



HER STORIES





Editor's Note

In her 2017 book, "Trainwreck": the Women We Love to Hate, Mock and Fear and Why", Sady Doyle explores the concept of the trainwreck: the image of a woman who has been dismantled by the media for daring to be anything other than palatable, submissive and quiet. From Billie Holiday, to Britney Spears and Miley Cyrus, she looks at how these women have been at the mercy of enforced narratives, without ever having the chance to tell their stories themselves. Early on in the book, she writes that "the privilege of controlling your own narrative is easy to take for granted."

Teenage girls have never had this privilege, for two reasons. Either their narrative is hidden: emitted from data, policy and practice. Their stories get subsumed under the supposedly catch-all banner of 'children and young people', which distinctly removes the unique experiences of being a girl in a patriarchal society. Alternatively, their narrative is prescribed for them, often by adults (the people who tend to possess the privilege of controlling narratives) making presumptive judgements about them. As Shalukah, a 15 year old FBB participant says on the pages of this book: "The stories of teenage girls are often overlooked because we get labeled as hysterical, over emotional, over exaggerated." If by 15 years old, your story of the world is one of adult prejudice, assumptions, labels and ignorance, then it strikes me that we must do better. Whoever possesses the privilege of controlling the narrative must find ways to pass that privilege on.

That's what this book is all about. It is the moment for teenage girls to reclaim their narratives, centre themselves and present their stories to the world, in their terms. It is their worlds in their voices, accompanied by the women who have played integral roles in their lives. It is the story of their relationships, and of shared womanhood that cuts across two or three generations. It is the story of joy, love and courage, and of hurt, loss and anger. It is the complexity of experiences that cannot be subsumed into a single story. As Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie reminds us, "The "single" story creates stereotypes. And the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story."

As you read this book, I hope you are filled with optimism at the multitude of stories of the girls and the women featured alongside them. It is a reminder to all of us to pass the mic, and then crucially, to listen. It is only by allowing teenage girls to control their own narratives that we will begin to understand the realities of their worlds.

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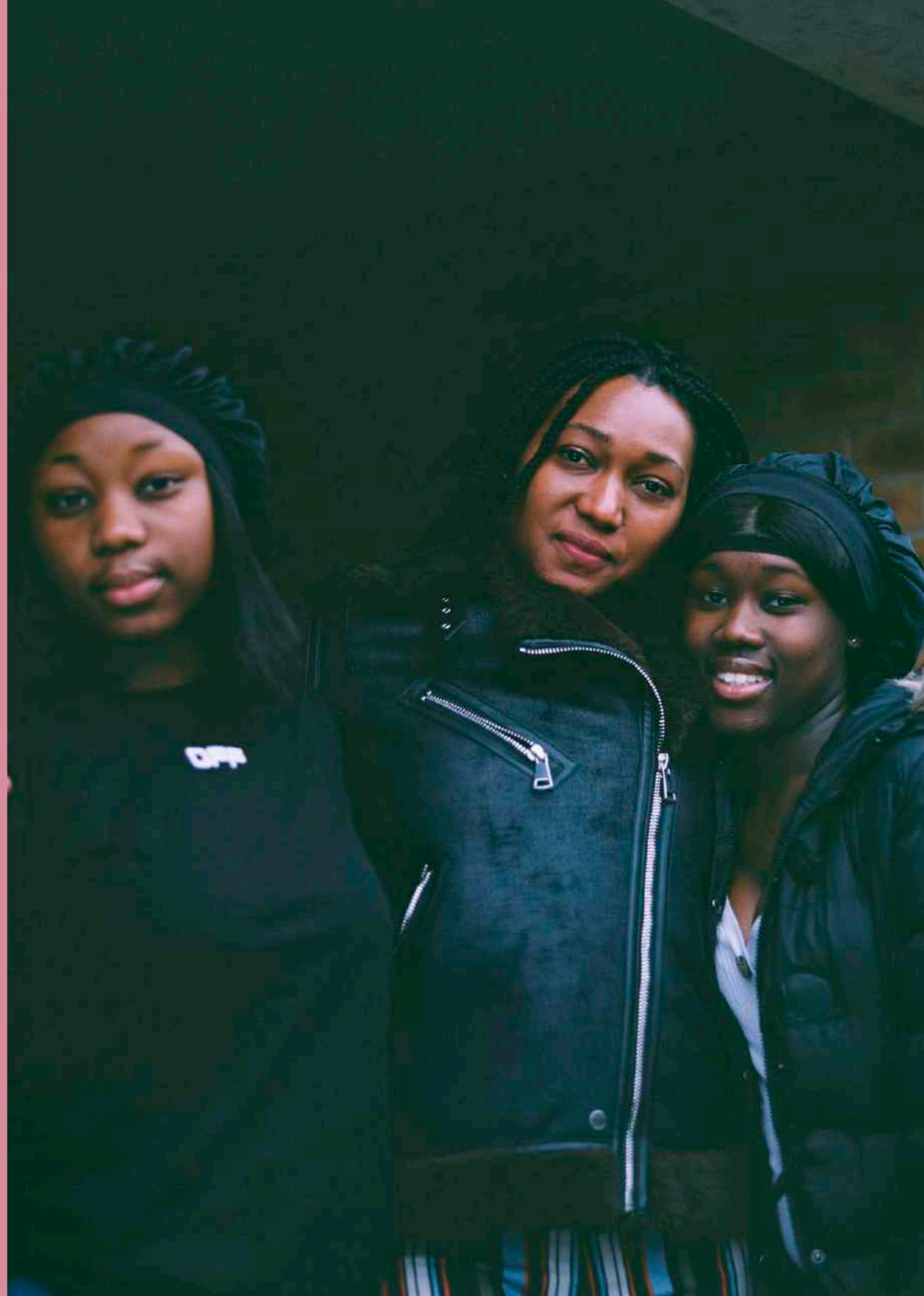
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Joyce, Divine and Mum, Nadege

