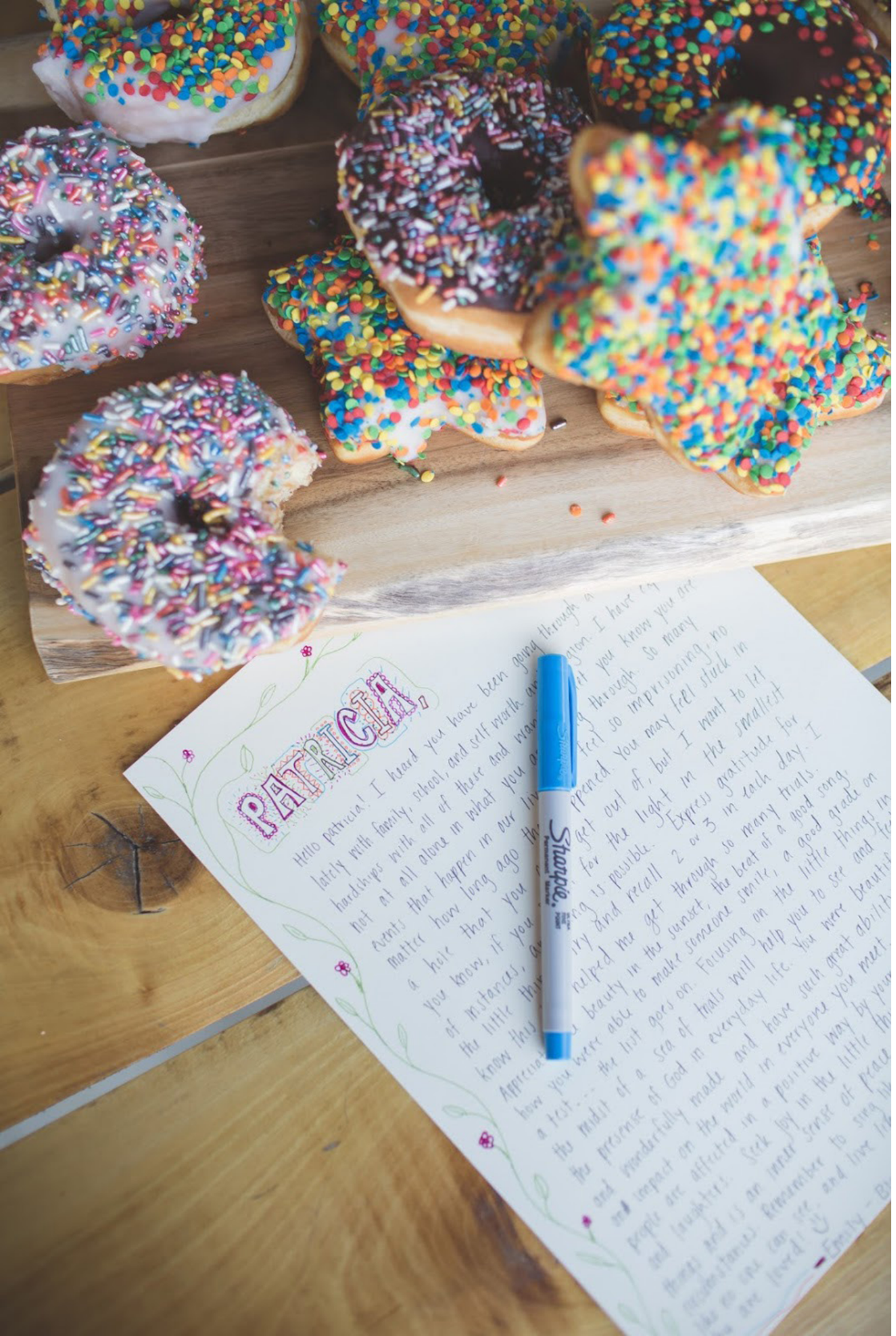
the letter project

2017 ANNUAL REPORT



We believe in you.

We believe in the power of women
supporting one another.
We believe in collaboration,
not competition.

Our Mission

The Letter Project is a faith-based nonprofit organization empowering women and girls through handwritten letters. Our goal is to ensure girls everywhere feel seen, heard and understood.

“

WHAT IS DONE IN LOVE IS DONE WELL.

