



The Power of Secrets

Sarah Withee

Slides: geekygirlsarah.com/secrets

Twitter: [@geekygirlsarah](https://twitter.com/geekygirlsarah)

Feel free to tweet along.



Hi. I'm Sarah.

@geekygirlsarah #alterconf





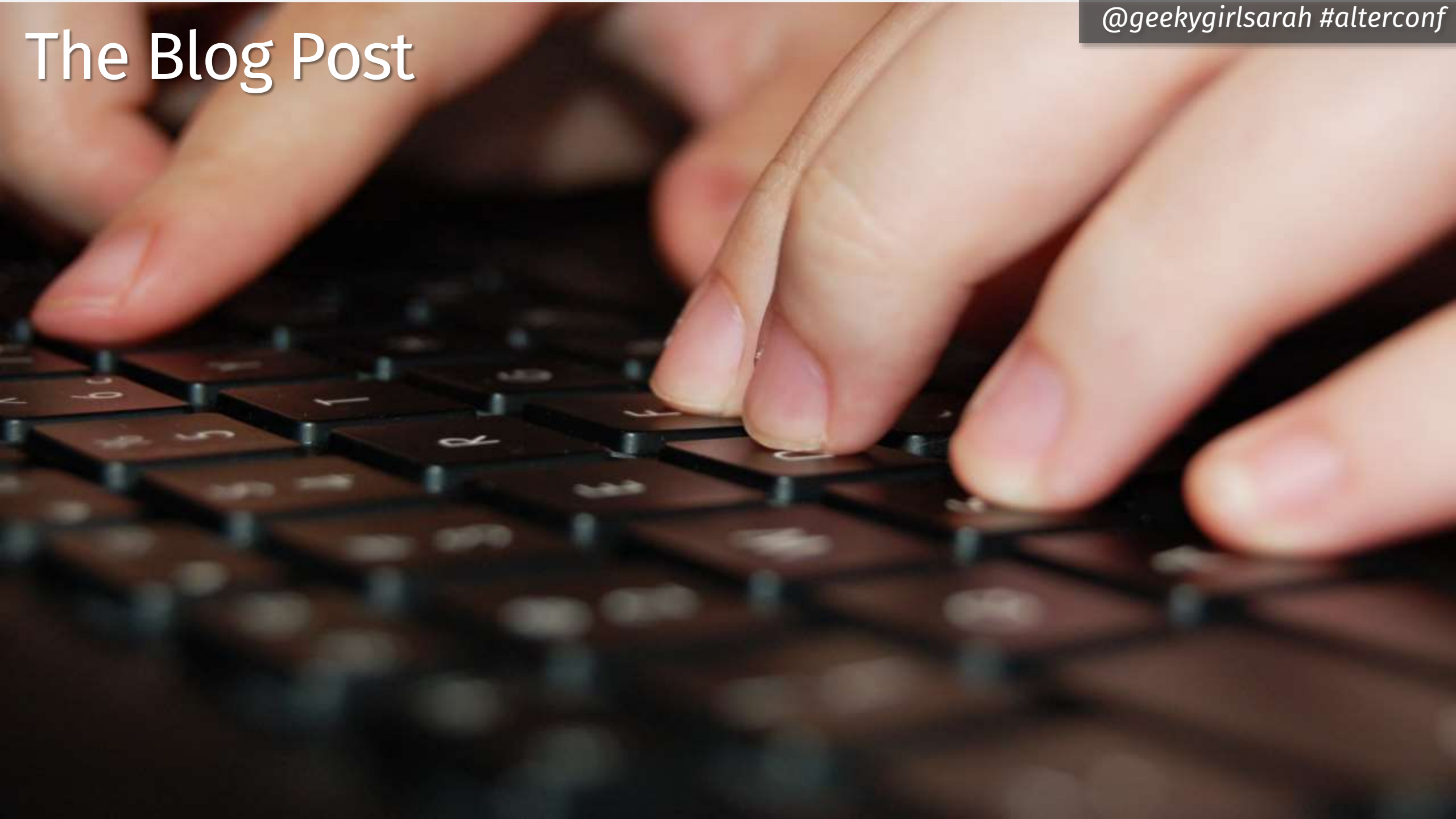


Being Stealth

@geekygirlsarah #alterconf







The Blog Post

@geekygirlsarah #alterconf

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Recommended by Bianca Tamayo, Erika Heidi, and 165 others



Sarah Withee

Polyglot software engineer. Plays w/ hardware & robots. Teacher. Speaker. Uses 100% wholly organic sarcas...

