On why volunteering is the best teacher...

In a recent survey we took of our graduating seniors, 87% of our GlamourGals volunteers shared that volunteering shaped their future goals and career aspirations. Our volunteers don’t just provide a foothold for seniors, but they create their own chapters, recruit more volunteers, organize visits, and more. They’re true leaders that are constantly faced with split-second decisions that affect their peers or the seniors they’re serving at a home. That type of on-your-feet thinking and decision-making will serve them well in their professional careers, in addition to the stories and real experiences they’re gathering.

Plus, those volunteer stories provide incredible material for scholarship essays, college applications, recommendation letters, or awards, which hundreds of volunteers in our program have already received us. Not only does volunteering help breed leadership skills, but there is also an immediate academic and social opportunity for them.

On how we can inspire more women to pursue STEM...

Half of our scholarship recipients went into STEM-related fields. To be relevant to our volunteers and really inspire them, we realized that we needed to show them STEM-related opportunities. Bringing relevant, inspiring STEM role models (especially women) directly to our volunteers enabled us to show them that they can be that woman up there. They can follow that same path to success.

Also, the more we can expose teenagers to STEM leaders that have similar origins, the better. For example, we invite GlamourGals alumni that are in STEM to come and speak at our annual GLTI conference. It brings it full circle for our volunteers. A 15-year-old girl sitting in the audience can see a fellow GlamourGals member in STEM and say “I can be her” and really believe it.

On what makes the best leaders...

I think if I had to give one word or skill that volunteers are learning from GlamourGals that would make them incredible leaders in the future is empathy. Now more than ever, being an empathetic leader is so important and I feel like GlamourGals volunteers are demonstrating that in different ways and it makes them that much more incredible.