

For Immediate Release

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Program Empowers Young Girls

Adolescence isn't easy. In fact, for most of us, those pre-teen years bring back memories of awkwardness, isolation and heartache. It is a time when we experience our first crush, our first heartbreak, when our self esteem hits an all time low, when we identify who we are by the friends we keep, when our peer's opinions mean more than our parents, and when suddenly getting good grades isn't so cool anymore. Add to the mix puberty and pimples and it's a wonder any of us get through it alive.

SAGES (Strengthening Adolescent Girls with Education & Support) is an empowerment and leadership program that works with girls who are vulnerable during this turbulent time. The girls share certain struggles that may include absentee parents, difficulty in school and poor self image. Over a 12-month period, SAGES girls meet twice a week at Worcester Youth and Family Counseling Services. It is a time of sharing, creating, laughing and learning to be strong, independent females and future leaders.

"The SAGES program exposes young girls to character building opportunities that they may otherwise never experience," explains Becky Cornwell, Pocomoke SAGES counselor and licensed therapist. Part of this process includes reaching out to the communities in which they live through service projects.

The Pocomoke SAGES group helps out monthly at the local homeless shelter, Samaritan Shelter. The girls work together to pack food for the shelter's food pantry and residents. Recently they were able to help over 85 families. "This is an example of putting their compassion for those less fortunate into action," explains Cornwell. "At the end of the day, the Girls may be physically tired from the work, but they've learned an incredible lesson about how their actions can impact their world in a really positive way."

Worcester Youth and Family Counseling Services, Inc. (WYFCS) is a private non-profit organization that is at the heart of what is really happening in the families and homes of our community. SAGES groups are available at both the Berlin and Pocomoke offices. For more information about the SAGES program or WYFCS call 410-641-4598. If you would like to learn how to help Samaritan Shelter, please call 410-957-4310. The Shelter is currently in need of cleaning supplies and paper products for the food kitchen.

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