Sep 29, 2015 · 9 min read

Life, Gender, and the Pursuit of Happiness

(Content warning: this post contains talk of deep depression and talk of self harm.)



A Commodore 64 personal computer, along with monitor, 5 1/4" floppy drives, and joysticks.

I was probably in first grade when I wrote my first computer program. My parents had a Commodore 64. (If you're a bit younger, it was about equivalent in power to the original Nintendo game system.) My dad taught me how to put in a floppy disk, flip

the lever to lock it in, then type **LOAD "*",8,1**. I had no clue what that meant, but the computer listened. I eventually learned there were a lot of other commands you could enter to do a variety of other things, and the computer listened to all of them. It fascinated me. I copied programs in from the instruction manual, then would change them, or add on to them, to make the

♥ 167 💬 12



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Sarah Withee @geekygirlsarah · 29 Sep 2015

(1/2) **Yesterday** I tweeted about a life-changing decision I made in 2007. It was the scariest thing I've ever done. I then wrote a blog post



6



Sarah Withee @geekygirlsarah · 29 Sep 2015

(2/2) about it. It makes me really nervous to share it, but I feel it's incredibly important to do, both for myself and for others.



9



Sarah Withee @geekygirlsarah · 29 Sep 2015

"Life, Gender, and the Pursuit of Happiness" -- my story of becoming a software developer, and of becoming myself.



Life, Gender, and the Pursuit of Happiness – The Lighthouse

I started writing computer programs in first grade. I wanted to be a developer. Then life stopped me from my goal.

[medium.com](#)



118



184







Stats

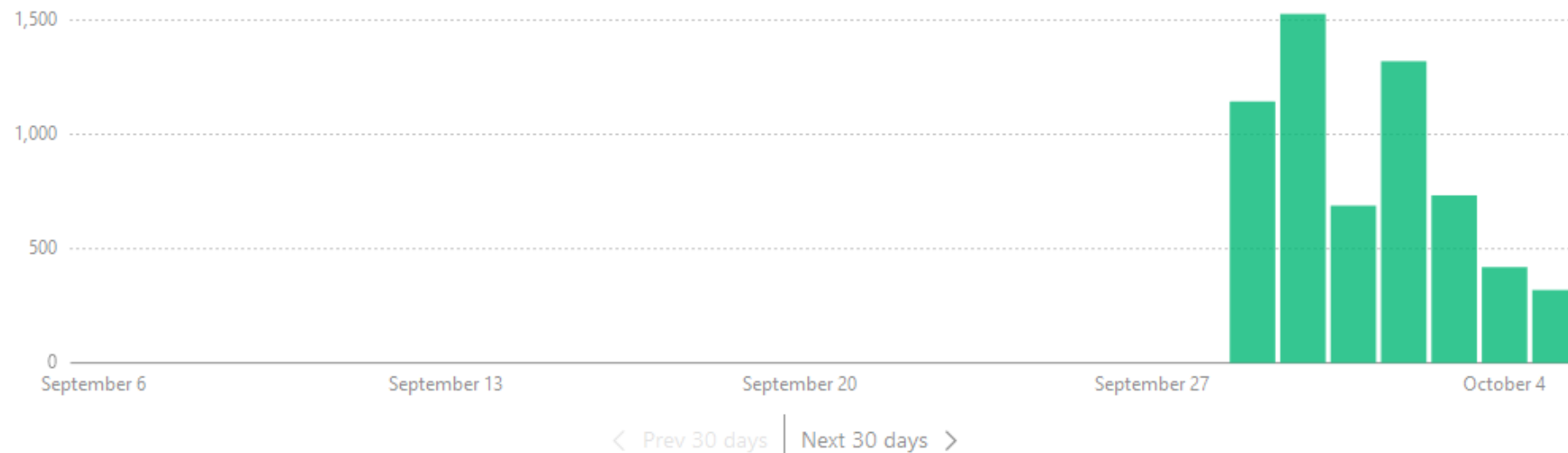
Life, Gender, and the Pursuit of H... [Show all stories](#)