-vincent van gogh

“I just checked my mail for the first time in a week. Y’ALL. TEARS. I opened my mailbox to find a “Special Delivery” just to me. When I opened the package it was filled with heartfelt letters of encouragement, love compliments. Letter after letter filled me with so much joy! WOW! Reading these, I never would have thought the girl they were referring to was me. This has truly been such an incredible gift. Whoever did this for me THANK YOU. SERIOUSLY. This is honestly one of the kindest and most thoughtful things anyone has ever done for me. ”

-A 23-year-old in Chicago

Why it Matters

Seven in ten girls believe they are not good enough or do not measure up in some way, including their looks, performance in school and relationships with friends and family members. **62%** of all girls feel insecure or unsure of themselves.

57% of all girls have a mother who criticizes her own looks.

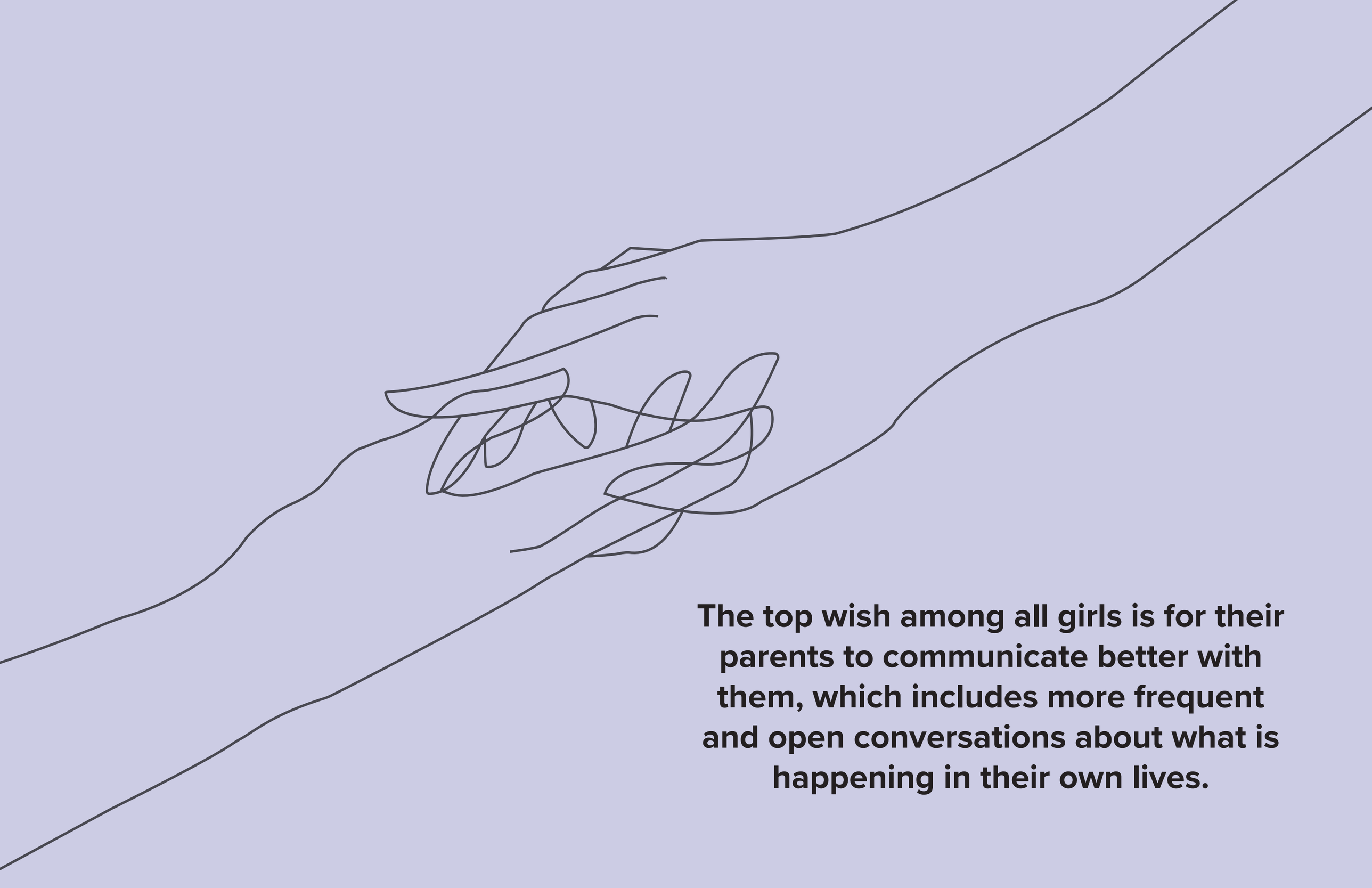
Source: Real Girls, Real Pressure: A National Report on the State of Self-Esteem commissioned by the Dove Self-Esteem Fund.

