About SWSG

WHAT IS SWSG?
Strong Women, Strong Girls (SWSG) is a multi-generational mentoring organization that connects professional women, college women, and elementary school girls. Our programming delivers an out-of-school experience that promotes positive development by taking a preventative approach to combat declines in adolescent girls’ self-confidence. SWSG was founded in 2000 as a student group at Harvard University and has since flourished in both Boston and Pittsburgh, where it expanded in 2006.

HOW DOES SWSG WORK?
Girls in grades 3–5 throughout the Boston and Pittsburgh regions participate in 20 weekly, after-school sessions where they learn about strong local and historical women and engage in skills-building activities. Local college women volunteers, supported by SWSG staff, facilitate sessions with the girls guided by a robust curriculum based on female role models. In turn, our college women mentors are mentored by professional women, known as Strong Leaders, who provide personal and professional guidance.

Core Values

BE ACCOUNTABLE
SWSG operates with transparency and integrity.

EXPECT QUALITY
SWSG pursues excellence and innovation.

FOSTER RESPECT
SWSG honors and supports diversity and inclusion.

BUILD COMMUNITY
SWSG values and promotes partnership and collaboration.

EMBRACE DISCOVERY
SWSG nurtures learning, creativity, development, and fun.

The 6 Cs of Positive Youth Development

SWSG uses the 6Cs, a nationally recognized youth development framework, to structure our mentoring curriculum. Through the lens of the 6Cs, we can better understand and foster healthy outcomes among young people and promote positive self-identity and leadership capability. Participants in SWSG gain skills in:

CONFIDENCE
Strong girls recognize their inner strengths to dream and do.

COMPETENCE
Strong girls know how to get things done.

CHARACTER
Strong girls embrace their individuality.

CONTRIBUTION
Strong girls know how to make a positive difference.

CARING
Strong girls show kindness and care for others.

CONNECTION
Strong girls value community and service.

A Lifelong Impact

WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM SWSG?
“This program really helped me build confidence and reinforce my friendships with the girls that I did the program with. I loved the fun activities we got to do like the jump rope field day, or just the times we got to write in a our journals to reflect on the week. It was really empowering to learn about female role models as well. It really gave me the assurance that I can accomplish anything in life.

~ 2013 participant, current high school student

HOW, IF AT ALL, DID SWSG INFLUENCE YOUR PERSONAL, ACADEMIC, OR PROFESSIONAL LIFE?
“SWSG connected me to some of my best friends during college. I connected with a community of young women who cared about the same things I did. It gave me the opportunity to explore my own identity as a woman and to think about how to encourage young girls to embrace what it means to be a girl and how to create their own definition for girlhood. In my professional life, I have carried with me the idea of building up other women and seeking out female mentors and mentees in my career.”

~ 9-year SWSG Alumnus

HOW, IF AT ALL, HAS YOUR PARTICIPATION IN SWSG HELPED YOU AT YOUR CURRENT STAGE OF LIFE?
“It is the reason I got into medical school because it is the reason I had the confidence to pursue medical school. Without Swsg I wouldn’t have applied (or likely gotten) my first clinical job. I also made lifelong friendships. These friends have been supportive and encouraged me to pursue my goals. They are still my closest friends.”

~ 2019 Graduate

Our Mission
Strong Women, Strong Girls empowers girls to imagine a broader future through a curriculum grounded on female role models delivered by college women mentors, who are themselves mentored by professional women.

Our Vision
Every girl and woman will realize her inner strengths to dream and do.
About SWSG Boston

SWSG Boston serves the Greater Boston community and serves as the organization’s headquarters. Our work is situated within the context of historically marginalized communities impacted by racism, sexism, classism, ableism, and more. Women in Boston are the majority-minority.

- 52.1% of the city’s population is women and girls, 34.6% of which are between the ages of 20-34.
- People of color make up 55.1% of the population in Boston. Yet, Boston is one of the most segregated cities in the USA.
- 69.7% of women in poverty in Boston are non-white, while only 54% of all women in Boston are non-white.

Our Program in Action

The FY21 curriculum included another year of inspiring and empowering role models. The Girlforce curriculum was all about interest and career exploration. Youth in the program had the opportunity to identify their interests and discuss and explore options such as college and beyond. With our vision for every girl (and woman) to realize her inner strength to dream and do, this year’s curriculum allowed us to share the variety of options mentees have for the future, as they embrace their strengths and interests.

