



# HEALTHY GIRLS SAVE THE WORLD: 2019 Summer Experience Evaluation Report

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**HEALTHY GIRLS**  
SAVE THE WORLD



## Introduction to Healthy Girls Save the World

**Healthy Girls Save the World** (HGSW) is a 501(c)3 non-profit that promotes healthy bodies, healthy minds and healthy relationships for middle school girls in North Carolina by providing a positive space in the community that fosters the development of healthy habits. HGSW inspires girls to be healthy and confident achievers by utilizing the distinct wealth of resources available on a college campus. HGSW organizes dynamic and interactive events where girls meet and engage with NCAA Division I college athletes, cook and eat healthy foods, develop their self-confidence, are physically active, and participate in a host of other health & wellness enhancing activities. Our program helps participants grow and learn to have a healthy mind, body and relationship with herself and others.

### ***What does it mean to be a "Healthy Girl"?***

Girls and women historically struggle with body image issues, self-confidence, and physical wellness related personal responsibility. Empowering girls to have healthy body images results in greater self-confidence and health-enhancing behaviors, and it provides them with the abilities to succeed in areas they otherwise might not have considered possible. In an effort to break down the many barriers that girls face when it comes to learning how to lead healthy lives, our low-cost events make holistic health education, positive role models, and well-organized physical activities more accessible. These events are a powerful combination of trained student volunteers, female athletes, expert speakers, and enriching activities lead by other student organizations. It is our aim to be an advocate for healthy and happy girls in the community, as well as a catalyst for changing perceptions of health and beauty.

In order to combat these issues, Healthy Girls Save the World teaches participants how to nurture a healthy body, maintain a healthy mind, and foster healthy interpersonal relationships through the use of SMART Goals, an evidence-based curriculum, and community networks.



Three pillars of health guide all HGSW programming.

- 1. Healthy Bodies:** Many girls and young women associate having a healthy body with being thin. However, HGSW defines being "healthy" as having consistent daily practices that contribute to living a healthier lifestyle. Examples of these practices would be exercising for thirty minutes a day, having 4-5 servings of vegetables and fruit every day, and/or, drinking 8-10 cups of water every day. These practices contribute to a healthier body, and they also can all be SMART goals. HGSW teaches young girls these practices and shows them that there is positivity to be found in treating your body well: when you nourish your body well you feel good, and when you exercise your body you feel even better.
- 2. Healthy Minds:** More than ever, the pressures and challenges of being a young girl can be overwhelming. Having a healthy mind can be complicated and frustrating because of what young girls are exposed to every day. During this period in girls' lives many suffer

from low self-esteem, which can be debilitating. Studies show that about 75% of girls suffering from the negative feelings associated with low self-esteem engage in cutting, bullying, smoking, drinking, or develop eating disorders. According to the “Do Something Campaign,” 75% of girls with high self-esteem would, unsurprisingly, not participate in any of those negative self-inflicting activities. We want girls to have high self-esteem! Healthy Girls Save the World is a positive environment where we provide young girls with a safe space to learn and express themselves. Having a healthy mind is crucial to their development because with a positive self-image and the knowledge to make positive choices they can become powerful young women in the future. Having a healthy mind is all about knowing how and when to make positive choices, recognizing your worth, and projecting that self-value onto the rest of the world.

- 3. Healthy Relationships:** Girls should recognize their own worth so that they can establish positive relationships with themselves, but they should also find meaning in positive relationships with others. Whether it be their parents or peers, we teach girls how to treat other people well, because knowing how to do this will take them very far in school, in the workplace, and throughout life. This can be tough because girls are products of the environments they come from. Some have seen positive relationships displayed in their households, and some have not. These conversations may have an added layer of depth because this is also a time developmentally where girls may develop romantic feelings for another person. We teach girls not only how to treat other people, but also how they should be treated. It is important that they know this so that they may gain valuable teamwork and collaboration skills that will contribute to their future leadership.