More than half (57%) of all girls say they don't always tell their parents certain things because they don't want them to think badly of them.

75% of girls with low self-esteem reported engaging in negative activities such as disordered eating, cutting, bullying, smoking, or drinking when feeling badly about themselves.

78% of girls with low self-esteem admit that it is hard to feel good in school when you do not feel good about how you look (compared to 54% of girls with high self-esteem).

71% of girls with low self-esteem feel their appearance does not measure up, including not feeling pretty enough, thin enough or stylish or trendy enough (compared to 29% of girls with high self-esteem).

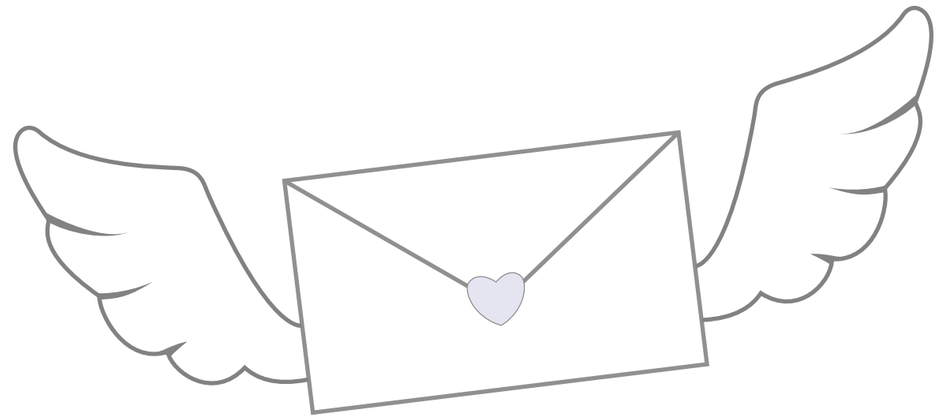


The top wish among all girls is for their parents to communicate better with them, which includes more frequent and open conversations about what is happening in their own lives.

“I am reading the letters in my bed right now and I am still so touched. I feel as if I am being hugged by these women and by you all at once. I wish I could thank each of them in person!...Today my gratitude is still on you and these letters. I am just so amazed and honored.”