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6,150
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Recommends (30 days)

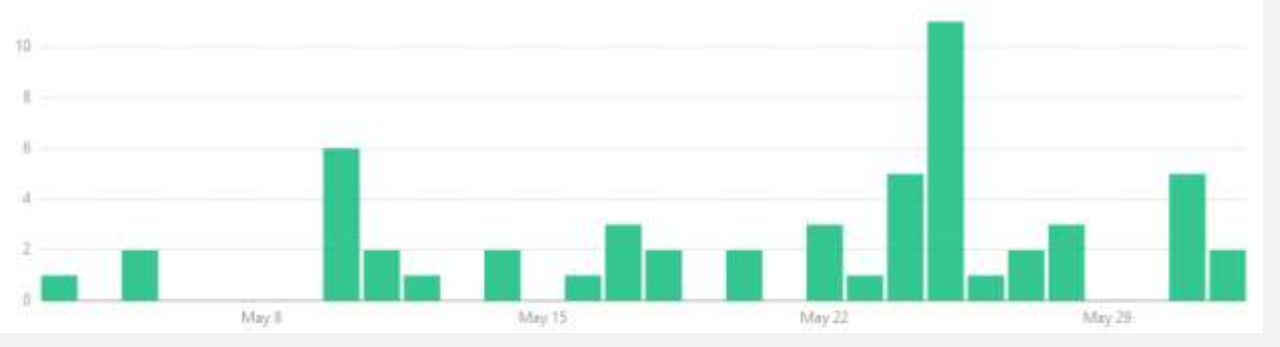