In addition to promoting these health pillars among its participants, HGSW staff and leadership uphold the tenets of these pillars in all interactions with participants, parents, and community partners. HGSW offers year-round programming to engage low- and middle-income African American middle school girls in and around Durham County. This report covers the activities and data from the 2019 HGSW Summer Experience

## Summer Experience 2019

The Summer Experience provides a space where girls they can practice skills related to the three pillars (Healthy Mind, Healthy Body, Healthy Relationships) in a structured, supportive environment through the mentorship of HGSW counselors and leadership. The camp took place June 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019 on the campus of University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The aim of the Summer Experience is to foster daily habits and affirmations that extend beyond the camp and become a part of daily life towards a healthy lifestyle.

Each year the Summer Experience has a theme, which puts the skills and values promoted by HGSW into action towards a culminating enterprise or experience. This year's theme, "STEM Girl Summer" allowed the girls to learn fun ways to indulge in self-care through science focused activities.

SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound) are introduced on the first day of camp to support participants in identifying healthy behaviors associated with the three pillars. These goals allow participants to take ownership of habits they want to develop during the Summer Experience, and daily check-ins promote reflection on what they are doing to actively move towards achieving these goals.

## Survey Results

### Camper Demographics

Most campers who attended the 2019 HGSW Summer Experience were 13 (27.8%) or 14 (27.8%) years old, entering the 8<sup>th</sup> grade (22%), African American (78%), and resided in Durham (56%). Campers came from a mix of public and private schools including:

- Research Triangle Charter Academy
- Sherwood Githens Middle School
- Hawbridge Middle School
- Northeast Carolina Preparatory Academy
- Smith Middle School
- Atlantic High School
- KIPP Academy
- Hillside New Tech
- Durham Academy
- Durham School of the Arts
- Rogers-Herr Middle School
- Southern Nash Middle School

## Camper Survey

On the last day of the Summer Experience, eighteen girls took a web-based survey. The survey asked questions specifically related to:

- their SMART goals
- how HGSW helped them achieve their SMART goals
- how their definition of what it means to be “healthy” has changed during the Summer Experience
- what they liked best about the Summer Experience
- how they would incorporate lessons from the Summer Experience into their daily lives
- HGSW social media presence and feedback for improvements

### SMART Goals

Girls were asked to reflect on the SMART goals they made on the first day of the Summer Experience, and how HGSW helped them to achieve them. Overall, 78% of the girls reported that they reached 1 or 2 of their SMART goals. Eleven percent of participants reported reaching all 3 of their SMART goals. For healthy bodies, most participants recorded SMART goals related to more water intake, getting more rest at night, and increasing physical activity. Related to healthy minds, most participants reported wanting to meditate more often and incorporate positive affirmations into their daily. For healthy relationships, many of the participants reported wanting to become more involved in their friendships and improve relationships with their parents and families.

We asked the girls to reflect on some of the factors that would hinder or help them in reaching their SMART goals during the Summer Experience. Almost half (45%) of participants let HGSW know that a lack of focus, procrastination, or daily distractions may hinder them in reaching their goals. Specific wording from one of the participant’s responses is as follows:

*Figure 1. Camper survey: “Sometimes it can be hard to meet all of your goals. What is one thing that might keep you from accomplishing your SMART goals?”*

*“I think that distractions in life keeps you from accomplishing your goals. In a specific way, it would be your friends.” – 13-year-old from Durham*

Additionally, over half (55%) of participants noted that being reminded of their SMART goals, writing them down, or talking about them positively with other campers was a factor that heavily influenced them to meet their SMART goals.