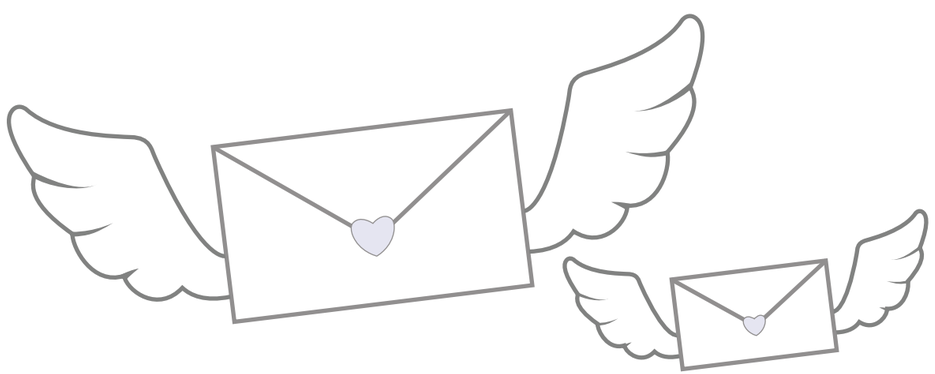
-A 29 year old in California

Making it Matter

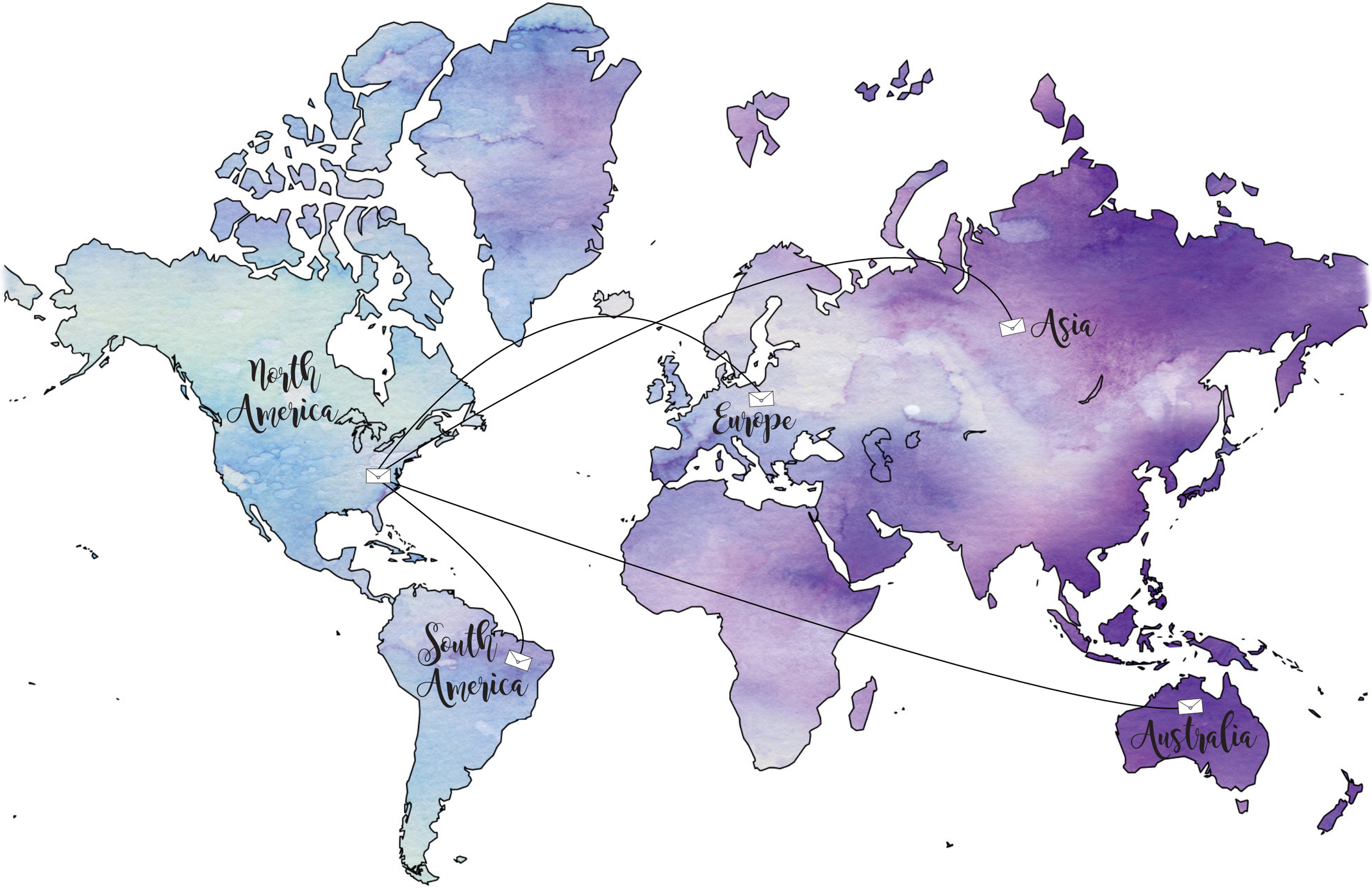


In a Little Over a Year We. . .

- [ ] **Grew to more than 1,400 women writing letters** from five continents and nine countries
- [ ] **Sent more than 5,000 letters** to eight countries
- [ ] **Received 501c3 status** as a non-profit organization
- [ ] **Raised more than $6,000** to help fund our project
- [ ] Were featured in 16 publications, including the Huff Post
- [ ] Were named as a Kind Cause by the Kind Foundation
- [ ] Received a Grant from The Pollination Project
- [ ] Founded 12 local chapters in US cities
- [ ] Founded 5 collegiate chapters at US universities



See how far we've sent our letters!



