

H.I.P.S. “Show and Tell” 2019 Annual Report



*Connecting with the
Greater Grand Rapids Communities*



A Letter of Gratitude for A GREAT 2019

Dear Sponsors, Partners, and Friends of H.I.P.S.,

On behalf of H.I.P.S. Board of Directors , please accept our heartfelt gratitude for your outstanding support of your monetary donations entrusted to H.I.P.S., your generosity made a difference in the lives of young girls in the Greater Grand Rapids Communities, your donations gave opportunities for them to attend H.I.P.S. Ten Weeks Summer Day Camp and Mentorship Program in 2019.

H.I.P.S. and its unique Ten Weeks Summer Day Camp and Mentorship Program is now widely recognized and lauded for its dedication to empowering young girls to make positive life choices and motivating them to work hard to achieve success by completing school, going to college, loving God, and family, being active in their church and community, and exemplifying the values of compassion, commitment, competency and citizenship.

H.I.P.S. Invite you to hear from some of H.I.P.S. Ambassadors, their Parents, and Community Leaders, on the impact that H.I.P.S. Summer Day Camp has made in their lives, as you read the following letters, remember, because of your continuing support, you have helped make a difference in the lives of these young ladies. Thank-you for being H.I.P.S, “Ambassador of Change”.

Sincerely,
Mary Harden Johnson
CEO/Founder



Letters from **H.I.P.S.** Ambassadors

HIPS

To: CEO and Board of Directors.

My experience in HIPS was a great one! I loved how each workshop was different and each ambassador student received a meal each time we attended a workshop. We learned various things from various speakers helping us prepare our hearts and minds.

We learned different skills from Professional working-class women. The impact was amazing, and I had a really good time with everyone in the program. Everything was super fun. All the workshops had a good lesson to them.

The Lion King play was awesome! The VIP seating section was amazing, and the actors were great. I loved how we got to go see the play in real life and after the play had question and answer with the actors.

During my time with H.I.P.S. I made new friends in this program. It is something I will never forget. HIPS is an awesome program to help young girls believe in themselves and to help them make good decisions in life.

Thank you to every person or organization who donated their time or money to help make it possible for us to make a difference in this world.

Sincerely,

Ambassador Tayina



*Thank
You!*

Dear Mrs. Johnson

I would like to express how H.I.P.S impacted my life. First, I want to say THANK YOU, for everything you have done for me. H.I.P.S has made a great impact on my life. It opens opportunity that I might not have ever got the chance to experience. H.I.P.S taught me that I matter, I am loved. Despite what I have been through, H.I.P.S was right there to catch me.

Mrs. Johnson never gave up on me, she always said I love you and you represent H.I.P.S. I tried to do my best. I appreciate H.I.P.S. I am not perfect, but when I was with H.I.P.S I was. H.I.P.S alone with Mrs. Johnson inspired me to do my best in everything I do. Thank you for being honest and always telling me the truth.

Thank you for allowing me to be a part of H.I.P.S. I now hold a 3.0 GPA; I am on the Varsity Basketball team. If it were not for H.I.P.S I would have given up, but the push, the encouragement, the phone calls, the visits, helped me understand. I am so grateful. I can do it, and I am going to. H.I.P.S your invited to my Graduation, cause your family, Thank You H.I.P.S for being you

Blessings,

Ambassador Legna

Junior Ambassador Kayannie, age 8

Hips is incredibly fun, and I like that Ms. Harden-Johnson feeds us and that our parents do not have to pay for the food. She takes us on fun trips. We do a lot of arts and crafts. We also do a lot of church stuff like sing church songs and learn to always trust in God.



Ambassador Londynn, age 11

What I like about The HIPS Program is that Ms. Mary takes us on field trips and teaches us a lot of interesting things there instead of just having fun. I also like that we never get away from God. We always talk about God and that we can have faith in Him.

God is an important part of the HIPS Program. Another thing that I like about HIPS is that there's genuinely nice people who teach us to trust and love one another.

They teach us to be kind in our actions towards ourselves and each other. I love HIPS and I look forward to participating each year. I would not be involved if it were not an amazing program.

I am so grateful to be part of this program and appreciate Ms. Mary and all the HIPS workers who take the time to teach me important and positive things about life such as valuing God, loving myself and others and making my education a priority.

Dear Ms. Harden Johnson,

Thank you for making H.I.P.S. it was really fun and it brighten up my week and it was a great program It helped me when I had nothing to do, The Program also helped me become less shy, and helped me to open up more with God and talking to people.

