

BRAVE

Girls Leadership Inc.



learn ..lead ..lend ..love.

Annual Report 2017-2018



May 25, 2018

96 K Tudor Lane Manchester, CT 06042

Prepared by:

Meaghan Davis, President and CEO

Andrea McDermott, Treasurer and Board Director

Mar Amador, Student Intern

Molly Kozlowski, Student Intern

A Letter from the Board of Directors

Dear BRAVE friends,

BRAVE Girls Leadership Inc. will soon complete our third year of operation. During this time we have experienced great success in bringing our mission to life. As a team, we contributed to an increase in awareness and inspired action around topics of human rights, social justice, and feminism through the vehicles of education, mentoring, leadership development and direct service. Through a variety of programs, projects and initiatives we have partnered with over 25 schools and communities and worked with over 1,000 students. Some outstanding projects include our Service Learning Trip to the Dominican Republic, our college internship program, and the two BRAVE conference events we hosted. It has been an honor and privilege to share this BRAVE journey with all of you.

Today, the BRAVE Board of Directors are very happy to share some important and very exciting news regarding the next chapter of BRAVE's story. In order to continue expanding and improving, the BRAVE Board of Directors have decided to restructure the BRAVE organization. Therefore, BRAVE Girls Leadership Inc. will dissolve our 501(c)3 status as a nonprofit organization. This summer, we will reorganize as an LLC called The BRAVE Institute for Education and Social Justice.

We are certain that this organizational change is a positive and vital next step. The BRAVE Institute LLC will maintain the BRAVE mission; to inspire and challenge humans to be brave and self-empowered contributors to a better world. However, we will engage several profound, and truly awesome amendments to how we bring our mission to life. This transition will serve as an opportunity to build on and add to what we already do and allow us to focus on diversifying and improving our strongest BRAVE programs, including the college internship program, the BRAVE annual conference, service learning trips, as well as BRAVE leadership training and workshops. We will work to enhance the sustainability of our impact as well as to broaden our network of partnerships and participants to include even more BRAVE humans in our local and global communities.

The reorganization of BRAVE Girls Leadership to The BRAVE Institute will facilitate a new vision for BRAVE. Our current K-12 mentoring programs rely heavily on our college interns. Our organizational change will temporarily eliminate our current college internship program and ultimately our ability to sustain direct support for individual schools. Therefore, we will no longer be able to provide weekly personnel support to any K-12 partner school. This decision was one of the hardest our organization has been faced to make. BRAVE started in a high school and came to life through students experiences in after school programs. BRAVE would not be what it is today without the students and teachers of our K-12 mentoring programs. Our time working with the students, teachers, administrators, parents and communities of each BRAVE school have been incredibly rewarding and truly special. Each partner school has had a unique and valuable role within the BRAVE family, contributing to our development and success over time. Thank you for an amazing three years.

If your school or community is interested in establishing a partnership with The BRAVE Institute, please connect with Meaghan Davis as soon as possible to discuss some very important legal protocols and guidelines. One very immediate example of a new protocol is the use of the organization's name, logo and content. Because the name, logo and content of "BRAVE Girls Leadership" are the intellectual property of Meaghan Davis, it is important that we no longer use them after Friday May 11th, without written permission from Meaghan Davis.

It remains our ultimate goal to continue to bring the BRAVE mission to life. We will be in touch with more information about the future of The BRAVE Institute at the end of the 2018 summer season. If anyone has questions about our upcoming changes, please contact Meaghan Davis at meaghan.a.davis@gmail.com.

On behalf of the entire BRAVE team, we are so grateful to all of you for your contributions and support. We are so proud of all that we have been able to accomplish, with your help, and we look forward to all of the new and wonderful opportunities and obstacles ahead of us. Please remember, BRAVE is not a place, person or thing; it is something that exists inside each of us; inside our hearts, minds and souls. Above all else, continue to live BRAVE each and every day and take BRAVE with you wherever you may go. At our best and bravest, we can and will contribute even more peace and love to make our world better. Stay awesome, everyone!