Divine and Joyce are sisters in their second year of the FBB programme at their school in Lambeth, London. They were joined by their Mum, Nadege.



DIVINE, 13

I want to tell girls to just be confident in what you do, without fixing yourself and don't let anyone's opinions affect you, just be confident really. Don't let your society or community try to bring you down. Just stay confident in yourself, focus on your education and don't be easily distracted.

I want to be successful, independent with my family here, but I wanna be focused on myself. I feel like it's important for females to share their stories and lives because it could help other girls get through situations that they're going through.



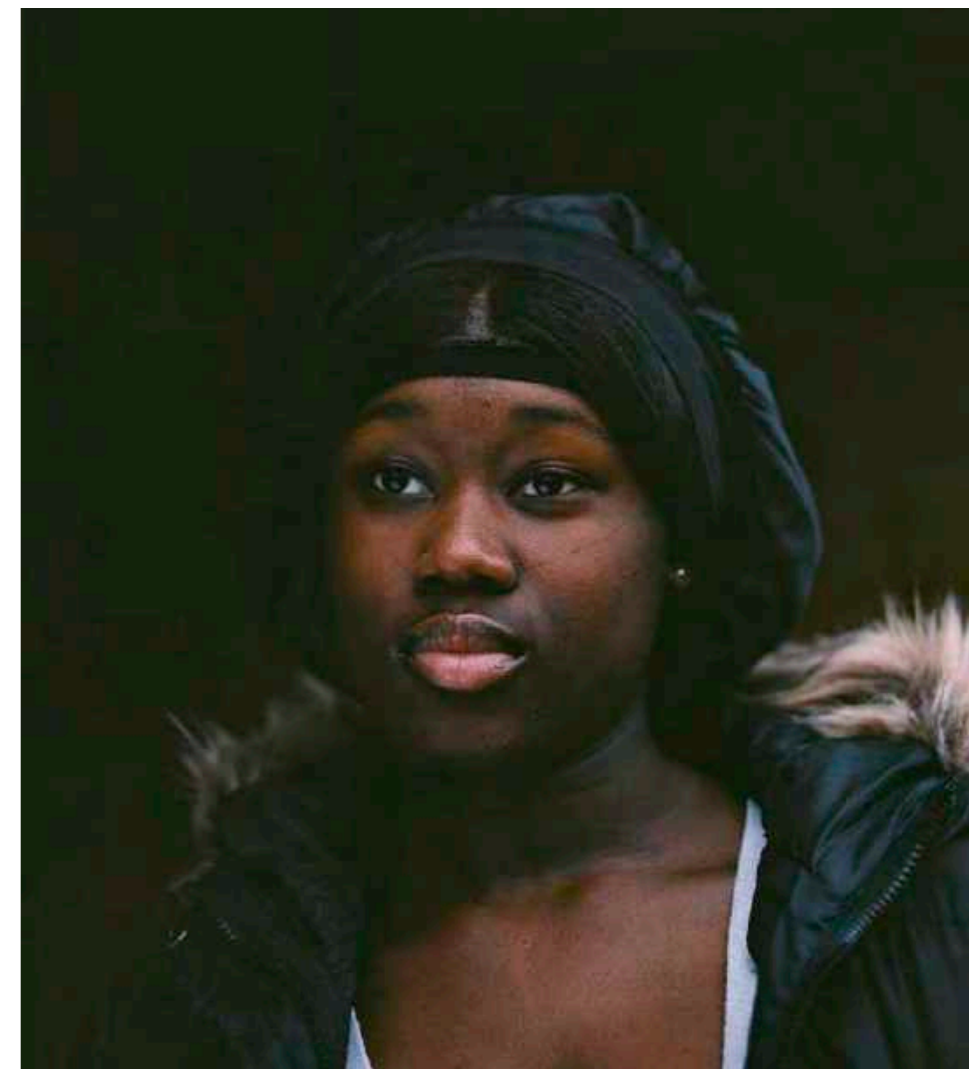
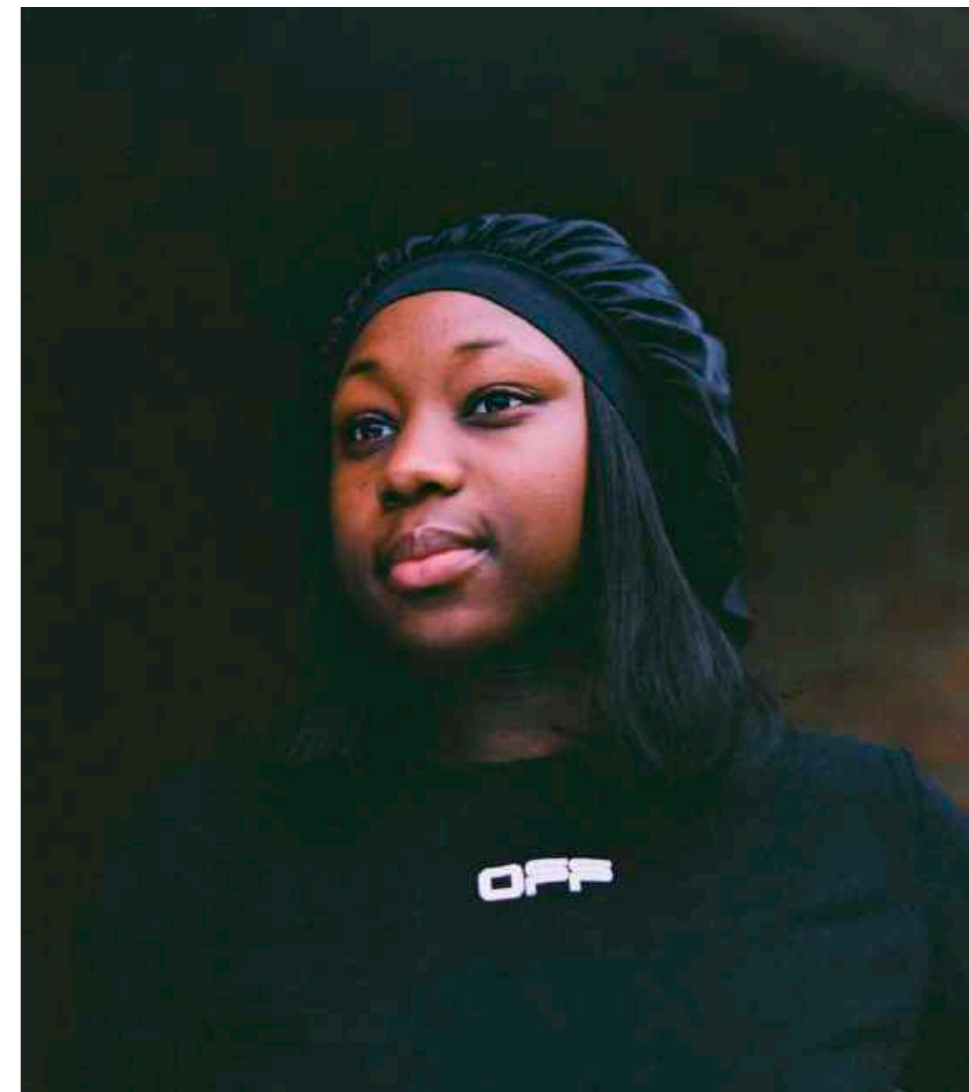
JOYCE, 14

