

UNITED WAY OF THE OHIO VALLEY
OWENSBORO-DAVISS COUNTY
PARTNER AGENCY: H.L. NEBLETT COMMUNITY CENTER, INC.

With the start of the 2015 school year, the Afterschool Enrichment Program was experiencing a lot of drama with our girls. Several of the girls were being pulled into the Directors offices on a daily basis due to arguing and not getting along with each other. The Directors were constantly breaking up arguments between the girls. The girls were fighting over the “popular” girl and were all wanting to be her “best” friend or they were arguing over little, petty stuff. At the same time, the girls are starting to hit puberty and with bodies changing, the girls needed an outlet to discuss feelings, body changes, boys and emotions. In September, after a long discussion with three girls, the idea of a girls group was brought up to have a way for the girls to express their feelings and to give them an outlet. A couple of employees volunteered to be mentors for the girls and a group was started. The group started with 12 girls between the ages of 7-12 years old and they meet on Tuesdays and Fridays. After a month-long trial, the group decided on a name: The H.L. Neblett Cheetah Girls Group. The girls come together to discuss the progress of their day, their emotions and anything they want to talk about. In late September, the center had several employee birthdays and the girls wanted to do something special for them. They came up with their own “Birthday” Dance. It was created and performed by the girls. The center posted pictures of the girls on Facebook and the Messenger-Inquirer read about the group. The Messenger-inquirer sent a reporter and photographer to do an article on the group. The girls took up half the front page on Monday, November 30, 2015. The girls were so proud of the article. During the interview, the reporter just listened to one of our daily, roundtable discussions and then asked each girl what they liked about the group. During the roundtable discussion, one of our girls discussed how her teacher at school was a coffee nut and how the teacher’s husband was such a “lifesaver” for bringing the teacher coffee from Starbucks that morning. The girl just didn’t feel like the class would survive if the teacher didn’t get her coffee fix. A day after the article printed, the teacher’s husband showed up with coffee for the wife and a Frappuccino for the girl just for calling him a “lifesaver.” This was such a great learning experience since the girls got to experience firsthand of the impact that words have on you and the world around us. Since the article was printed, the girls have gotten a lot of attention. People want to come in and talk with them. Other organizations have invited them to visit. The River Park Center has invited the group to their Fine Arts Day on March 5. The girls will be performing an interpretive movement piece. The H.L. Neblett Cheetah Girls Group will also be performing for the Mavericks on March 20. The H.L. Neblett Cheetah Girls Group is an amazing group of girls. The girls have argued, they have laughed and they work. The girls have grown closer together and working more as a team just from participating in this group.

WHAT DIFFERENCE WILL YOUR INVESTMENT MAKE?

With your investment of \$100 **H.L. Neblett Community Center** can:

- Purchase gross motor items such as jump ropes, balls with air pumps, parachutes, hula hoops and cones for active play