Some of this year’s role models included:
- Mariama White-Hammond, a Reverend who is working to bring awareness to climate change and build healthier communities.
- Autumn Peltier, a 15 year old water activist who teaches us how to value differences.
- Malala Yousafzai, an advocate for girl’s education access.

Program Highlights

- This year, Boston re-launched the Strong Leaders program. Through this program, we matched 68 college mentors in a 1:1 mentoring relationship with a professional woman.
- SWSG also re-designed our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging training sessions for mentors to focus on community and cultural context with the goal of improving our DEIB practices.
About SWSG Pittsburgh

Strong Women, Strong Girls arrived in Pittsburgh in 2006 with just one college chapter and one program site. By 2019, we have grown to encompass six universities and colleges and 40 program sites, serving more than 1,150 women and girls each year.

MENTORING FOR CHANGE

In the Fall of 2019, the City of Pittsburgh released its 2019 Gender Equity Commission report on Pittsburgh’s Inequality Across Gender and Race. The results for our city paint a troubling picture of continued inequality:

◆ For every dollar White men make, Black women make 54 cents; AMLON (Asian, Multiracial, Latinx, Other, and Native American) women make 59 cents; and White women make 78 cents.
◆ Black women are more likely than any other adult population to live in poverty. In comparison to other similar cities, Pittsburgh falls short in terms of livability for Black women.
◆ Pittsburgh has more Black women out of the labor force than 97 percent of similar cities evaluated.

At SWSG, we know that a foundation of strong female role models and high-quality mentorship can change the landscape for girls and women. We provide young girls, at a formative period in their lives, with the tools, skills, and qualities to build the future – any future – they dream about.

Through mentorship, we’re empowering girls and women to create a diverse pipeline of strong female leadership in and for the Pittsburgh region.
Throughout the 2020-2021 program year, we made strides in aligning our deepening MEL practices across Boston and Pittsburgh. This included streamlining surveys for all for mentees, mentors, and Strong Leaders. During the virtual program year we completed training evaluations and end-of-semester surveys with mentors, pre and post surveys of mentees with an online survey, and an end of year survey with Strong Leaders.

### Gender Inclusivity at SWSG

Strong Women, Strong Girls is an inclusive organization that believes girlhood is a personal experience for all.

We welcome anyone to join our community who is interested in our program and identifies as a girl or is gender non-conforming, nonbinary, agender, or transgender.

### Our Impact

When evaluating the impact of our program on participants, SWSG uses a variety of methods to assess what mentees take away from their experience. Overwhelmingly, mentees advance in each of the 6C areas after a year in the program, and report having learned more about themselves, their strengths and talents, and role models.

Mentees were surveyed at the beginning and end of the program year using online/virtual methods.

**WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE PROGRAM YEAR, MENTEES RESPONDED...**

"I learned boys and girls are equal."

"I made new friends." (92%)

"I have a sense of belonging at SWSG." (97%)

"I can learn from people who are different." (96%)

"When asked to share one thing they wish people knew about them, girls said:

"I am a GREAT singer!"

"I am independent!"

"I never give up."

"I want to go to Harvard."

"I'm willing to help anybody in need."

"When asked about the program year, mentors responded...

"This year, over 600 college women mentors also experienced opportunities for growth, leadership, professional development, and civic engagement. They said:

"Being a mentor has had one of the biggest impacts throughout college. ...It's continually reminded me why I want to go into the field of psychology - so I can continue helping others."

"...This experience has given me the chance to make such valuable connections with these little girls...at least 5 of the girls walked up to me and said they want to go to UMB and it was the most rewarding moment!"

"I had so much fun getting to know the girls...I feel like I've learned a lot about myself, about leadership/mentorship, and about the Pittsburgh community."

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**The 6C's of Positive Youth Development**

- CONFIDENCE
- COMPETENCE
- CHARACTER
- CONTRIBUTION
- CARING
- CONNECTION

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**Our Community**

We saw changes to the demographic makeup of our mentees and mentors during the year of virtual programming, leading SWSG to consider the obstacles to virtual participation for some and the benefits to others.

### Boston

**GIRLS' RACE**

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**MENTORS' RACE**

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### Pittsburgh

**GIRLS' RACE**

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**MENTORS' RACE**

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**Our Reach:**

**Boston & Pittsburgh**

- **508** Girls Enrolled in SWSG
- **628** College Mentors
- **186** Professional Women
- **73** Virtual Mentoring Sites
- **12** College Chapters
- **43,000+** Volunteer Hours Contributed by College Mentors

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**508 Girls Enrolled in SWSG**

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**Helping others is important to me.** (100%)

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**I enjoy school most or all of the time.** (92%)

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**I can learn from people who are different.** (96%)

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**I have a sense of belonging at SWSG.** (97%)

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**I made new friends.** (92%)

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**I want to go to Harvard.**
During the COVID-19 crisis, marginalized youth have been disproportionately impacted by higher rates of COVID infections, deaths in loved ones, food and housing insecurity, lack of access to technology and online learning, and increased stress. A recent article from *The Chronicle of Evidence-Based Mentoring* highlights that “marginalized youth are likely to bear the heaviest burdens of trauma and economic fallout” from COVID-19 (Astesano, 2020).