I learned how to be patience when making a bracelet with colors beads that had meaning to God.

So, I want to say thank you for your time, money, and patience. So

Thank You!

Sincerely,

Ambassador Atesha



Dear Ms. Mary Harden Johnson HIPS GEO & HIPS Board Members:

We want to take this time to say thank you to Ms. Harden Johnson, Board Members and Sponsors for allowing us to be part of the Disney production of the Lion King on Broadway in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The show was breathtaking!

We have read about the Lion King on numerous occasions in our early childhood, but to see how the movie came alive on stage, with the beautiful costumes and animations was so impressive that this experience will never be forgotten. Our seats in the theatre were also great. We were so close to the stage and orchestra we felt like we were on stage with the rest of the dancers and actors; full of energy watching all the characters in their beautiful costumes take center stage.

The storytelling and visual artistry were so moving and inspiring. We marveled at the diversity and culture of all the characters. We appreciated seeing this diversity and transformation, giving all children, adolescents, and families an appreciation of the arts through a cultural lens. We look forward to future Broadway experiences.

A special thank you Ms. Mary H. Johnson, CEO, we want to thank you for your vision, compassion, and loving heart. You continuously pour into our lives and other young ladies, giving us support, direction, wisdom, guidance, and most of all inspiring us to be Christ-centered in our lives. We will continue to keep you, the Board, and community sponsors in our thoughts and prayers. All of you are Ambassadors of Change!

Ambassador Asia 11th Grade and Ambassador Londyn 7th Grade



Dear Ms. Mary Harden Johnson,

Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your program and teaching me life skills and self-confidence. I am thankful to God for allowing you to have a concept to build all us little girls up. We have so much fun and we take necessary learning tools from your program that help us to succeed in life and at school.

I appreciate all you do for us and all the sponsors that help us with outings like the movies and Lion King. We know that is a huge expense and you get out in the community to get sponsors to make these special things happen for us. I love you and I thank you for being a positive mentor in my life. I look forward to next year HIPS program it is such a blessing.

God Bless You

Ambassador Charmaine

Dear Ms. Harden Johnson,

I love to attend the program. I would love to do it my whole life, you made help me not to be shy anymore, and I loved the programs and the dedication that you gave to all of us.

I enjoy going to the various trips. I would have never done that with all my mom's working and her job pushing her when she is not feeling well. I would like to give you a big thanks, All the stuff you had done for us you made are summer exciting. Thank you and all the volunteers that helped Thank you and I will always remember this program and you for life.

Sincerely,

Ambassador Aiysah

To Whom It May Concern,

The H.I.P.S program was a wonderful array of experiences. It connected me with other African American girls who were of diverse ages. I was able to forge relationships with some of the girls and look forward to seeing them next year. During the H.I.P.S meetings there was always something significant occurring.

I really enjoyed how every meeting had a speaker who presented a specific topic that was God centered. And that topic was always something I needed addressed in my life at that time. I remember one topic was prayer. I had been struggling with math and had a test approaching the next week. When I got to the meeting the topic was prayer and different petitions you could make to God. Petition for forgiveness, cleansing from sin, strengthen, God's power, and God's help. I needed God's help.

After the speaker talked about prayer, we made a bottle with different colored beans which signified something spiritual (black for sin, white for cleansing, green for life, etc.) and a small piece of paper on which to write a prayer. I wrote several concerns on the paper, placed the note in the bottle with the beans and sealed the bottle.

One of the prayers in the paper that was now in the bottle was that I would get a higher score on my math test and I did. I got a B+. I am glad the speaker spoke on prayer. This increased my faith in the power of Christ through His Holy Spirit, and He answered my prayer (I had been getting C and C-). Another highlight of the meetings were the trips. Now that I am writing about H.I.P.S and considering Ms. Harden-Johnson all trips were purposeful. Trips were always educational, (even the movies) inspirational, and motivational. Trips to the Art Museum, the Science Museum, Onstage Play's (THE LION KING), Youth Conference overnights, Workshops, Movies (taught moral lessons) and several other Multifaceted outings. The trips helped expand my mind and broaden my thinking.

Lastly, H.I.P.S helped to strengthen my faith in Christ. The speakers seemed to inspire me the most. As I embark upon a new life's journey, college, with its twists and turns. I needed good sound advice on how to live a wholesome life as I take these next steps. And H.I.P.S supplied that need. H.I.P.S made me grow as a person and have fun while growing.