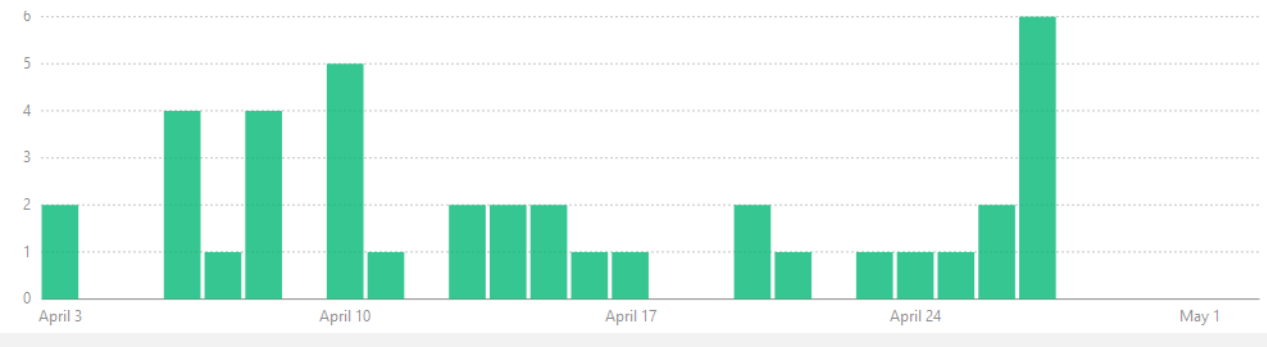
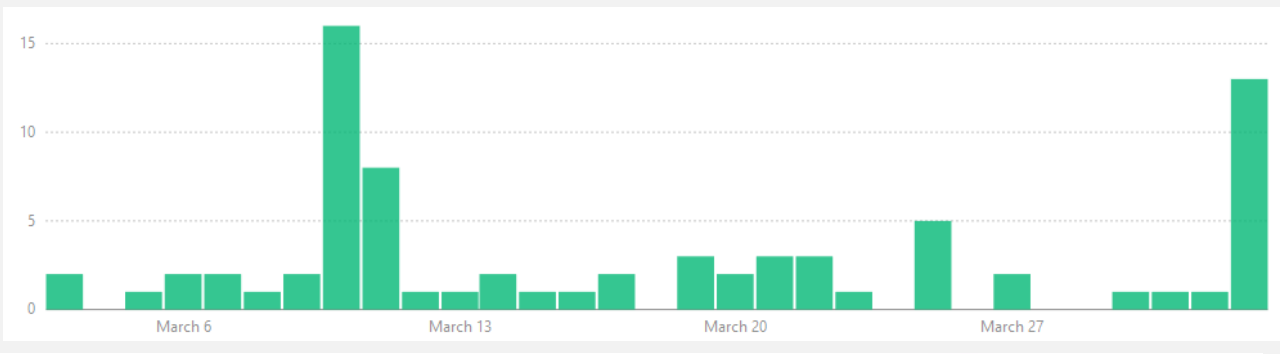
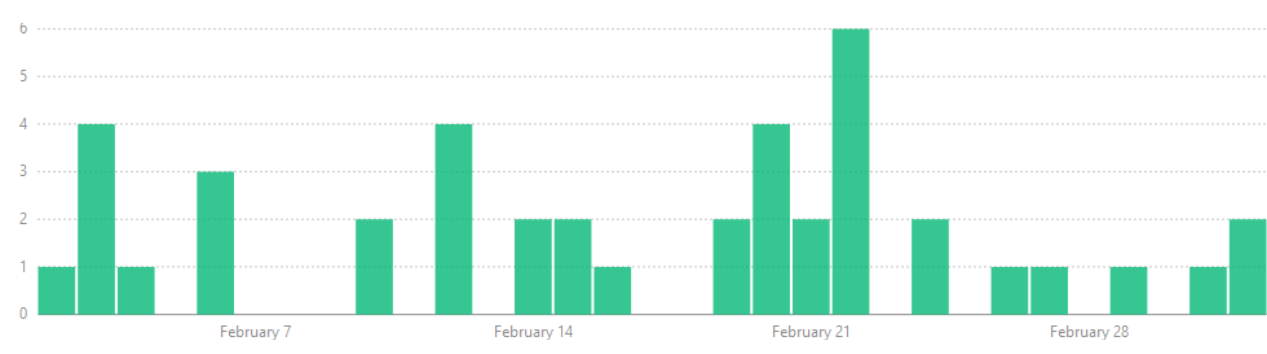