Peace and love,

Meaghan Davis

She/her/hers
Founder and CEO
President, Board of Directors



BRAVE Students Speak

“I learned to be BRAVE and to help our community and to work together and how to make new friends.” - Smith Elementary Student

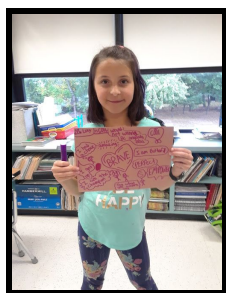
“BRAVE helped me gain more confidence to stick up for myself. It also helped me learn how to solve conflicts.” - Sedgwick Middle School Student

“The reason I like BRAVE is due to the fact that it teaches young women how to respect ourselves, and to learn about important values we have deep down inside. Another reason is BRAVE teaches us values school cannot teach us. BRAVE is a wonderful place to be to learn, have fun, and chill with new people.”

- Summit Middle School Student

“This year BRAVE at Island Trees High School had weekly meetings on topics that were important to us and important to the world. We spoke a lot this year about how to defend yourself whenever you're in an uncomfortable situation and even took a self defense class! A few members also had the opportunity to attend the International Day of the Girl at the United Nations which they then brought back information they learned to the rest of the group.”

- Victoria Lavelle, President of Island Trees High School BRAVE



“BRAVE allows me to meet kind and inspiring individuals who are passionate about making a difference in this world anyway that they can. BRAVE creates a space on campus where people can show their true selves, and feel accepted and appreciated by their BRAVE family. Taking on a leadership position within BRAVE taught me how much work must go into organizing events, but that it is all worth it at the end when we see the impact we can make.”

- Ashley Stephens, Vice President of UConn BRAVE

“BRAVE has taught me to reach out my comfort zone, to grow and be aware of what I'm capable of in order to be the leader I am today. This semester, I've learned to be an advocate and use my voice for good. Being a member of BRAVE is an experience that has truly changed my life.”

- Barbara Shehata, UConn BRAVE Student

“Being a part of BRAVE has definitely pushed me out of my comfort zone many times and has taught me that usually the main obstacle you have to overcome is yourself. Sometimes you just need a little push to get started. I'm thankful that I have had this opportunity to be a part of a dynamite organization and have been able to meet a group of kind hearted and like minded individuals.”

- Michelle Voong, Computer Science Intern



“Being a part of an organization like BRAVE has transformed who I am. Not only has it given me skills to become a leader, it has helped me question and understand what a true leader really is and how it can be shown in so many different ways. I could name a list of all the professional development I have gained, but that would not even encompass what this organization has truly given to me. Without BRAVE I would not be as confident and willing to share my thoughts and ideas and would underestimate my own value. BRAVE is not only an organization but also a support system, a safe space, and a family that has helped guide me to my values, passions, and focusing on what is important.”

- Emma Whitmore, Mentoring Intern

BRAVE by the Numbers

1,865 participants



13 schools

11 major service projects



Led and supported **22** awareness campaigns



23 leadership trainings

Of students who participated in a leadership training:

- 87% answered that they were very satisfied with the leadership that they received.
- 95% agreed that the training was both effective and impactful.
- 91% felt empowered to lead others in their community.
- 91% learned new and useful leadership skills.
- 94% believe the training helped strengthen their leadership skills.

BRAVE Student Leader Feature:

BRAVE is Home

Home is the closest word I can use to describe BRAVE. With family members coming in and out, the BRAVE program had become a space of constant change, inspiration, new friendship, and endless possibility.

The home that BRAVE provided for me was a good one. It was always a safe space for self-exploration. From my ever-changing dreams, to switching schools, and transitioning between genders. No matter who was home at the time, it was BRAVE family. They were there ready to listen, learn, and support me. I hope this letter will explain how influential BRAVE has been in my life. In order to express this I have chosen, with great difficulty, to highlight three of my most profound experiences with BRAVE. I will start with my time teaching and learning as a mentor.

I spent my time in BRAVE following my passions. I worked often as a mentoring intern. As such I had the incredible opportunity of mentoring elementary, middle school students, and eventually fellow interns too. As most BRAVE mentors will tell you, I learned more from this experience than I ever thought I would. During my time as a mentor, I planned lessons based on themes of self-love, teamwork, and empowerment. I was able to see how our BRAVE lessons and community impacted the students I worked with. They created new friendships, developed their team-working skills, and even took up leadership roles in the classroom. By sharing their ideas and helping younger students, I saw as even the shyest of members feel comfortable to join in the fun and most importantly be themselves.

