Project Title: Investigating Digital Friendship Among Young Girls in an Online Social Network

You are invited to take part in a research study being conducted by Dr. Tracy Hammond, a researcher from Texas A&M University. The information in this form is provided to help you and your child decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to allow your child to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this permission form. If you decide you do not want your child to participate, there will be no penalty to you or your child, and your child will not lose any benefits they normally would have.

Why Is This Study Being Done?
The purpose of this study is to investigate the ways children interact on social networks, and if good habits can be learned by educating children about good digital citizenship and digital friendship strategies.

Why are My Child and I Being Asked to Be in This Study?
Your child is being asked to be in this study because she is a Junior member of the Girl Scouts of Central Texas. You, as her parent or guardian, are also invited to participate. You must participate together.

How Many People Will Be Asked To Be In This Study?
Approximately 45 people (participants) will be invited to participate in this study locally (approximately 20 girls, one guardian per girl, and 1 Girl Scouts of Central Texas support staff).

What Are the Alternatives to being in this study?
The alternative to being in the study is not to participate. There are no adverse effects associated with choosing not to participate.

What Will My Child Be Asked To Do In This Study?
In the Kickoff and Closing events, your child will be asked to complete a personality quiz and other surveys relating to their social support systems and online experiences and participate in standard workshop-like activities, such as ice breakers, the creation of posters or skits, focus group interviews, etc. In the time between those events, your child will be asked to participate in a number of online activities on a custom social network designed for safe child communication. You will also be required to log in to this social network at least once per week to ensure your girls are using the application correctly. Your participation in this study will last 8 or more weeks.

Online Social Network Use (Weeks 1-8)
This is a series of small events that will take place on the online social network. These events will be simple activities for the girls to complete, such as writing poems, sketching specific items (i.e. monsters, fruit, etc.), animating essays, writing news stories, etc. During this time, parents are required to log in to the social network at least once per week to ensure their girls are using the application correctly.

Optional Continuance (Weeks 8+)
Girls and parents may choose to continue participating in KidGab communications and activities until May 2017 or earlier, if the site needs to be taken offline for any reason prior to that date. Extended participation in KidGab will provide your child the opportunity to further practice safe social networking, and will allow us to study the long-term trends and behaviors exhibited by youth on online social networks.
Are There Any Risks To My Child?
The things that your child will be doing are no greater than risks than your child would come across in everyday life. In the workshops, the girls will use craft supplies such as scissors and glue. On the social network, they will communicate and share with their peers. Monitoring and security measures are in place (including the requirement for parents to log in and monitor at least once per week). We understand that the online data of minors is very sensitive and we have measures (including encryption, firewalls, and passwords) to keep that data safe. At no time will the researchers share personally identifiable data with anyone outside of their own team. Unfortunately, no number of safeguards can promise absolutely that there will be no breach of confidentiality, though we think the possibility of a breach is remote. Girl Scouts of Central Texas is not held liable in any manner for issues that arise during the course of the study.

Although the researchers have tried to avoid psychological risks, your child may feel that some questions/procedures that are asked of you will be stressful or upsetting. Your child does not have to answer anything they do not want to.

Are There Any Benefits To My Child?
The direct benefit to your child by being in this study is an increased awareness of good digital citizenship and digital friendship strategies.

Will There Be Any Costs To Me or My Child?
Aside from their time, there may be a small cost (to cover costs of the Girl Scouts of Central Texas associated with the program) for taking part in the study.

Will My Child or I Be Paid To Be In This Study?
You and your child will not be paid for being in this study.

Will Information From This Study Be Kept Private?
The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking your child to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Information about you your child will be stored encrypted, password protected, and locked behind a firewall. This consent form will be filed securely in an official area.

Information about you and your child will be kept confidential to the extent permitted or required by law. People who have access to your information include the Principal Investigator and research study personnel. Representatives of regulatory agencies such as the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) and entities such as the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program may access your child’s records to make sure the study is being run correctly and that information is collected properly.

Who may I Contact for More Information?
For Girl Scout questions or information about the program, contact Program Specialist, Emily Magnotta at emilym@gsctx.org. For information about the research study contact the Principal Investigator, Dr. Tracy Hammond, Ph.D., at 401-775-8268 or hammond@tamu.edu.

For questions about your child’s rights as a research participant; or if you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, you may call the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program office at (979) 458-4067 or irb@tamu.edu.

What if I Change My Mind About Participating?
This research is voluntary and you have the choice whether or not to allow your child to be in this research study. You and your child may decide to not begin or to stop participating at any time. If you choose not to be in this study or stop being in the study, there will be no effect on your child.
relationship with Girl Scouts of Central Texas, Texas A&M University, etc. Any new information discovered about the research will be provided to you and your child. This information could affect your willingness to allow your child to continue their participation.

**STATEMENT OF CONSENT**

The procedures, risks, and benefits of this study have been communicated to me and I agree to allow my child to be in this study, and to participate myself. I understand Girl Scouts of Central Texas is not associated in the actual research or results of the study. My questions have been answered. I may ask more questions whenever I want. I do not give up any of my child’s or my legal rights by signing this form. A copy of this consent form will be given to me.

___________________________________
Child’s Name

___________________________________
Parent/Legal Guardian Signature  Date

___________________________________
Parent/Legal Guardian Signature  Date

**INVESTIGATOR’S AFFIDAVIT:**

Either I have or my agent has carefully explained to the parent the nature of the above project. I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge the person who signed this consent form was informed of the nature, demands, benefits, and risks involved in his/her participation.

___________________________________
Signature of Presenter  Date

___________________________________
Printed Name