

## Momentum Blog #1 - The first workshop at Principled Academy

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*Sunny leading the string activity for connections*

The Principled Academy asked us to put on three presentations for each week of Momentum. We worked with a class of seventeen students of seventh and eighth graders combined. Principled Academy was looking to connect the two classes and build more understanding and authenticity between them.

The first workshop at Principled Academy, “Connections,” went straight into asking the students what they believed created real relationships, and how they themselves can be a true friend to others. Sunny led one activity where everyone's wrists were connected by string, representing all their relationships with one another. This showed how one person's actions can be felt by everyone else, and how we need to be aware of how our actions and feelings affect others every day.



*Hana leading a group talk*

The following week we focused on “Confidence,” from being comfortable in yourself to taking a stand for what you believe in. I gave my first talk introducing confidence. I went into it thinking what could I possibly give to these kids? I often don't feel extremely confident and self-assured myself, so what do I have to offer? But I remembered when I was able to stop thinking about what was “expected” of me, and find confidence in who I was, and ultimately, be more successful. From giving that talk to interacting with the students, I myself was able to gain even more confidence for the future.



*Hana sharing her "If You Really Knew Me..."*

Our final week on “Bullying Prevention” was about giving the students the chance to open up and gain a deeper awareness and empathy of one another. I spoke on the topic of being honest with yourself and others, and furthermore, the value of expressing yourself to others. Sunny and Hana both shared their personal stories to open up the group discussion, in which I was so impressed with the honesty and depth of which these twelve and thirteen year old's shared their personal stories. I was able to gain a better understanding of them, and I think, as peers, they could with each other as well. We finished the day with personal goals the student's could strive for, which was such a great way to finish our time there.

This experience at Principled Academy has been so beneficial for me, and I believe we definitely did our best to connect and relate to all the students there. Through that, I think they could trust us and find something of value in the three presentations we did there. I'm so grateful for this opportunity to work with Momentum, and look forward to seeing it continue to grow in the future.

Marina H.