you want to help them solve them the right way. As a coordinator, you may not have all of the answers. It may be necessary to consult with other adults at Pearls, a parent, the principle, a doctor, or the police to ensure their safety.

This is an important step. The girls can make their own decisions about what they want to share. They also know that their information may be shared with others in an attempt to seek help, or if mandated by law. With the young lady knowing up front, she will not feel tricked or "snitched on" when this issue arises.

Field Trips

Pearls for Teen Girls, is fortunate enough to hold the support of other organizations. Emails are sent often inviting the girls to attend plays, games, and performances.

If you have girls available to attend, please feel free to accept the offers. Acceptance of these tickets fulfills two benefits. The first is to the girls. They now have the opportunity to be culturally enriched, or exposed to an event they may not have had the chance of.

The second benefit is for the organization. Pearls shows appreciation when a coordinator uses the tickets. The donating organization's support will continue to grow. Writing a thank you letter, and having the girls sign it will also identify how the girls benefitted from their experience.

It is seldom that a play, performance, or game takes place during a specific group's meeting time. For that reason, consider the date, time, number of tickets, and any related costs. Most importantly, consider which group/girls will benefit the most from the experience.

Event Planning

There are five main events that take place at Pearls each year.

Holiday Party	We host an annual holiday party for our girls and their family. Games are played, Karaoke is performed, and food is served.
Sleepover	All pearls girls are invited to attend. It is our version of a Lock-in. We rent a recreation center such as the YMCA or Boys and Girls club. The girls attend workshops, play games, have a scavenger hunt, swim, and eat.
Closing Ceremony	This is our end of the year awards ceremony. Each group will vote for the girls that they feel best represent PEARLS. Awardees are announced at this celebration. It is an event for the entire family. We also award our scholarship recipients. A ceremony welcoming the 8 th , 10 th , and 12 th graders into their new pearls group is also performed.
Goal Parties	The goal setting process takes place once per semester. Each girl attending Pearls during the goal setting process sets a personal goal. On the due date, evidence is collected to identify which girls have achieved their goal. A goal party fieldtrip is planned and those girls who have reached their goal are invited.

Although each of these events requires a team effort, an event coordinator is appointed for each one. As the event coordinator, you will be responsible for appointing and overseeing the committee that works on the event.

The things that you will need from your committee is finding a place to hold the event, deciding what activities will take place during the event, and the menu. Your committee should also prepare a list of things you will need to buy and/ or pay for well before the event.

Since your committee will consist mostly of teenagers, you will be responsible for all of the purchases. Please keep in mind that each event has a budget. To maintain an available balance on your credit card, use the list that your committee provides to determine which items you can request a check for.

Purchases and Receipts

Even the most seasoned shopper probably shops less for themselves than for a girl's non-profit organization. The running of four to five groups requires a lot of supplies. Coordinating events also calls for the purchasing of several items.

The most important thing you can do is keep up with your confirmations, invoices, and receipts. Pearls' has a process for credit card receipts, check requests, and reimbursements.

Credit Card Receipts- This process will be for any item(s) you purchase using a Pearl's credit card.

Form: Credit Card Expense Reconciliation

Check Requests – You will need to request a check for anything that is too expensive to put on a credit card. Each coordinator has a limited balance on their credit card. It is best to leave as much of your line of credit available to you as possible. You do not want to find yourself in any binds when needing to quickly swipe your credit card.

Form: Facilitator Reimbursement / Check Request Form

Reimbursements – There may be times when you have to use your own money to purchase something on behalf of Pearls. If that happens, it is necessary to request reimbursement for the purchase.

Form: Facilitator Reimbursement / Check Request Form

In all three of these cases, it is necessary to include original copies of the receipt, invoice, or confirmation. Always be sure to make a copy of the receipt and form for yourself. It is possible that either item could be misplaced and a copy could be used in its place.

A Day in the life of a Pearls Coordinator

Pearls' has 20-22 groups annually. These groups take place in 12-14 sites throughout the city of Milwaukee. Each coordinator is responsible for four to five groups.

The groups are separated by grades. Generally, middle school (6th, 7th, and 8th grade) are grouped together. The high school component is divided into two different categories, Junior Teen and Senior Teen. The junior teen group consists of 9th and 10th graders while the senior teen group consists of 11th and 12th graders.

Many times, the coordinators who prefer middle school will get all middle school groups and vice versa. However scheduling can throw a wrench right into that utopia, and a coordinator may be responsible for middle and high school groups.

In addition to the adult programming team at Pearls are teen facilitators. The role of the teen facilitator is assisting the adult coordinators with running the middle school groups. In return, the Program Coordinator gets to help the teen develop into a Junior Coordinator.

A Junior Coordinator is a former teen facilitator who is currently enrolled in higher education. They are responsible for a middle school group of their own.

Pearls groups can be one hour, one and a half hours, or two hours long. Each group meets at the same place, on a set day of the week. For example, in 2007 the Junior Teen group met at the YMCA every Monday from 4:30 to 6:30 pm. The maximum number of girls per group is twenty five.

Girls do not switch groups unless a circumstance occurs where they are unable to make it to their original group.

Program Coordinators are responsible for preparing lessons, scheduling speakers, designing field trips, and developing projects around the leadership compass, Making Proud Choices, and Too Good or Drugs. “Making Proud Choices” is an abstinence based sex education curriculum. “Too Good for Drugs” is a drug prevention curriculum.