

The Time Capsule Project

NEWSLETTER

By Samantha Maggio



To preserve memories!

For my Girl Scout Gold Award entitled *The Time Capsule Project*, I worked with four girls that hold a special place in my heart. I wanted to find a way to help empower the girls, raise their self-esteem and cultivate lasting friendships. I also wanted the girls to have fun doing it. I helped the girls create personalized time capsules, which will be opened in five years - in 2023. As you might imagine, the girls had fun deciding which items to place into their time capsule each week. The girls worked together to discover things that were important to them and learned about themselves and each other in the process. It was wonderful to see the help and support they gave each other week after week. The goal of the project was achieved when, through a voyage of self-discovery, the girls organically became more socially aware and confident in discussing things that were important to them.

For the past four years, I have participated in a program created by the Farmingdale Youth Council called “*It’s a Girl Thing*.” I have been involved in this program since its inception in 2014, supporting the members of the group as a mentor, confidante, and friend. My hope was that I would make a difference in the girls’ lives. Little did I know how much of a difference the girls would make in my life.

It’s a Girl Thing is a program designed to help special-needs girls foster new friendships, build self-esteem and create a support network for each other. It meets every Saturday morning from November through March for a couple of hours. During these meetings the girls do fun activities, arts and crafts, and discuss issues important to them. It has been incredible to observe the personal growth of each girl week after week, year after year. When it came time to work on my Girl Scout Gold Award, I knew I wanted my project to be centered around these girls. They have been my inspiration.

While working on the time capsules, I gave the girls opportunity to work as a team, be creative, and demonstrate what characteristics give them an individual sense of identity. I felt these were crucial factors to incorporate into a time capsule and these would be things the girls would want to reflect on in five years. We started off with some team-building exercises to get the girls warmed up and comfortable working with each other. One of their favorite activities was standing on two long pieces of wood (like two long skis) and walking together in unity. They learned how to work together as a team to achieve their goal of moving forward across the floor.

The girls worked on a different time capsule activity each week. It was important to remind them of the purpose of the project. Each activity was designed to boost their self-esteem and confidence. It was important for the girls to understand the meaning behind every activity. I wanted them to know that the person who they will be in five years, will be similar, but probably somewhat different from the person they are then. We discussed how things can change drastically in five years and when the time comes to open their time capsule, they may discover that they’ve evolved into an entirely different person.

The girls made self-esteem collages by cutting out inspirational pictures and words from magazines and adhering them to a piece of cardboard. The purpose was to create a collage that represented their current personality, as well as their dreams and ambitions for the future. They also filled out “All About Me” worksheets that described personal and demographic information about themselves in 2018 that they could reflect on in five years’ time. The girls also wrote letters to their future selves which included a description of an extraordinary day they had, something they never wanted to forget, something they promise to themselves and things they want to do someday. To support the theme that the girls could achieve any goals they make if they put their minds to it, the girls placed into the time capsules special plaques that read: *she believed she could, so she did*. The girls also painted small canvases with positive affirmations written on them. Finally, the girls brought some small items from home to include in their time capsule...things that were meaningful or special to them that they would look forward to seeing in five years.

To reinforce the idea that believing in yourself gets you halfway to your goal, I wrote the girls a letter to put in their time capsule.

The Importance of empowering each other

Good morning girls, today is the last day of Girl Talk which means it's the last time we will work on the Time Capsule. In five years, you girls will be able to open up your time capsules and see what is inside. I hope when you girls open the capsules it gives you joy and it shows how much you've grown as a person. I hope that you girls have enjoyed the activities and discovered a piece of yourselves or set a new goal moving forward. Maybe you girls have learned something new about each other, because that's the point of our Saturday morning group. We learn about other people and we empower them and ourselves. We girls can change the world and what helps to do that is if we support one another by uplifting each other. So I encourage you girls to take away from this Time Capsule project that you girls have the power. You girls can accomplish anything that you dream of or any goals you want to achieve in your lives.

-Sam

In the time capsules there's an envelope with a forever stamp with my address on it. I'm 2023 the girls will send me a letter of their thoughts and feelings reflecting on everything we've done. This is a day I cannot wait for it to come.

This wasn't simply an eighty-hour community service project to me - this was more than that. I'm not saying the project was easy because there were definitely days where I felt overwhelmed and felt like giving up. But here I am, writing about my success in leading the project I was passionate about - a project that has unlocked my calling to become a special education teacher.

This project can be replicated around the community and around the country, maybe even around the world. Anyone can take on this project to discover what you value, and what makes you unique. The objects or material you put into the time capsule will be the things you want to preserve for the future. This project isn't just limited to the four girls I made the time capsules with, anyone can do it.