In the Fall of 2017, I was not in front of the classroom. Instead, I got to sit back and see the BRAVE program run under the leadership of my peers. I got to watch as my friends, and fellow interns, experienced what it was like to mentor. Their transformation was incredible. By spring time, the BRAVE mentors were captivating the attention of rambunctious students and creating lessons with meaningful themes. I was so proud to watch as students welcomed new BRAVE family members in, and as the new mentors made BRAVE a home of their own.

In BRAVE, I was challenged to push past my comfort zone and be vulnerable. I learned the power of empathy and the importance of not giving up on what you believe in. The second experience I will share is BRAVE's first ever international service learning trip to the Dominican Republic. This lesson about comfort zones and vulnerability was, without a doubt, reinforced during our service learning trip to the Dominican Republic.

This trip was challenging in many ways and I don't think anyone could have anticipated what we were going to see and be doing. The one of the most important things I learned during this trip was that sometimes in order to do the right thing, you need to put your comfort aside. Sometimes, you need to challenge yourself to give it your all even when you feel defeated.

As a member of the BRAVE team who spoke Spanish I helped translate a majority of the trip. Often, I helped explain construction plans or aid where vocabulary was limited. During our last few days however, I helped translate community meetings we had with those who lived in Imbert. I listened to their struggles with drugs, crimes, health issues. Having to explain such stories for my English speaking friends was both mentally and emotionally exhausting. In order to retell their stories accurately I had to put my emotions and reactions aside. At the end of each meeting, my emotions would come down on me and I had time to process everything that happened.

After the first meeting I wasn't sure I wanted to expose myself to the conversation again. I wanted to help but I found it very difficult to participate. I shared how I felt with my BRAVE friends and they listened and encouraged me to do what was best for me. At that moment I could have easily given into my fears and decided that I no longer wanted to sit in to the meetings. I really wanted to help Imbert and I understood the importance of their stories being heard. So, I ultimately decided to continue participating in the meetings. I found strength in my friends and they helped me find comfort in these difficult conversations. I was able to overcome my fear and help make a difference.

The last experience I would like to share with you is about our second annual conference, the Live BRAVE Conference: Teaching and Learning for Social Justice. When I was assigned the position of conference chair, I knew I wanted to create a space where people could learn and teach about social justice issues.

Our goal was to bring together diverse voices and perspectives. Lots of planning was focused on how to engage people in discussion that we lack in our daily lives. We hoped to build conversations about values and dreams. At the conference I was able to take a step back and I noticed something incredible. Just by being together people opened up. They expressed curiosity and an eagerness to do better. They did not necessarily need a prompt from us to do so. It came naturally. They simply needed a space that encouraged respect, kindness, patience, and authenticity.

Seeing this unfold at the conference not only made me proud but hopeful as well. If BRAVE was able to create a space where different people could find common ground, have fun, and learn together. Then I could do the same in my daily life. By being patient, authentically me, and kind I could create a space among my own friends, family and classmates that promoted such- goodness.

Home is an understatement when describing what BRAVE has been for me these past three years. I will always be grateful for the home BRAVE is. Despite the transition it is undergoing I know it will always be there for its family. My story is only one of so many that have been positively impacted by their time at BRAVE. Because of this organization so many believe in themselves more, and are spreading the goodness with those around them. I can't wait to continue to share the lessons and memories BRAVE has provided me with to new family members to come.

Stay BRAVE Always,

Mar Amador

They/them/theirs

BRAVE Lifer



BRAVE Community Feedback

"BRAVE has given me the space to share my passions with humans I have met and grown to care for over the last year. In return, I have had the opportunity to absorb new perspectives and ideas that have changed how I engage with the world. I learned how to be a better me."

- Sarah Dottor, AmeriCorps VISTA Member

"BRAVE is an opportunity for girls to experience a safe space to share ideas, concerns, solutions and dreams about making a difference in their world and the world around them. They have serious conversations and play, they get to know all types of students and interact with all grades. The positive energy is infectious no matter who or how many students attend each week. Their leader Shelby is consistent, professional, energetic and extremely positive. BRAVE provides an after school activity where anyone can shine. I have only been involved from afar because Shelby is a dynamic leader. Thanks for this opportunity at KP."

- Laura Wilson, King Philip Middle School Teacher Advisor



"I am so happy with the activities you are doing in BRAVE. I love that you are talking with them about their goals and aspirations. This is exactly what I was hoping for for my daughter. We have her dream catcher up in the refrigerator so we can all remember that she wants to go to college."