Sincerely,

Ambassador Ronnalynn

To Whom It May Concern,

I really enjoyed the H.I.P.S. program. It gave me something positive to do on a Saturday. It got me away from the telephone and internet and it made me focus on more important subjects, Christ, others, and me. The program helped me see how I needed to pay more attention to me and how important I was as a girl. That my education was important and filling my head with knowledge about God and the world around was the best thing I could do for myself.

The speakers, activities, food, and fellowship with a diverse group of girls made me come out of my shell (I am the baby of the family). I started interacting with girls I normally would not have interacted with, I was serving others, and I helped with devotion.

I am glad Ms. Harden-Johnson created this program especially for girls because I think us girls are overlooked sometimes. But Ms. Harden Johnson tells us, we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us". That has become one of my favorite scriptures, especially now that I am a freshman in high school. She let me know along with all the positivity that the other team members included, convinced that I am somebody and I call do all things through my Savior Jesus Christ.

Lastly, I like being a part of H.I.P.S because they showed love and class in every session. They are a no-nonsense group who strive for the best and want the best for and out of the girls who participate in the program. I enjoyed being a part of H.I.P.S and I look forward to participating next year.

Sincerely,
Ambassador
Lillian



Dear Ms. Harden Johnson,

I love to attend the program. I would love to do it my whole life, you made help me not to be shy anymore, and I loved the programs and the dedication that you gave to all of us.

I enjoy going to the various trips. I would have never done that with all my mom's working and her job pushing her when she is not feeling well. I would like to give you a big thanks, All the stuff you had done for us you made are summer exciting. Thank you and all the volunteers that helped Thank you and I will always remember this program and you for life.

Sincerely, **Ambassador Aiyah**

Dear Ms. Harden Johnson CEO OF H.I.P.S.

I enjoy your program over the summer. I did not only like the gifts; I like the lessons that came with it. I really enjoyed when we made the bracelets with the lady. Then when do you have us come back to make the prayer bottles. One thing I learned was To Love Yourself no matter what getting your way. I hope we can continue with this program in the future.

Sincerely,

Ambassador Adrianna



Letters from H.I.P.S. Parents

Dear Mrs. Harden-Johnson,

This is a letter to affirm my sincere appreciation for you and your vision for Helping Important People to Succeed. My daughter (Charmaine) has been a beneficiary of the outpour of compassion, esteem, and vigor that your organization affords to its participants. Charmaine has been active in the organization for three consecutive years and every year it seems to be more beneficial than the previous year.

I have observed girls being endowed as well as empowered and gaining a positive conscience about themselves and their existence. I have witnessed my daughter elevating her self-esteem and being totally confident in herself, who she is and just as she is. H.I.P.S. is a very essential organization and I feel richly blessed to have my daughter to be a part.

The Highlight of this year's program was The Broadway Lion King performance. Charmaine was ecstatic and is yet still telling all who will listen about her experience and that she had bragging rights for front row seats was an additional plus.

May God bless you the more and may many more community assets realize the value of H.I.P.S. and partner with this essential organization.

Forever Grateful,
Mrs. Chakenya



Thank-you M

directors:

Helping Important People Succeed (HIPS) is a unique enrichment community program in Grand Rapids, Michigan which affords young ladies the opportunity to fellowship with a diverse peer group from various social-economical and educational backgrounds. Unlike some community groups which require a certain economic or social ranking, or a high GPA, HIPS welcomes everyone with the core belief that all young ladies are important and can succeed if given guidance and the opportunity.

In addition, the staff are very welcoming to the parents. They make us feel just as important as the youth ambassadors and they take the time to solicit feedback from the parents in efforts to strengthen the program.

What I admire most about HIPS is that they offer high quality enrichment activities and experiences which integrates body, mind, and spirit. I have two girls in the program who are repeat participants and they have blossomed socially and gracefully. They both started the program as shy and timid individuals and today they have taken an integral part in leadership opportunities.

Ms. Harden-Johnson and her staff are dedicated to supporting their participants in academic and social achievements in efforts to equip them to develop to their fullest potential.

With Gratitude, **Ms. Tamara: Parent of Kayannie and Londynn**



Dear Ms. Harden -Johnson,

I wanted to take this opportunity to Thank you for having such a successful Program. H.I.P.S has been a great program not only for my daughter, but for all the young Ambassadors that attended the program. My view of H.I.P.S not only helps young women in the community to become successful women, but to love the Lord and our savior Jesus Christ as well as themselves. I love that the program has a strong Spiritual setting. The start nothing without putting God first.