*Figure 1. Camper survey: “What is one thing that helped you reach your SMART goals for a healthy mind?”*

*“Just writing the goal down and really how it was emphasized to help us remember and it was also helpful that the goals that I put were a benefit for me and they helped me out so that is another reason why it was easier to do the SMART goals.” – 14-year-old from Durham*

### Definition of “Health”

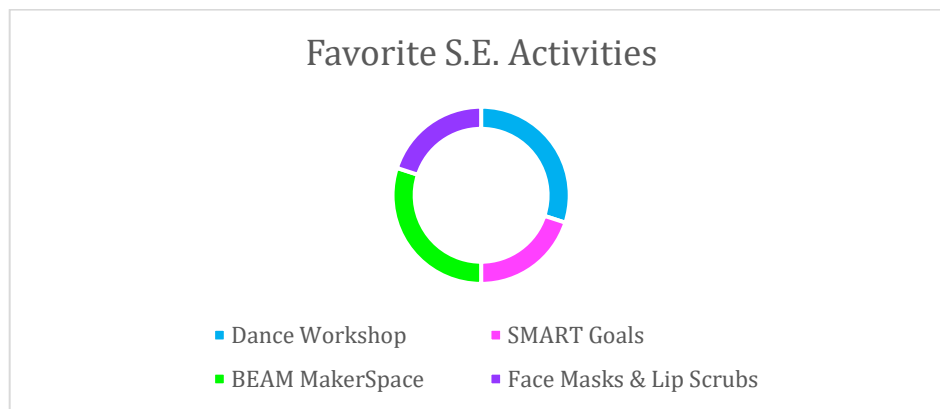
Fifty-six percent of girls surveyed said that their definition of what it means to be “healthy” changed as a result of the camp. Girls’ responses were most often related to expanding their definition of what it means to be healthy outside of just body health or what it means to have a “good” body into a more holistic definition that includes mental health and healthy relationships.

### Overall Evaluation from Campers

Overall, 100% of campers indicated they enjoyed the Summer Experience and felt supported by the Summer Experience counselors; with 89% reporting they would come back next year if they could. Additionally, 83% told us they would recommend the HGSW Summer Experience to their friends and invite them back for next year if possible.

When asked what activities they liked best, girls indicated a wide range as displayed by Figure 5 below. Each activity that was mentioned received about the same number of votes, indicating campers enjoyed mostly the same activities. The activities that received the most mentions or were liked best by campers were the Dance Workshop with Ms. D, creating buttons at BEAM MakerSpace, creating and learning about SMART goals, and finally making face masks and lip scrubs from scratch in relaxation stations.

*Figure 3. Camper survey: “What is one thing you enjoyed learning most during the 2019 Summer Experience?”*



When asked how campers were likely to incorporate what they learned during the 2019 Summer Experience into their daily lives, more than half (80%) mentioned revisiting lessons about daily affirmations and SMART goals. Camper responses to this question specifically mention continuing the specific SMART goals they created during the Summer Experience even though the camp had ended.

Figure 4. Camper survey: "How are you going to continue to incorporate the lessons from the S.E. in your daily life?"

*"I'm going to do daily talks with myself." – 12-year-old from Chapel Hill*

*"I have been making sure to 'hype myself up' with my affirmations that I say at school or at home, telling myself 'you got this' or 'you are strong.'" – 14-year-old from Durham*

*"Remembering my SMART goals and continuing to do them" – 13-year-old from Durham*

### HGSW Social Media Presence and Engagement

The camp participants were also asked about their perception of Healthy Girls Save the World, Inc's social media presence and ways the organization could engage them more often. When asked what social media channels the campers used most – more than half (89%) responded that YouTube was their most used social media website. Popular social media channels like Instagram (78%) and Snapchat (72%) follow closely. When asked if they would participate in an HGSW social media giveaway, eighty-three percent of the participants stated they would participate. Participants indicated that they would like to see prizes like water bottles, gift cards, air pods, and UNC gear.

We also asked campers to go to our current website, [HealthyGirlsSaveTheWorld.org](http://HealthyGirlsSaveTheWorld.org), to give general feedback about website aesthetics. Popular responses include feedback about changing the website's color, updating information more often, and including a photo gallery from past HSGW events.