- Eileen McCathy, BRAVE Parent

"BRAVE has been a place where positive feelings are shared, growth is celebrated, doubt is nullified, and friendship reigns supreme. I am still amazed at the level of enthusiasm shared by all of our BRAVE members, from the youngest to the oldest. BRAVE proves that a small investment in acceptance can reap immeasurable amounts of love."

- Areej Nitowski, BRAVE Board Director and Sedgwick Teacher Advisor



Live BRAVE Conference: Teaching & Learning for Social Justice

66 registered participants, 6 panelists, 9 guest speakers

Participant feedback:

“My favorite part of being in BRAVE this year was without a doubt working on the Live BRAVE Conference. I was so proud to work with my friends and bring together so many great people. Everyone came ready to learn, share and be their authentic selves. It was an incredible experience; listening to their stories and sharing a genuinely BRAVE space.”

- Mar Amador, Conference Chair Intern

“The conference was inspiring to say the least. I think everyone needs to experience an event like it to help them understand the world around them just a little more.”

- Shannon Thearle, ITHS Junior, Conference Participant

“The 2018 BRAVE conference was an exquisitely timed event for individuals dedicating their ability to provide information and understanding of areas of social justice and the application in everyday life. Individuals that spoke of experiences of triumph or trial really showed that social justice is an action of progress, and one that everyone can be involved in through their own means.”

- Heather Norris, Former BRAVE Intern and Conference Speaker

“Speaking at the BRAVE conference this year pushed me far outside my comfort zone but gave me the platform to use my voice to speak on topics that are important to me. This opportunity, and the support of the attendees, made me realize that my words and voice matter; this was the first step in a lifelong journey of sharing my voice and hopefully encouraging others to do the same.”

- Jamiah Bennett, Former BRAVE Intern and Conference Student Keynote Speaker

“The conference was very informative and inspiring. All of the programs had very interesting perspectives on social justice and advocacy. I would love to return to a similar conference in the future.”

- Lucas Brunt, Conference Presenter



Spotlight: BRAVE Award Recipients

Elementary School Awards

- Kindness Award - Aleksandra Cruz-Santiago
- Learn.Lead.Lend.Love Award - Giselle Santa
- BRAVEry Award - Sophia Clark



Middle School Awards

- Kindness Award - Lasya Karuturi
- Learn.Lead.Lend.Love Award - Abby Craig
- BRAVEry Award - Mebret Farquhar
- Kindness Award - Elyse Willis-Card
- Learn.Lead.Lend.Love Award - Hazel Weathers
- BRAVEry Award - Karin Parhomenko

College Awards

- The Rising Rockstar Award - Devon Roberts, USJ
- Excellence in Leadership and Commitment to Service - Heather Allstrom, UConn
- Excellence in Leadership and Commitment to Service - Ashley Stephens, UConn



Org-Wide Awards

- The Learn.Lead.Lend.Love Award - Emma Whitmore
- The Lifer Award - Mar Amador
- The BRAVEry Award - Shelby Mehmet

BRAVE Donors

In our third fiscal year BRAVE Girls Leadership lead many community engagement projects, for which we received many, very generous donations from different constituents. All of those donations went directly toward our service goals and made each project a great success. In addition to the donations we were given for our community projects, we were also fortunate enough to be awarded a few donations strictly for BRAVE Girls Leadership and our day to day expenses for operation. This included the donations that were generously contributed by all those who attended the Learn.Lead.Lend.Love Luncheon Event. Those donations were made directly to BRAVE, for BRAVE. We also received specific donations for our Live BRAVE Conference, our partnership with the Imbert community in the Dominican Republic, and our H2O for Life direct service project. We would like to extend our deepest thanks to those who made those contributions.

