





This is how the day starts at GATE—the Greenwich Academy Talent Enrichment program—and I was lucky to have been a part of the 27th year of this vibrant program that brings in bright and capable local students for a month of academic enrichment. One of the first things I noticed about the girls was their pride in being chosen to be a part of this academic community and enthusiasm for the classes in reading, writing, and math, as well as the opportunities to take courses in art, drama, and dance.

Rebecca Hatchett and I just completed our first year as co-directors of the program, and we both became well aware of the impact this significant outreach program has on girls in the larger communities of Greenwich, Stamford, and Port Chester, as well as those in the GA community. The program runs Monday through Friday on GA's campus for the month of July. Girls entering third through ninth grades are recommended by their schools because of their strong academic performance. This year, the GATE seniors, those entering eighth and ninth grades, were also offered engineering and design, computer, and filmmaking classes.

As a newcomer, I noted a true sense of history and community among the students, counselors, and teachers who have worked with the program in previous years. Theresa

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Hall, who has taught art at GATE for eight years, describes it well: “I like that there’s a continuity in it. We have relationships with the girls and the counselors and feel tied into the camp. I know the girls love coming back. They make good friends and find a like-minded community of peers who can talk about books, art, and their experiences here. We encourage them to take

creative and academic risks that they may not consider at their own schools.”

Nicole DeRosa '07 just finished her 11th year with GATE, where she worked as a counselor through Upper School at GA and then as a teacher for the last several years. “I do it because the kids like to come to GATE and are highly motivated and want to learn as much as possible in a short time,” she said. “There’s also such a sense of community among the girls. The older girls feel a sense of responsibility because the younger girls look up to them.”

The GATE counselors share this enthusiasm for the girls, as well. This year, 17 GA Upper School girls worked as counselors, some who were GATE students themselves. Dana Wadsworth-Hutton '17 has worked as a counselor for two years and readily sees the impact of the program. “It really broadens the students’ and counselors’ interests, and you can see the growth in the girls. Also, being a counselor is a great experience in learning to work with a variety of people and to be flexible.”

The biggest endorsement of the program came from Isabella, a rising fifth grader from a Greenwich public school. On the bus ride to Scalzi Park for our ropes course and team building field trip, I asked if she had a favorite part of GATE. She enthusiastically replied, “I’ve loved everything!”