Our Key Beliefs

[and our strategy to using them.]

1 **Every girl** - no matter her history, circumstances, or background - **matters**

In a world with so many divides, our goal is to create more unity among women. No matter where we've been, by building one another up, we'll be more confident, empowered and able to move forward in a positive direction.

2 **Every girl is good enough** and deserves to feel heard, seen, and understood

In our social media-driven world, girls receive hundreds of message each day reminding them they need to be thinner, smarter, prettier and overall better. Our goal is to flip the message: **you are already enough, just as you are.**

“Thank you for the letters. They honestly just brightened up my day…I will be putting one in my locker so I can look at it every day at school when I’m feeling down…You just do not know how much seeing and reading those letters means to me right now.”

-A 16-year-old in Chicago

Our [inspiring] Community

Whitney Saxon,
Creator of The Letter Project

Our mission is to invite women into a Christ-centered community that builds one another up and encourages collaboration. We believe that we're all in this big, beautiful world together and the best thing we can do is pour into one another. The Letter Project was created to teach women and girls that **they are enough, no matter what**.

Our [Amazing] Board

Elizabeth Levine

Katharine Hansen

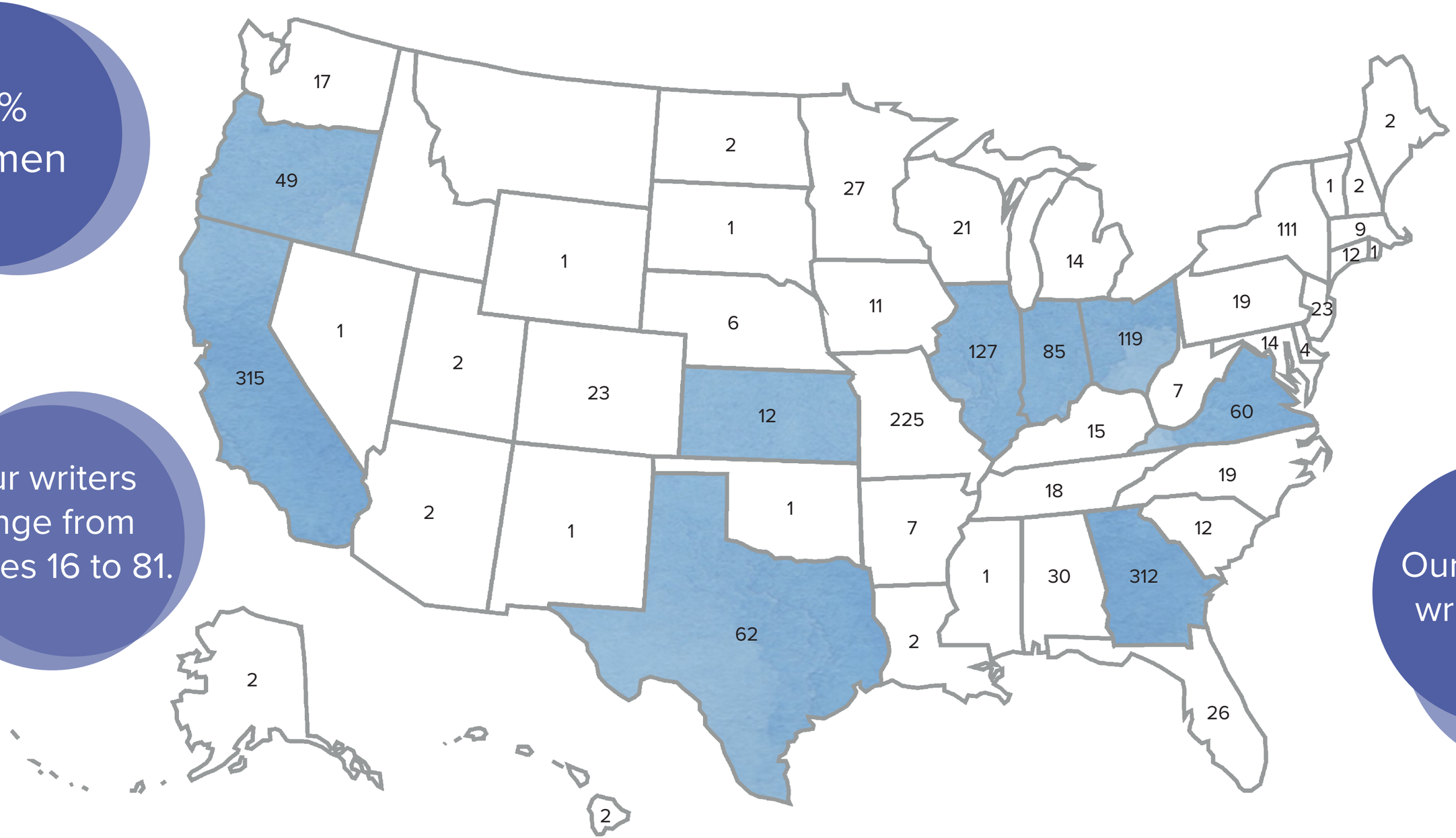
