



Contact:
We Canceve Movement
PeopleWhoCare@wecanceve.org
202.491.3586

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Young Harford County girl sponsors “Covered Girl” event for area teen girls living in foster care

Nine-year-old Grace E. G. Callwood sponsored a two-hour, fun-filled workshop on October 25, at the Arrow Crossroads Community in Bel Air, a group home for 18 teen girls who are transitioning out of foster care. Callwood created the workshop to be a self-awareness and self-esteem fun-day for teens focused on makeup, poise, etiquette and basic networking tips.

“I wanted the girls to have that special day so it would be more fun for them in there,” said Callwood, who decided shortly after being diagnosed with T-Cell Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma in October 2011 that she wanted to help other sick children, as well as homeless children and foster children.

She told the girls in her opening remarks that “I got this idea because teenage girls usually like makeup. I also got this idea with help from my mom and my grandma. I thought they would like this so they can feel magical.” In a subtle way, the event incorporated Christian values.

Local model and makeup artist Aisha Watson was the special guest. Watson gave the girls tips on skincare and make-up applications and pointers on how to take amazing photos without compromising their lady-like qualities. Cosmetics were donated by Sephora and Mary Kay.

The girls also received tips on etiquette, customized for young audiences that addressed proper cell phone and texting behaviors, and table manners.

An 18-year-old who lives at the facility said she thinks the event was very powerful.

“It was like we have to understand that we are pretty inside and out. We have to dress nice but love what we have going on for [ourselves]. Thanks so much. I had a lot of fun,” said Christina, who lost her mother at age seven and has been in and out of foster care ever since.

Sabrina, also a resident there, said “I really liked your idea; it was nice and fun, and a learning experience. I learned some new things I would not have learned if this makeup party wasn’t thought of.”

In August, Callwood donated 32 hand-made key chains and more than 50 personal toiletry packets to girls residing at Arrow Crossroads Community residents.

Next up, Callwood is planning a Christmas gift drive for children with HIV/AIDS.

“I thought of that when we saw the Dance Theater of Harlem,” said Callwood, as she recalled a family trip to Morgan State University’s Murphy Fine Arts Center this spring.

"I was thinking about the different dance numbers they did and I remember the AIDS dance," said Grace, who met the renowned dance troupe and their esteemed ballet master in May. "I was thinking about children with AIDS because I can't really help grownups with AIDS because I don't know what to give them."

She said she'd also like to sponsor a game day with teenage girls.

"I've never had that, except for field day (at school) so I thought that they would like it since they have a Wii and I don't know how much they get to go in there. We could have a day for games and of course food."

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Callwood Remarks: Grace Callwood, 9, makes opening remarks Friday night at Arrow Crossroads Community in Bel Air during a makeup workshop she created to help teen girls "feel magical." Callwood is an oncology patient in Baltimore. She is expected to complete chemotherapy next year. (Photo by T'Jae Gibson)

Covered Girl 1: Model/Makeup artist Aisha Watson joins Grace Callwood during recent beauty inside and out workshop for teen girls in Bel Air. (Photo by T'Jae Gibson)

Covered Girl 2: Grace Callwood, 9, arranges donated gift bags full of cosmetics from Sephora on a display table at Arrow Crossroads Community in Bel Air. Mary Kay Cosmetics also donated makeup samples for the teenage girls who reside at the transitional group home. (Photo by T'Jae Gibson)

Covered Girl 3, 4: Model/Makeup artist Aisha Watson, who has a master's degree in counseling, applied positive reinforcement and affirming language – along with eyeshadow and blush – to out-of-home teen girls residing at the Arrow Crossroads Community, a transitional group home for teen girls preparing to be emancipated from the foster care system. (Photo by T'Jae Gibson)

Watson, Callwood: Model/Makeup artist Aisha Watson joins Grace Callwood during recent beauty inside and out workshop for teen girls in Bel Air. (Photo by T'Jae Gibson)