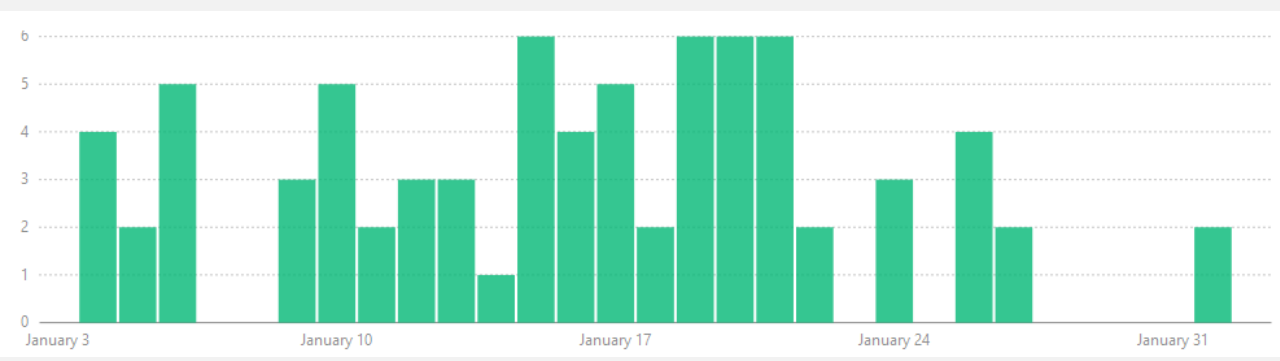
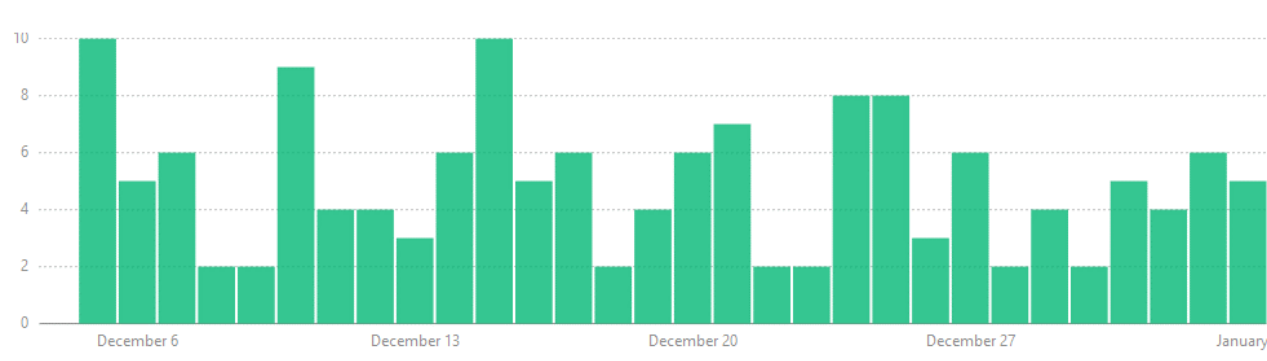
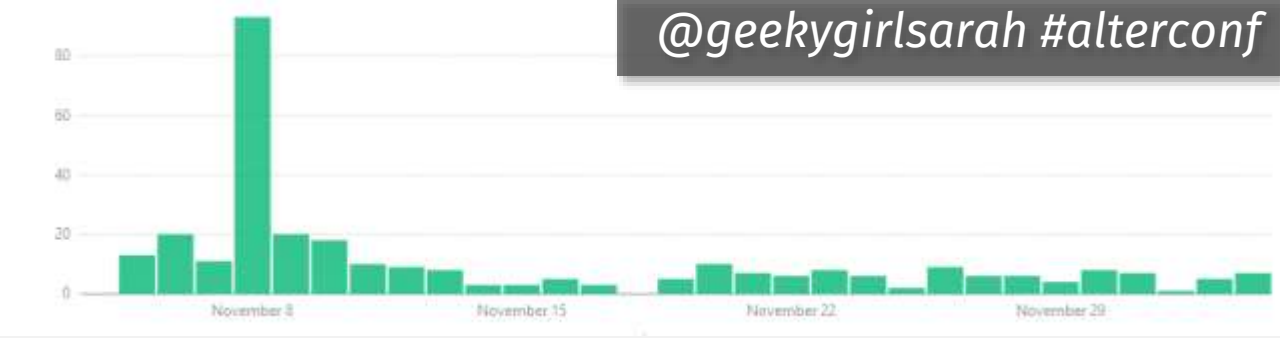
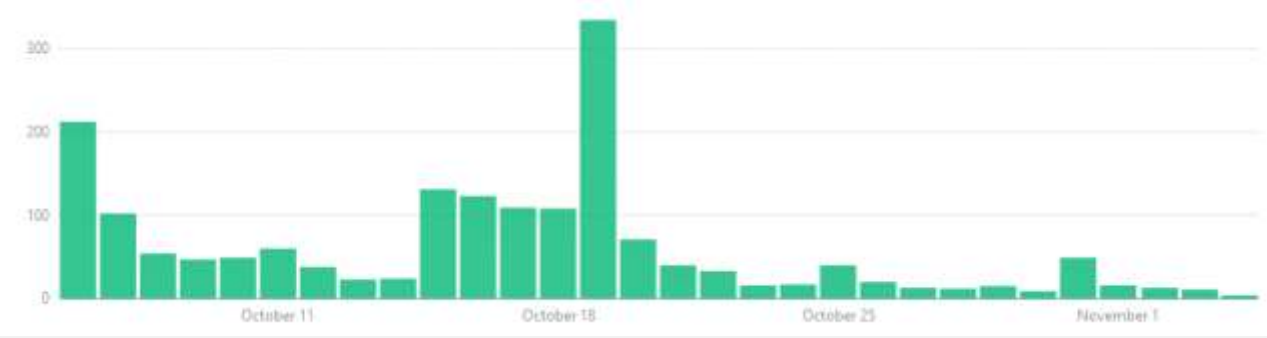


