

Tutoring Plus and Lesley University Empower Each Other During “Girls, Media & You” Program

By Kerry Bouffieux, Tutoring Plus of Cambridge

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Two dozen students packed into ‘The Women’s Center’ at Lesley University’s White Hall on a cold Monday evening. Half of these students were Lesley University undergrads while the other half of the students were 6th through 9th grade Cambridge students. The young women had come together to celebrate the completion of a collaborative ‘Girls, Media and You’ workshop series.

The five-week workshops were designed by Lesley undergrads with the goals of opening minds, engaging in meaningful dialog, and sharing opinions on young girl’s and women’s image in modern media. By looking at magazines, videos, music lyrics, movies and more, the young students began to understand the images and attitudes they see everyday and how it relates to their individual image and self-esteem. Colleen Smith, a Lesley University senior, summed up the feelings of her peers saying, “It felt as though the activities we did together, the support we all provided to one another and the friendships we created were the spark that will start the fire within these girls to allow them to carry on the lessons they have learned.”

At the celebration, the girls’ projects were shared while students of both Cambridge and Lesley reflected on their five-week program. The Cambridge girls showed off the collages and drawings they made and shared pieces of their journals which gave everyone in the room a chance to see the how much the girls learned and now understood about body image and media literacy. These journals were a particularly special piece for the girls. When they received the journals weeks before, the excitement took over the room and the smiles could not be ignored while the pride and personal investment of the young students was evident in the quality and diversity of ideas shared within those pages.

Alice Diamond, Associate Dean for Career and Community Service at Lesley University, said “This project has been a wonderful opportunity for our students to apply what they are learning in the classroom and have a chance to work with youth in the Cambridge community. We truly appreciate the collaboration with our community partner, Tutoring Plus.”

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