I feel like one of my strongest attributes is how I take care of people in my family. Just spending time together, being happy and having a lot of fun around each other - just to put smiles on peoples faces - I enjoy that.

In cooperation with
Aramide Okekunle

Photographed by
Serena Brown

The Elmgreen School,
London





“I WAS SURROUNDED BY PEOPLE WHO SHOWED ME LOVE.”

● JOYCE AND DIVINES MUM, NADEGE

It is really important to share your story to boost others, because people can learn from the past and telling them what you went through will help them pick up in life. So they can say to themselves: “if she succeeds that means I am able to do it as well.” I think it is important to share your testimony in whatever you have done in the past to help others. That’s the main thing I believe.

From an African mother, the first thing that is important to pass down to my daughters is respect. Not only for your family, but you have to respect everyone in your workplace and in life. I am proud of course, most of the time I hear from my friends: “Oh I saw your daughters and they said hello”, because they don’t ignore people, they see you and say hello. Once Mummy says “this is my friend”, automatically when they see you outside, wherever you are, she will come and say “hello Auntie” or “hello Uncle”.

The biggest lesson that I have learnt from my past is concerning your ability: that you are able no matter what. I have been through a lot - especially in this country - but I was surrounded by people that showed me love, that showed me it’s not the end. Because even though as a Christian, sometimes we feel like God has abandoned us, and you just want to give up. But when you look at the future that is bright we say, “you know what we can do it, so it’s about courage’.

