



Girls Advocacy and Leadership Series (GALS)

“Resilience in the Era of COVID-19”

VIRTUAL FALL 2020

In partnership with
Photo Start



**Women's Campaign
International**

Philadelphia, PA, USA

www.womenscampaigninternational.org

Summary

Women's Campaign International (WCI) has **22 years** of experience working with women **leaders** around the world through our core program themes of **Community** Engagement, Economic **Sustainability**, and Conflict **Transformation**.

WCI fosters meaningful **dialogue**, role models **collaboration**, and inspires collective **action** by way of innovative and action-oriented programming.

Working with **grassroots** partners, WCI creates programs focused on enhancing the **advocacy** and **leadership** skills of women leaders, thereby increasing their ability to effectively participate in **leadership roles** across all sectors. As agents of change, these advocates learn to identify community issues, **raise awareness**, and **engage** key stakeholders.



GALS Initiative

Our Girls Advocacy and Leadership Series (GALS) has—for **ten years**—sought to **equip** teenage girls in Philadelphia with the **skills, confidence, and connections** needed to take on leadership roles. Now, in the era of COVID-19, as the Philadelphia School District goes virtual and we are experiencing a lack of regular social connection, we reflected on how we can continue to **build confidence** and **skills** in a virtual environment. We believe that we need to move forward **together**, with a shared **resilience** and **determination** to persist in the face of adversity.

This fall, WCI adapted our GALS program to host a **virtual** eight-week series focusing on “Resilience in the Era of COVID-19.” Virtual gatherings—open to **any girl-identifying teenager** around the world—were a combination of skill-building **workshops, discussions**, and fun **activities**. Girls from ages 11 to 18, from Uganda to Philadelphia, joined in.

In partnership with Photo Start, an organization dedicated to **enhancing** economic **opportunities** of children by teaching critical **skills** through photography, participants learned to **amplify their voices** and **memorialize experiences** through the art of photography after every session. Participants were challenged to take photos each week, and all of the photos featured in this report were taken by GALS participants.



Schedule and Speakers

Week 1: **The Mindset of Resilience** *with Courtney Seard*

Week 2: **Storytelling through Photography** *with Photo Start*

Week 3: **Financial Management** *with Republic Bank*

Week 4: **Yoga** *with Keyonna*

Week 5: **College Planning** *with GALS Interns & Alumnae*

Week 6: **Poetry** *with Kadrise*

Week 7: **Healthy Relationships in the Era of COVID-19**
with Women Against Abuse

Week 8: **Reflection through Visual Storytelling**
with Photo Start



Outcomes

Participants found GALs valuable for a variety of reasons, ranging from increased self-esteem and self-awareness to understanding how to budget finances.

All participants responded having positive experiences with the series, and indicated a desire for more virtual programming moving forward into 2021.

“I learned about myself and how I like interacting with people I care about. I learned how relationships can grow.”

“There are more than one ways to tell a story.”

“I learned that poetry is a good way to release your emotions.”

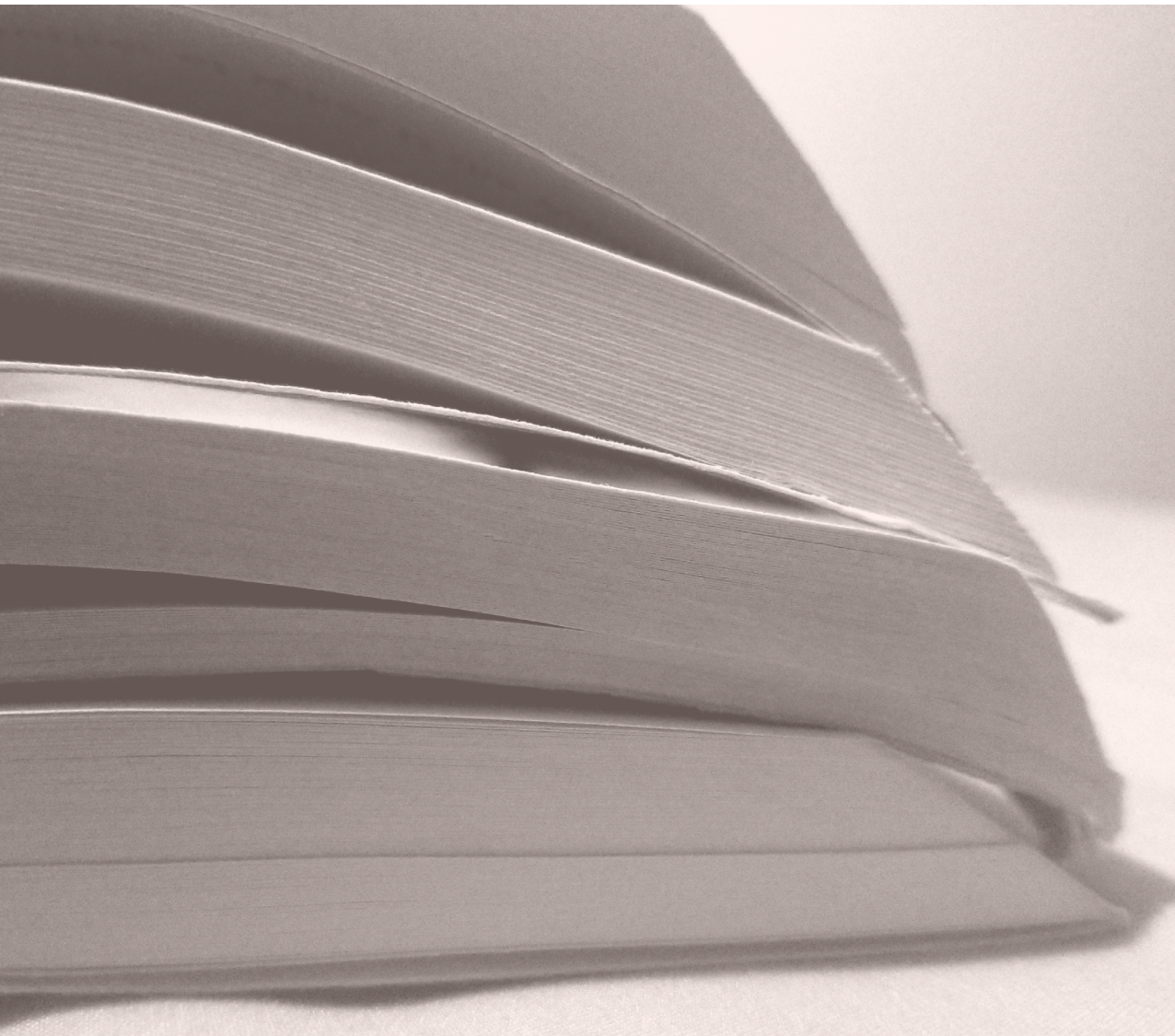
“[I] will practice healthy coping mechanisms in the future.”

“This helped me open up to find out who I really was.”



Conclusion

As COVID-19 persists, for the safety of our participants and staff, GALS will **remain virtual** for the foreseeable future. Based on the **positive feedback** from our first virtual series, GALS has demonstrated to still be **effective** at **empowering, uplifting,** and **educating** girls. Additionally, due to the nature of virtual programming, girls **all over the world** now have the opportunity to participate in GALS remotely. We look forward to continuing to **grow** our virtual GALS program in 2021.



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