Individual Donations:

- Jennifer Chila
- Christine Dooley
- Scott Falk
- Jonathan Harder
- Healing and Transformative Therapy Services LLC
- Annemarie Morrissey
- Risa Nitkin
- Michele O'Rourke
- Ray's Catering
- Colette and Tom Rogers
- Delores Sarfo-Darko
- Maribeth Sarnacki
- Mark Tomasino

Fundraising Events for Monetary Donations:

- Donors and Attendees of the Learn.Lead.Lend.Love Luncheon, December 2nd 2017
- Walk for Water Event, Hosted by the UConn Chapter
 - Heather Allstrom
 - Marge and Kenneth Allstrom
 - Olga and Peter Allstrom
 - Mar Amador
 - Anastacia Burns
 - Danisha and James Collins
 - Robin Corning
 - JoAnna Daemmrich
 - Nayo Daniel
 - Russell and Marietta Davis
 - Deanne DeCrescenzo
 - Laura DeSorbo
 - Jeffrey Dottor
 - Sarah Dottor
 - Flushing Hospital OR
 - Abigail Joseph
 - Erica Jowdy
 - Brett Kenyon

- Brittany Kenyon
- Victoria Kenyon
- Kori Krafick
- Natalie Maduro
- Nicole Messoro
- Denise O'Rourke
- Michele O'Rourke
- Devon Roberts
- Kate Shannon
- Ashley Stephens
- David Stephens
- Maria Turcotte
- USJ BRAVE



BRAVE Financial Summary

BRAVE has just finished its third fiscal year. In our third year of operations, BRAVE's finances were consistent with our second fiscal year as an organization. The absence of tremendous growth in our revenue this year was a direct result of Board Directors decision in January to dissolve our 501(c)3 status in May. However, BRAVE did continue to grow and expand our reach. We held our first ever organization wide fundraiser event, a Luncheon in December, which allowed our assets to surpass our annual budgeted value. Our expenses increased due to our expansion efforts, specifically with the addition of our first ever international service learning trip to the Dominican Republic, as well as other direct service initiatives and our second annual conference event in March. In addition, BRAVE continued to collect and share with other organizations and causes. Our funds did not grow as much as last year, making the scale of expenses more significant. After the peak in our assets and revenues in quarter two, we see a drop off in the third quarter and final quarter of our fiscal year. Due to the reorganization we will not see the financial outcomes for our fourth quarter. Overall, BRAVE had a very healthy financial status this year and was able to accomplish all projects and initiatives with success.

Current Assets: \$10.44

All assets, and intellectual property, will be transferred to Meaghan Davis upon the formal dissolution of the 501(c)3, BRAVE Girls Leadership Inc. in May 2018.

Financial Institution: Webster Bank, Royce Circle, Storrs, CT 06268

The BRAVE Girls Leadership Inc. account at Webster Bank will be closed upon the formal dissolution of the 501(c)3, BRAVE Girls Leadership Inc. in May 2018.



The BRAVE Team

Board of Directors:

- Meaghan Davis, President and CEO
- Leslie Bruenn, Vice-President
- Andrea McDermott, Treasurer
- Areej Nitowski, Secretary
- Adam Nemeroff

Student Interns:

- Mar Amador - Intern Team Leader, Conference Chair
 - UConn Sophomore
- Sarah Dottor - AmeriCorps VISTA Member
- Molly Kozlowski - Mentoring Intern, Community Outreach Intern
 - UConn Sophomore
- Seyenah Lopez - Mentoring Intern, Public Relations and Marketing Intern
 - UConn Sophomore
- Shelby Mehmet - Mentoring Intern
 - USJ Junior
- Alexis Julien Trice - Public Relations Intern
 - UConn Junior
- Michelle Voong - Computer Science Intern
 - UConn Senior
- Nicole Ware - Event Planning Intern, Mentoring Intern
 - UConn Senior
- Emma Whitmore - Mentoring Intern, Team Leader
 - UConn Senior



BRAVE Operations 2017-2018

Partnering Schools/Colleges:

- Florence E. Smith STEM Elementary School - West Hartford, CT
- Duffy Elementary School - West Hartford, CT
- Sedgwick Middle School - West Hartford, CT
- King Philip Middle School - West Hartford, CT
- Summit Middle School - Hartford, CT
- Island Trees Memorial Middle School - Levittown, NY
- Island Trees High School - Levittown, NY
- Farmington High School - Farmington, CT
- Cromwell High School - Cromwell, CT
- Hartford Public High School - Hartford, CT
- High School Inc. - Hartford, CT
- University of St. Joseph - West Hartford, CT
- University of Connecticut - Storrs, CT

Board Meeting Dates and Locations:

- August 13, 2017 - 55 Depot Hill Rd, Cobalt, CT (Annual Meeting)
- January 7, 2018 - 96k Tudor Lane, Manchester, CT

Board Meeting Reports

Click [here](#) to view the board meeting minutes and summary.