“I WANT MY

DAUGHTERS

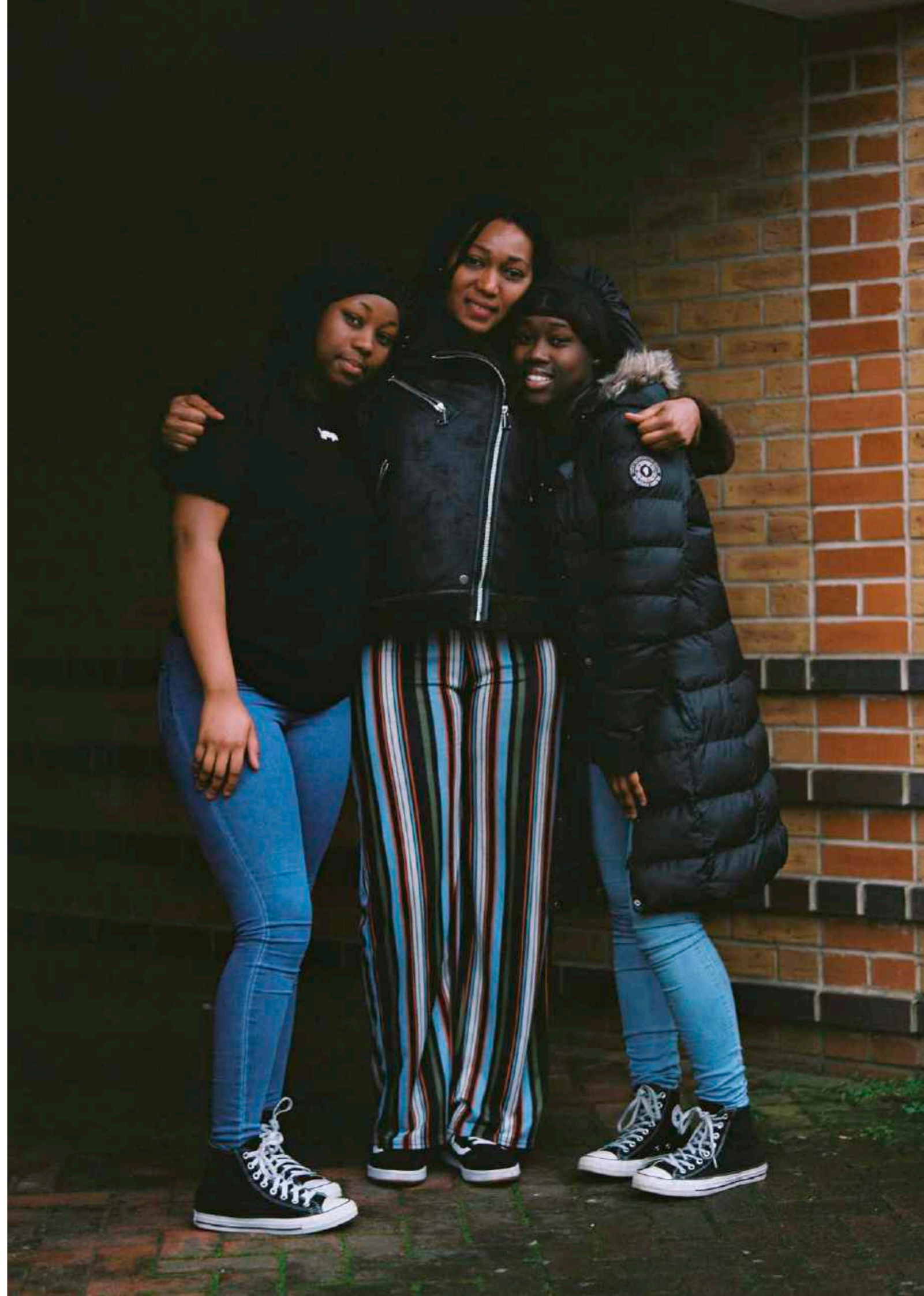
TO BE

HAPPY

AND

SETTLED

IN THEIR LIFE.”



Isatou and Mum, Musukoro

ISATOU, 13

It's important for females to share stories about their lives because females don't get as much recognition as men do when they tell their stories. Women can do the same thing as men and they can do it 10 times better.

Don't look at a man and be like, "Oh I can't do that because I am not a man". Just look at a man and be like "Oh I am gonna do that and I am gonna be better. Much better. And I am going to show everybody that I can do the same thing a man can do."

I've got my netball and a lot of trophies. I use that to represent me even though I win them for sports, I also win them for just being who I am: just being kind, funny and myself.

Isatou and her Mum live in Plumstead, South East London. Isatou is 13 years old and in her first year of the FBB programme.



ISATOU'S MUM, MUSUKORO

We have to share our stories because in this world whatever men can do, females can do it, and so we have to be proud of ourselves. I come from a family which couldn't further my education, and my Mum was the one who was struggling for us. I had to go to school and come back and help my Mum who's selling stuff so that we can have things.

I had to give up and look for a job just like my Mum. It was my aim to go to higher education but I couldn't. That's why both me and her Dad came here from Portugal. Her Dad did a course at Lewisham College. That's what I explain to them: "try your best, I am here for you. What I didn't get, I want you guys to get that," and they're making me proud because they always stand by me and help me.

My hope for Isatou is for her to complete her education, to get better and to not come to my situation in how I am struggling. I want her to learn the education here and take it seriously. Be someone who will be responsible. I want her to get a good chance so she can help the community.

Photographed by
Serena Brown

In cooperation with
Aramide Okekunle

Sydenham School,
London





BE TRUE

love will never die

STAY TRUE
STAY TRUE
STAY TRUE
STAY TRUE

EVERY
FRIDAY
NIGHT
AT
2 A.M.

love will never die

Mia and Mum, Carley

Mia is a 13-year-old first year FBB participant
pictured with her Mum, Carly. They live
together in Lewisham, London.