These are the girls that SWSG prioritizes—those who live in economically disadvantaged communities who attend school districts in need of our program. It is now more important than ever to provide socio-emotional support to girls being disproportionately impacted by this pandemic.

- Black children make up about 20% of children losing a parent to COVID-19 (though they represent 14% of all children in the US), furthering the risk of trauma and depression (US Dept of ED, 2021). In addition, social isolation during the pandemic has led to a decrease in access to support from family, peers, and other role models (Society for Research in Child Development, 2020).

- In a May 2020 survey of elementary, middle, and high school girls, The ROX Institute for Research and Training found that 79% of girls reported feeling more lonely or isolated since the start of the pandemic, with 33% saying they feel much more lonely/isolated.

- In crisis situations when children are removed from school, they fall behind not just in academics but in critical social-emotional learning (Kamenetz, 2020).

These statistics are staggering—but the solution is clear. SWSG is committed to starting our next chapter with a focus on being a part of that solution to support women and girls at this historic time in our lives! By participating in SWSG, even remotely, girls enter a community of peers and mentors in which they can identify and share their emotions (Character & Caring), give and receive support (Contribution & Connection), and foster strength and positive identity (Confidence & Competence), as well as the opportunity to build impactful relationships via weekly meetings.

Maintaining virtual programming throughout the pandemic was instrumental to providing opportunities for connection and consistency for mentees in SWSG. With the most youth participating in school virtually for most of the year, we wanted to make sure SWSG could address some of the challenges brought on by the pandemic. At a time when connection was extremely difficult, SWSG offered programming via Zoom, which fostered connection amongst our community.

*The focus [of SWSG sessions] shifted to not just curriculum, but meeting girls where they are, whether that meant movement breaks or a space to chat and meet new friends.*

-Site Facilitator

SWSG caused me to think about working with children in my future career (considering pediatrics), taught me advocacy skills, and broadened my understanding of social justice issues and societal inequities in ways that will be highly beneficial to my future work as a physician.

-2020 Graduate

*My daughter enjoyed having people to talk with that was all about self-confidence building. I enjoyed the time she spent on the meetings because she was learning an aspect of life that schools don’t devote much time on doing without being graded.*

-SWSG Parent

*It’s made me realize how important it is to be an advocate for yourself and how hard work and willingness to learn can lead far in life. I think that I was able to realize my dream really early in life because of this program.*

-2013 Program Participant, current college student
Thank you to our Generous Supporters!

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SWSG Inc. Revenue & Expenses

TOTAL REVENUE: $2,737,496.49
- FOUNDATIONS: $636,957.75
- CORPORATE: $136,031.50
- INDIVIDUALS: $212,000.69
- IN-KIND: $1,228,996.62
- EVENTS/OTHER: $171,358.57
- PPP LOAN FUNDING: $352,151.36

TOTAL EXPENSES: $2,325,640
- MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION: $408,911
- FUNDRAISING: $285,200
- PROGRAM: $402,532
- IN-KIND: $1,228,996

SWSG Boston

TOTAL REVENUE: $1,505,426
- FOUNDATIONS: $334,893
- CORPORATE: $80,582
- INDIVIDUALS: $146,722
- IN-KIND: $673,522
- EVENTS/OTHER: $60,675
- PPP LOAN FUNDING: $209,030

TOTAL EXPENSES: $1,325,278
- MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION: $260,444
- FUNDRAISING: $167,839
- PROGRAM: $223,471
- IN-KIND: $673,522

SWSG Pittsburgh

TOTAL REVENUE: $1,232,069
- FOUNDATIONS: $302,064
- CORPORATE: $55,449
- INDIVIDUALS: $65,278
- IN-KIND: $555,474
- EVENTS/OTHER: $110,682
- PPP LOAN FUNDING: $143,121

TOTAL EXPENSES: $1,000,362
- MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION: $148,466
- FUNDRAISING: $177,360
- PROGRAM: $179,061
- IN-KIND: $555,474