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National Charity League event focuses on philantrophy and mental health

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The Acalanes Area and Lamorinda Chapters of the National Charity League hold first ever joint meeting. Photo Ann Murphy Photography The two local chapters of National Charity League held their very first joint meeting Oct. 14, bringing together 200 young women from the Acalanes Area and Lamorinda Chapters of National Charity League. NCL is an organization of mothers and their daughters in seventh to 12th grade that focuses on community service, leadership development and cultural experiences. The daughters are referred to as Ticktockers.

For this special event, the Senior Ticktockers chose to focus on teens in foster care and teen mental health. They hosted two fantastic young female speakers. The first was Sydney Somerville, the founder of FreeStyle, a branch of the local philanthropy Grateful Gatherings that gathers new and gently used clothes for teen girls in foster care, then creates pop-up boutiques where teen girls in foster care can shop for as many items as they would like. The NCL Ticktockers organized a tremendously successful clothing drive for FreeStyle. At

the Ticktocker Day event they sorted the clothes to help prepare for the next FreeStyle boutique opening. The experience of choosing new clothes at the boutique can be life changing. Somerville shared a story of a young woman who was excited to go to school again because of the confidence and joy these new outfits gave her.

The second speaker was Lauren Cook, author of "The Sunny Side Up" and "Name Your Story." Lauren is a marriage and family therapist who is passionate about destignatizing mental health concerns and adopting healthy approaches to lifelong psychological wellness. Lauren asked many questions of the Ticktockers and brave seventh-grader Emmie Cimperman actually kicked off the open conversation. A lively and meaningful discussion among the entire group followed. The Ticktockers learned that over 25 percent of us experience mental health conditions and that seeking and offering help is a sign of strength that we all need to encourage. The Acalanes Area and Lamorinda NCL Chapters look forward to more joint events in the future. For information, visit national charity league.org, https://gratefulgatherings.org/ or https://thesunnygirl.wordpress.com/about/.

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