Promoting Girl Power

Theta Xi Chapter implements a body image workshop for young women in foster care

As the planning stages for the event began, the Alliance was searching for facilitators for the various panels, but was having trouble finding someone who had knowledge in the area of body image.

Taylor had previously worked with the chapter at USC, and Tri Delta sprang to mind in connection with Bodyimage3D. She got in touch with the Bodyimage3D co-coordinators for the chapter, Amanda Amos and Rachal Thundat, to see if Theta Xi would be interested in participating. The Tri Deltas enthusiastically accepted the role.

The first step of developing the workshop was to brainstorm ideas on how to best implement Bodyimage3D for this particular audience.

According to Rachel Thundat, "The response was incredible. Almost every single one of them seemed very drawn into the activities [...] and they were very eager to share their thoughts. They seemed to really understand the difference between positive and negative body image, and that was basically our main goal."

At the end of the day, the members of Theta Xi were happy to be able to help these women while also spreading body image awareness in their community. At the same time, Taylor was proud to have Tri Delta involved in the program.

"It was always my goal to couple my love for Tri Delta and its many programs with my passion for serving kids in foster care," says Taylor. "I am so glad we have been able to do so through this unique collaboration with Theta Xi Chapter!"

ON FEB. 2, THETA XI CHAPTER at the University of Southern California shared the healthy mind, healthy body and healthy spirit message of Bodyimage3D with young women in foster care. Members from the Tri Delta chapter facilitated a workshop as part of an event called "Girl Power: Celebrating What Makes You Beautiful," hosted by the Alliance for Children's Rights.

Taylor Dudley, Cal State/Long Beach, works with the Alliance for Children's Rights in Los Angeles. The office is about three miles from the USC campus. "We provide free legal services to kids in foster care," explains Taylor. "But in addition to that, we put on events that are designed to teach, empower and serve the young people who are 16 and older and about to exit foster care."

The Girl Power event was designed specifically to help empower young women and consisted of several workshops on topics such as employment, reproductive health, education, body image and healthy relationships.

Dara Weinrauch, Southern California, is not only a member of Theta Xi, but is also an intern at the Alliance for Children's Rights. She had already worked on communications for the event through the Alliance, and when she found out her chapter had agreed to participate, she immediately signed up to help with the body image workshop.

"Bodyimage3D has recently become important to our chapter, and we've been looking for avenues to expand our outreach," says Dara. "This was a great way to move beyond just Tri Delta and USC and reach out to others who may need more assistance than we do ourselves."

Three additional members worked on the project with Amanda, Rachel and Dara: Jen Masiac, Tina Gutierrez and Lindy Whittlesey.

Amanda Amos comments, "Our relationship with our bodies, insecurities and how the media affects those apply to virtually every woman. That being said, I think the blessing in working with the young women in foster care was being able to facilitate a conversation about how we feel about our bodies and if the media perpetuates an unrealistic ideal. Also, giving them an outlet to voice those opinions was important since many of them have never even been exposed to this idea of 'body image' or had the space to discuss it on a deeper level."

In order to facilitate conversation, the Tri Deltas began the workshop by asking the participants — a group of around 10-15 young women — what came to mind when they thought about body image. The Theta Xi members wrote down the participants' responses and then asked them further questions, such as, "Why is it you think this when you think of body image?"

The next activity included cutting photos out of magazines that either portrayed a healthy or an unhealthy body image. The women created posters using the photos and talked about how the media portrays body image.

On the whole, the participants were receptive to the message and were excited about the workshop.

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