Ms. Harden-Johnson loves everybody, especially the Ambassadors of the program. The program teaches them to become Ambassadors for Christ and for the community. The program teaches the young ladies they are loved and somebody. The smiles that the program put their faces are priceless. I sat in on a few sessions and they not only had a great impact on my daughter, but me as well. I learned a lot from the program as well. I love it.

The interactions Ms. Harden-Johnson and her board members have cannot be measured. They are the best. They would do anything for the Ambassadors to make sure they grow in Christ and success as young adults.

I was overly impressed on how you made the young Ambassadors feel loved and cared for, just like they were your own. The love you have for my child and every child that attend the program is outstanding. I pray this program stays in place. It is an awesome program.

Sincerely Yours,

Mrs. Mary: Parent of Legna

Dear Ms. Harden Johnson and H.I.P.S. Board of Directors,
I would like to thank you for all the time that the girls have spent in the H.I.P.S.

program. The program was a learning experience for the girls show me that there is more to life than texting and Facebook and snapchat.

The girls had a great time and I really appreciate the experiences that they could participate in, they really enjoyed it.

I am a single working mom who works a lot. The H.I.P.S. program is especially important and necessary program for young girls today

Sincerely, Ms. Theresa

Parent of Adrianna, Aiysah, and Atesha



To Whom It May Concern,

I am the parent of two teen aged girls (Ronnalynn and Lillian) who have attended H.I.P.S for the last three to four years. Through this program my girls have grown spiritually, socially, and emotionally. And I have seen other girls grown in these areas as well.

Spiritually, every session began with devotion which consisted of scripture, prayer, and a spiritual song. The girls participating in the program facilitated devotion even though they may not have been accustomed to leading devotion. I saw this seemingly small act help build leadership skills, decision making skills, self-confidence, and compassion during each session.

Not only did each session begin with devotion, but each session incorporated a guest speaker and craft (prayer bottle, rock of hope, hope chest, and salvation bracelet) to accompany the specific topic. Topics ranged from faith, prayer, hope, perseverance, and sacrifice. These components: devotion, guest speakers with a themed topic, and a craft, to solidify each topic were pieces that contributed to the formation of well-rounded individuals (the participants) ready for community and global service.

Socially, each session contained a social skill building activity that helped release any tension, anxiety, frustration, or apprehension the girls might have been experiencing before they arrived. For instance, debriefing on the week, crafts, circle compliments no put downs, getting to know you, gathering information on each, and other activities which construct positive social behavior. The girls in the program come from diverse economic backgrounds, they are diverse ages and races. Because of this each lady or girl brought a myriad of experiences to the group.

Because of this, some girls found themselves fearful, inhibited, and uneasy. But, as Ms. Harden-Johnson and the rest of her team continued encouraging girls with this scripture, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (and other scripture)", with hugs, and good food and fellowship girls quickly learned and modeled the value of sisterhood, importance of establishing relationships, self-worth, and honesty.

Emotionally, Ms. Harden-Johnson and her team of social workers, counselors, and educators from different specialty areas were fully equipped to handle any

problems that arose.

I recall one incident, a young lady about 9 or 10 was crying and one of the counselors came alongside the young lady, rubbed her shoulder for comfort and asked why she was crying? She would not say why, she just quieted down a bit and continued the craft. A few minutes later she began crying again.

The counselor came over again but this time she sat down to talk to her. When the counselor was done talking to her the young lady was smiling. I asked the counselor, "What was wrong?" and she said the young lady missed her mother and wanted her to come back. The counselor knew exactly how to handle and resolve the situation. The girls in the program are surrounded by loving, caring, nurturing individuals that can meet their needs right on site.

The H.I.P.S. program gives and does so much more than I could ever write on paper. This program could potentially stop another girl from being in an abusive relationship, from being taken advantage of mentally and physically, and stop sex trafficking by building girl's self-esteem, self-awareness, self-control, and self-confidence.

Lastly and most importantly, the H.I.P.S. program promotes God's love for each participant through Jesus Christ. Ms. Harden-Johnson and her team embolden each girl to continue the work she's started with them, the work of; knowing Christ as their Savior and establishing a relationship with Him, being responsible, respect for family and community, love for yourself, love for others, and most of all Love for Christ.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Carolyn, Parent