Stories Responses









Tweet Activity

Sarah @ AlterConf @geekygirlsarah
"Life, Gender, and the Pursuit of Happiness" -- my story of becoming a software developer, and of becoming myself. <https://medium.com/@geekygirlsarah/life-gender-and-the-pursuit-of-happiness-e0e57970ceae> ...



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Get more engagements by promoting this Tweet!

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Impressions	68,794
Total engagements	2,594
Link clicks	1,545
Detail expands	435
Profile clicks	286
Likes	186
Retweets	118
Replies	14
Follows	10



Mark Corrado
@MarkCorrado

So inspiring Sarah

Sarah Withee @geekygirlsarah
"Life, Gender, and the Pursuit of Happiness" developer, Willow A



JustJenFelice
@JustJenFelice

These are the type of things tech peeps. Find yourself, find your purpose 💪❤️



Heather Tovey
@HRTovey

@geekygirlsarah Thank you for writing Life, Gender, and the Pursuit of Happiness! It's a

thank you!! I finally read your book. It's amazing. You are amazing if :)



MattPayneOrg
@MattPayneOrg

Great ending to a story bravely told. Thanks @geekygirlsarah

Sarah Withee @geekygirlsarah

"Life, Gender, and the Pursuit of Happiness" -- my story of becoming a software developer, and of becoming myself. medium.com/@geekygirlsarah

LIKE
1



1:30 PM - 30 Sep 2015



1



Nick Cowan
@notetoself_stl

@geekygirlsarah people see be see it you're to

LIKE
1



12:49 PM - 30 Sep 2015



1



Bonnie edge case M
@BonMatts

I had the pleasure of meeting Sarah last weekend, and I highly recommend her story.

Sarah Withee @geekygirlsarah
"Life, Gender, and the Pursuit of Happiness" developer, and of becoming myself

LIKES
3



9:24 AM - 30 Sep 2015



Mental Health

Gender Identity

Empowerment



2



1



RETWEETS
3

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4



9:00 AM - 30 Sep 2015



3



4



3:31 PM - 29 Sep 2015



3





Bridget Ham-Oneill [Follow](#)

Sep 29, 2015

Thank you for taking the time to read it!
Sarah Withee



1

Thank you for sharing your story! I am a 57 y/o Grandmother who due to the paralyzing fear of my family and society, lived a lie, got married in High School and did not begin living a life as my true self, as a lesbian until I was in my 30's You are such an amazing woman and have such courage, compassion and drive. Many will be inspired by your struggle and success in being you! ♥

Mental Health

Gender Identity

Empowerment



1



Bridget Ham-Oneill

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Name 

Email @gmail.com

Phone

Subject Thank you

Message
Hi, I'm a 22yo stealth FtM and I wanted to say thank you for both of your Medium articles. I both love and hate being stealth; it was great to feel normal at first but seven years later, I feel -too- normal? Weird. I don't know if I'll ever come out a second time; too scared, I guess. But it is really nice to hear that maybe I could, if I wanted to. Thank you for your courage, us young ones really draw inspiration from role models like you.

Sent from (ip address): 

Date/Time: October 19, 2015 8:15 pm

Sent from (referrer): <http://sarahwithee.com/contact/>

Using (user agent): Mozilla/5.0 (Macintosh; Intel Mac OS X 10_10_5) AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML, like Gecko) Chrome/46.0.2490.71 Safari/537.36



Sarah Withee

@geekygirlsarah

I had this weird dream where I opened my soul to the whole Internet yesterday & Twitter responded wonderfully. That would be silly, right?

LIKES

12



7:14 AM - 30 Sep 2015



12





Sarah @AlterConf @geekygirlsarah 18 Oct 2015

TFW @anildash favorites your blog post where you share your coming out story online... 😊 🍷

@geekygirlsarah #alterconf



Anil Dash favorited

Sarah Withee @geekygirlsarah

19d

"Life, Gender, and the Pursuit of Happiness"
– my story of becoming a software developer,
and of becoming myself.

medium.com/@geekygirlsara...