Megan Spellman

Janette Mudd

Grace Jarrett

Our community is composed of over 1,400 [incredible] writers.

100% women



Our writers range from ages 16 to 81.

Our average writer is 26.

Impacting our Communities

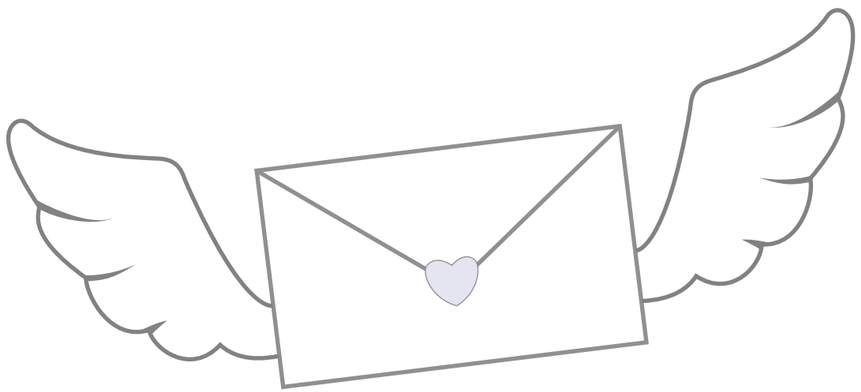
In 2017 We Hosted. . .

- More than 40 individual write nights
- 15 events in honor of The International Day of the Girl
- A Galentine’s Day Fundraiser

“I received a letter package yesterday—it was so unexpected and uplifting. This letter package was a day-maker...”

-A 22 year old in Wisconsin

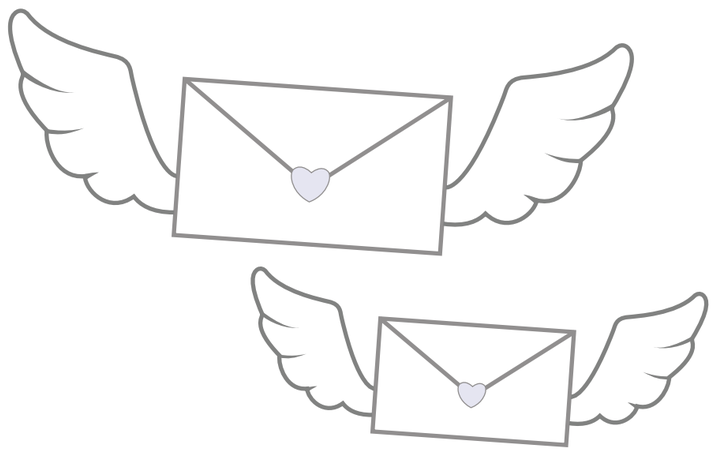
A Sustainable Cause



Why this **works**

The Letter Project's success is rooted in its simplicity.

Writing a letter is a simple, powerful act with which women can engage on their own schedule, in their own home. So often we over complicate ways to volunteer and we are proud to reduce barriers to entry and create a way for more women to give back.



“I wanted to write to you and say thank you for all of the encouraging words you had to offer. As I read the letters, I found myself sitting in bed with tears of joy in my eyes... Your letters have helped me so much and inspired me to enjoy the little things in life. I hope to be like each and every one of you - kind, compassionate, loving...”

-A high school girl in Arkansas

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Thank you for supporting us as we support others!