

# Y-WE LEAD: Y-WE CREATE Report

foundry10  
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## Program Overview

We partnered with Young Women Empowered (Y-We) and their Y-We Create program, a branch of their year-long Y-We Lead program. The program ran from November 2015 through May 2016. The young women who participated in the program met once a month to participate in activities in their learning community and supplemental field trips were also offered throughout the program. Additionally, the program was bookended with weekend overnight retreats. The goal of Y-We Create specifically was to expose the participants to a variety of creative pursuits in which the young women had the opportunity to explore the use of their imagination and how to bring creations to life. The participants learned a variety of skills including but not limited to knitting, embroidery, collaging, felting, jewelry making, glass blowing, and screen printing. The main role of foundry10 was to plan and facilitate the field trips and to conduct research.



## Mary

Before this program, Mary was excited to learn new skills and pursue something she was interested in. At the beginning of the program, she answered neutrally when asked if being creative was important to her. By the end, she told us that being creative was very important to her. This large of a shift in importance did not happen on its own and can be largely attributed to her participation in this program. Mary said that her favorite part of the program was “creating things” because doing so “gets my mind set right” and that the biggest thing that has changed as a result of this program is her “creative mood”. Additionally, this program helped her feel like she would have support in following her interests and passions. Mary feels like participating in Y-We lead will make her more likely to try new things in the future!

## Highlights

- Students were excited to have the space to create and be creative. One student said “I can finally release my creativity”. Another said that her favorite part of the program was “making friends with everyone and being creative”.

- We also found a nearly significant correlation between “I am confident that I can pursue the career I choose” and “the skills I will learn in this program will either help me in my chosen career field or help me decide what I want my career to be” ( $r=0.71$ ). Based on this data and the anecdotal information that students shared, the students thought this program would help them figure out if they wanted to go into a creative/fashion related profession. In the post surveys we found that answers to the question “what are you interested in doing as a career and why” most said the same thing in pre and post, but some also mentioned more creative careers as an option they were considering.
- There was another near significant correlation between “the skills I will learn in this program will either help me in my chosen career field or help me decide what I want my career to be” and “I feel supported to pursue my interests and passions” ( $r=0.74$ ). This could be due to students feeling more secure through Y-WE LEAD to follow their passions and interests, especially in creative careers.

### **Program Reflections**

The way the program was structured gave the participants the opportunity to try a wide variety of creative expressions. The young women seemed to enjoy getting to try many different things and seemed less interested in delving deeply into one activity. The one exception may have been jewelry making as that was extremely well received by the group. Another popular activity was creating collages and “Me Mirrors”. Building on themes or an overall arc for the program was challenging due to sporadic attendance. We adapted our approach based on this to focus on more singular experiences that could stand alone. Fluctuating attendance also made data collection somewhat problematic; it was hard to obtain input from the same participants more than once. If this program were to be run again, it is recommended to continue with the one-off workshop model so there is not an expectation of a collective experience. In addition, the most successful off-site field trips included transportation arranged for the participants, which is crucial to future planning.