Details



6



Anil Dash ✓

@anildash



Following

@geekygirlsarah so inspired & impressed by what you wrote. Will be sharing it tomorrow. :)

RETWEET

1

LIKES

5



8:37 PM - 18 Oct 2015



1



5





Stats

Life, Gender, and the Pursuit of H... [Show all stories](#)

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81

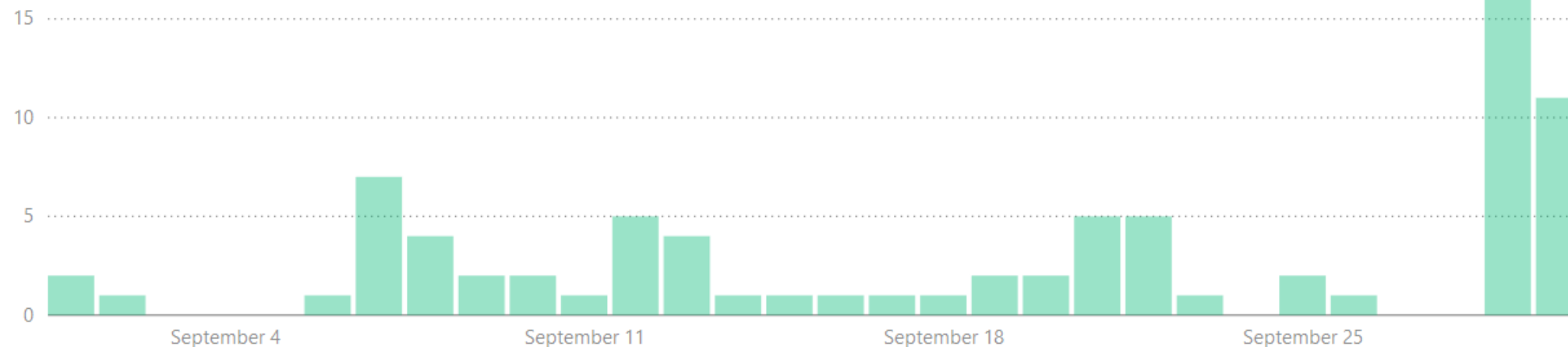
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Reads (30 days)

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Recommends (30 days)



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On Becoming Vulnerable

@geekygirlsarah #alterconf







“I know vulnerability is kind of the core of shame and fear and our struggle for worthiness, but it appears that it’s also the birthplace of joy, of creativity, of belonging, of love.”

- Brené Brown
“The Power of Vulnerability”



A blurred background image of Bob Ross, the host of 'The Joy of Painting', standing in front of an easel and painting a landscape. He is wearing his signature white shirt and has his characteristic afro hairstyle. The image is dimly lit, with a soft light source from the left.

“There are no mistakes, just happy accidents.”

