CLASS AND THE CITY
THE SOPHISTICATED ESCAPE FROM THAT TOO-LONG TO-DO LIST.

— BLOG, THE HUSTLE —

A Conversation With Rachel Doyle – Founder and CEO of GlamourGals Foundation, Inc.
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Senior isolation has become an epidemic. It is estimated that this year, 3.3 million seniors will spend time in senior homes across the US – and 60% of these senior home residents will never receive a visitor.

A little more than a year ago I saw one of my LinkedIn contacts had started volunteering with an organization called GlamourGals. Intrigued by the name, I did some digging and fell in love with their mission – to inspire and organize teen volunteers to provide companionship and makeovers to women and men living in senior homes. Recognizing the importance and joy that comes from elder companionship – my Pop Pop had lived with my family since I was born and my sisters and I were already known for doing our great aunt’s nails each time she visited – my sisters and I decided to get involved and started a community chapter in our town, of which I became the advisor.

When her grandmother passed away, GlamourGals founder and CEO, Rachel Doyle realized the overwhelming need for companionship among seniors. Combining her passion for kindness and makeup, she filled this need by starting the GlamourGals Foundation, Inc., which inspires young volunteers to visit senior women and men living in senior homes and provide lively conversation, manicures and facials. Now, 17 years organization has spread to over 100 chapters across the US with 3,000 volunteers. I’ve experienced first-hand how a wave of fresh visit transforms the atmosphere of the home in just an hour or two – and I promise that if you try volunteering just once, you’ll leave with a new perspective as well.

Keep reading for GlamourGals founder Rachel Doyle’s advice for young entrepreneurs, students and anyone who wants to make a positive and compassionate difference in the world.
Q: What inspired you to start GlamourGals Foundation, Inc.?

I started GlamourGals when I was still in high school [she was only 17!]. I was inspired to honor my grandmother and provide an opportunity for relevant community service. I loved fashion, beauty and makeup. I also loved making people smile. I thought, why can’t I combine these passions?

Q: How were you able to grow the organization while you were still in high school?

Looking back there are definitely key moments that shaped the future of GlamourGals and my development. In my first meeting with a senior home, the activities director posed questions that I didn’t have the answers to. As a high school student, I had to find them and follow up with her.

Another is the very first makeover I did, which happened months after that first meeting. The senior home had sent a press release and a *New York Times* reporter responded. After they ran the story on us, the Oprah Winfrey Show read it and called my high school saying...
that they wanted to cover GlamourGals. At the time, GG was still just a project that I invited fellow students to participate in. *(Coming full circle, GG and Rachel and featured in the November 2017 issue of O, The Oprah Magazine!)*

**Q: How did you continue to grow the organization while you were a busy college student?**

During college my role began to shift. Chapters were being created all over. GG volunteers would call me and ask for additional makeover supplies. I knew my role was to make sure my volunteers had everything they needed – so I cold called companies and pitched GG to everyone from the receptionist to the Senior Vice President.

There were many times in college where I had to sacrifice my social life or stay up late prepping press packets. My first board conference call happened on a pay telephone in a broom closet, while I was on campus in between classes – it was the only quiet place! I learned early on to do whatever it takes to make things happen. Even after college, when I had my first full-time job, I would work before I got into the office – taking calls on my commute in or catching up on my work on the weekends.

**Q: What did you study in school and do you feel like it has helped you during your career?**

I was a Policy Analysis and Management major. I don’t think it has anything to do with my work except that it has challenged me to learn about subjects that made me more well-rounded. It also taught me what I don’t want to do.
Q: You run an organization full of strong women helping women. Who do you look up to as a role model or for inspiration in your own life?

My mother. She has been there from the start and continued to give in all the ways that she could. For many years she was a kindergarten teacher and she would come home from work and do our chapter mailings multiple times a week! I am eternally grateful for her dedication and support. I also look up to Martha, Ellen and Oprah! They have each built empires in their own way. Martha filled a need, Ellen brings humor and Oprah brings inspiration.

Q: When you’re not working how do you spend your free time? What are your wellness outlets?

I love to travel, bake and workout. I just had my second child this past spring so like any new mom I am still trying to juggle all of the responsibilities and keep time for myself. Needless to say, I want to raise two little expert travelers, so I take them around the world and just roll with it! And when it comes to my outlets, nothing helps me relax more than getting a massage.
Q: What advice would you give to someone who is just starting their career?

Be a good listener and become an expert at saying thank you! Always write a thank you note to people, along the way I have had many mentors or even professional colleagues who have supported me with their time over lunch or coffee, or even sitting at their desk. Always say thank you – it can be via text, e-mail or handwritten note. Even a phone call! Just say it!

Q: What are some tips you would give to young entrepreneurs interested in starting their own business or nonprofit?

Research and talk to people who have created a business or organization related to yours. A lot of people don’t realize the paperwork and leg work it takes to get something off the ground. It is super competitive and can be very draining, and your idea may never really take off. Sometimes your ideas might even be more successful when manifested as a fun hobby rather than as your work.
Q: Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience starting GG?

This journey didn’t happen overnight. As much as you see “insta-success” today, I feel like people are being cheated out of experience. These experiences have defined our success and given me the confidence in the decisions I make now as the CEO of GlamourGals Foundation, Inc.

Feel inspired? Join the GlamourGals community by donating your time and money to help end senior isolation! In addition to makeovers, GlamourGals hosts fundraisers and events throughout the year on the East and West Coasts – I hope to see you there! x