

Forestview Girls are Helping Girls

[By Kelly McHugh, The Jag Rag Editor](#)

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"Middle school is a critical transition period, especially for girls having to deal with peer pressure, gossip, self esteem issues and physical changes. If I had had a role model to look up to, it would have definitely simplified these problems," said Tori James, founder of the Girls Helping Girls Club at Forestview High School.

Last summer, James attended The Emerging Public Leaders Program at Furman University in Greenville, S.C. Each participant designed a plan for a student led service project addressing a need in their community.

James' project was forming the Girls Helping Girls Club, where girls at Forestview High School mentor girls at Southwest Middle School.

"We talk about everyday issues such as self-esteem, appearance, the importance of education and the value of community service," said James, who is the club's president.

With more than 70 members, the Girls Helping Girls visit Southwest frequently with activities, crafts and snacks. In December, they made treat bags for the Belaire Healthcare Center and donated toiletry items to the battered women's shelter. The club plans to take on another service project this spring.

"Being a member of this club has been one of the most rewarding experiences I've had. It's a great way to spend time with friends while making a difference in the community, and it's incredible to see how these girls look up to us," said Evan Martin, vice president. Other officers include Whitner Wise, secretary and Abigail Buckner, treasurer.

This spring, James will return to Furman to present her project, where the most successful student will win a cash prize. But for James, the club is more than a competition.

"I believe that by starting this club our community will be a better place with more confident goal-oriented young girls," said James.

Girls Helping Girls is sponsored by Kristie Smith and Gail Handsel, teachers at Forestview.