– Bob Ross



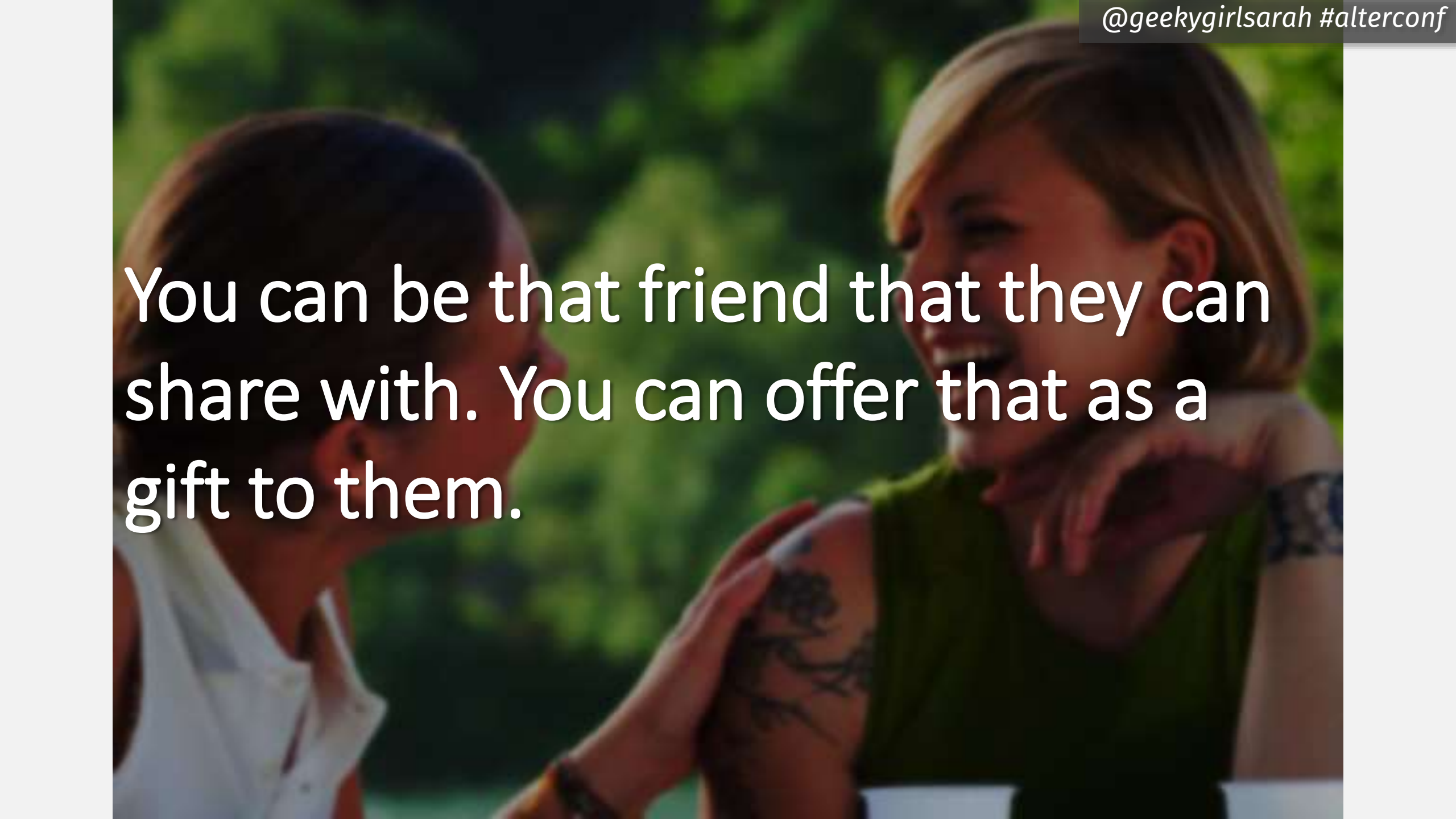




Embracing Vulnerability

@geekygirlsarah #alterconf



A photograph of two women laughing and talking outdoors. The woman on the left is seen from the side, wearing a white shirt. The woman on the right is facing her, wearing a green top and has a tattoo on her upper arm. The background is a blurred green landscape.

You can be that friend that they can share with. You can offer that as a gift to them.





C.J. Janovy

@cjjanovy

Follow

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"Mother Nature calls to me. There will be an answer: [#letmepee](#)"--Heartland Trans Chorus
[@KansasCityPride](#) [#lgbt](#)



Sarah,

Thank you so much for joining us at rehearsal on Monday, and auditioning last night. It was a pleasure to meet you and hear you sing. We do not have a singing position available for you at this time; however, I would invite you to audition again in January or next fall. I believe your voice shows some real promise for choral singing, but the combination of your lack of singing experience and your voice being in transition, means that your range and volume are limited at the moment. The demands of our music would be very difficult for you at this juncture. I would be happy to work with you, at your convenience and at no charge, to develop your singing abilities. (This is not something I typically offer!)

In the meantime, we would welcome you as a part of the organization in a non-singing, volunteer capacity. We have a number of individuals who assist with the various committees of the KCWC in the areas of service, marketing, fund raising, membership support, front of house at concerts, and music library, among others. If this would interest you, please let Judy Siegfried know, and she will connect you with the right contact person.

Thank you again for your interest in the Kansas City Women's Chorus.



Artistic Director & Conductor | Kansas City Women's Chorus

Inspiring through Performance | Embracing Diversity | Advocating Social Justice
Simply singing is not enough.









Sarah Withee
@geekygirlsarah
sarah@sarahwithee.com

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