### Parent/Guardian Survey

At the conclusion of the camp, parents/guardians were asked to complete a Qualtrics survey regarding their perception of the camp and of their child's overall satisfaction. Twelve parents/guardians completed the survey, most of which were parents/guardians of rising 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> graders (67%) and lived in Durham (50%). Twenty-five percent of parents/guardians surveyed received a scholarship to attend the 2019 Summer Experience, and over half (75%) had previously enrolled their child in HGSW programming. Of those who had previously attended HGSW programming, over half (58%) had attended a previous Summer Experience.

Parents seemed to be satisfied with the 2019 Summer Experience with one-hundred-percent responding that the Summer Experience positively impacted their child. Over half (75%) responded that their participant was excited after the first day of camp, and excited to return the following day. One-hundred-percent of parents/guardians surveyed said they would recommend the HGSW Summer Experience to another parent for their child to participate.

As HGSW looks to explore more reliable and consistent funding for its programming and staff, the survey also explored how parents/guardians felt about additional contributions. The majority of responding parents/guardians (67%) responded yes when asked if they would be interested in making monthly donations. For those who indicated interest, 50% indicated they would be willing to contribute \$0-25. Survey respondents were also asked how much they would be willing and/or able to pay for HGSW Summer Experience, particularly one lasting three weeks or more. Nearly 67% of parents/guardians surveyed stated they would pay \$150 a week for a HGSW Summer Experience that lasted at least 3 weeks. Two respondents indicated they would be willing to pay \$200 a week, and two respondents indicated they would need a scholarship for a Summer Experience that lasted at least 3 weeks. Despite mixed reception of additional financial contributions for future HGSW programming, most parents/guardians surveyed (83%) indicated that they would contribute to a crowdfunding campaign to raise funds to hire full time staff to make HGSW programming more sustainable.

### Future Engagement and Opportunities with HGSW

Healthy Girls Save the World, Inc. is very much interested in providing healthy activities and content to our participants outside of the annual Summer Experience. In the camper survey, we specifically asked our participants how they would like to see that happen and what type of content they would like to see. When asked if they would like to see HGSW become an app for their phone, and what they would like to see on the app – a number of respondents indicated that help with SMART goals, healthy eating, and self-empowerment/confidence would be beneficial from this type of platform.

*Figure 5. Camper survey: "How are you going to continue to incorporate the lessons from the S.E. in your daily life?"*

*"Sure, to stay healthy and keep track of what you eat, etc." – 14-year-old from Chapel Hill*

*"Yes, I would like to see how to exercise every day, how to stay healthy, and why you should do all of this." – 12-year-old from Durham*

*"Fitness tips, recipes, interviews with girls that have been to the camp, giveaways, a blog portion" – 13-year-old from Durham*

*"Of course, maybe it could send daily affirmations to your phone and like tips to help girls through their middle school and high school experiences" – 14-year-old from Durham*

Another section of the camper survey was dedicated to understanding how campers would like to be engaged by Healthy Girls Save the World on a monthly basis and the content they would like to see in future engagement opportunities. More than half (53%) responded yes to receiving monthly email from HGSW, while the remainder (23.5%) were split evenly between 'maybe' receiving emails or responded no altogether.

One specific engagement tool that HGSW is working on is the HGSW Subscription Box. In order to move forward with this project, we wanted to get an understanding of what the participants



would like to see in the boxes. Eighty-three percent of participants responded they would like to receive an HGSW Subscription Box, and that they would like to see promotional materials, health and beauty tips, and physical activity plans in the boxes. Fifty-percent of participants stated that they think their parents would spend around \$10-\$15 on a subscription box each month.

*Figure 6. Camper survey: "How are you going to continue to incorporate the lessons from the S.E. in your daily life?"*