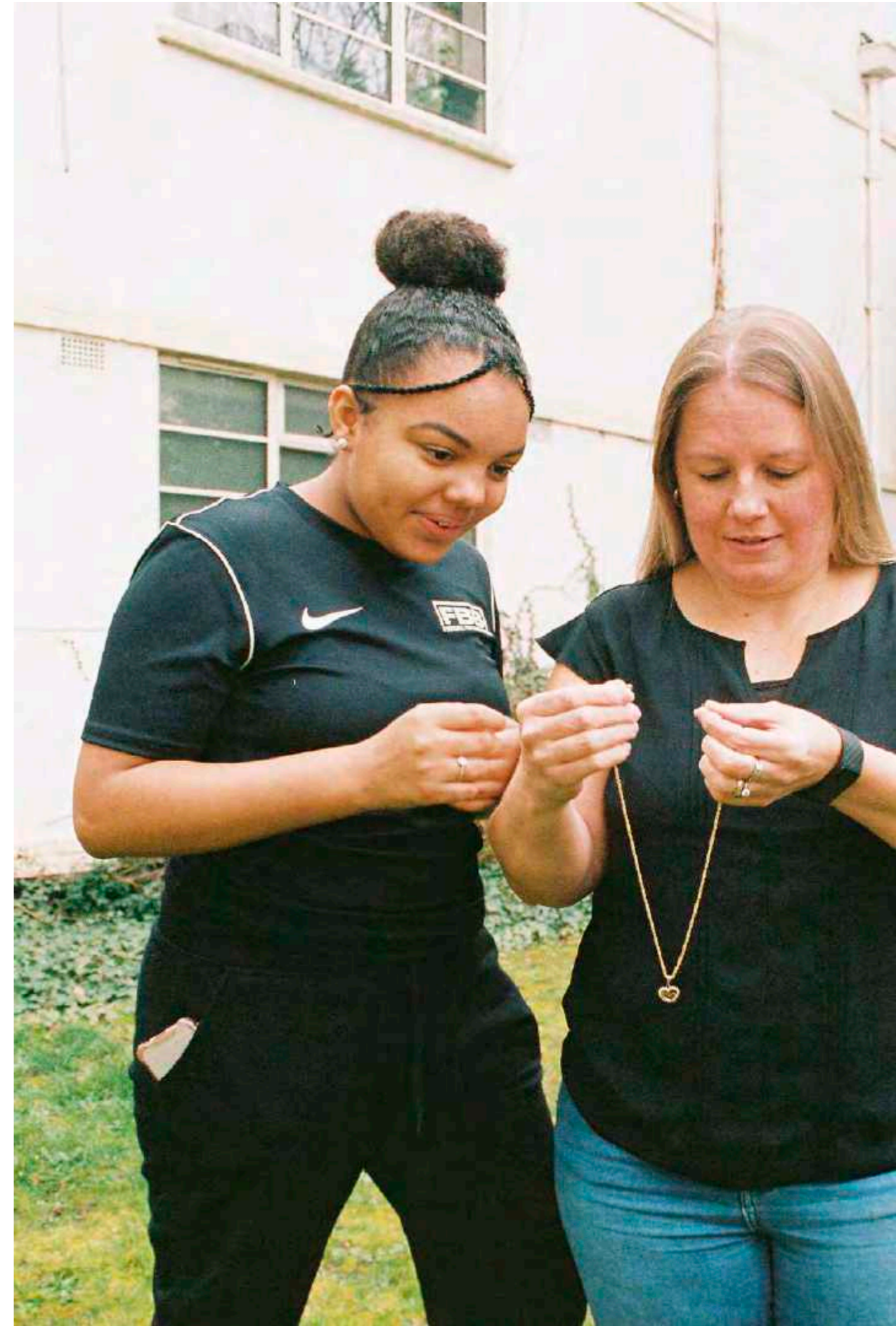




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MIA, 13

I hope to go to university, have a good job and a family. I want to make sure I am happy with myself and what I've done. If I could give one piece of advice to younger girls it would be to always talk with your friends and family members because they can always help you and encourage you to do your best.



MIA'S MUM, CARLEY

I think it is important to hear women's stories so others know that they're not alone. The lesson I have learnt and passed down to my child is that you've got to keep going. I would have tended to give up on things that I found difficult, but with her, I would make sure that she persists, just keeps trying and doing her best. My hope is that she keeps true to herself, carries on trying her best, is always considerate of others and, remembers it's not always about her.



Summer and her Sister, Georgia

Summer, her sister Georgia and her niece Konnie-Rae live in Eccles, Manchester. Summer is in her first year of the FBB programme at her school in Salford.

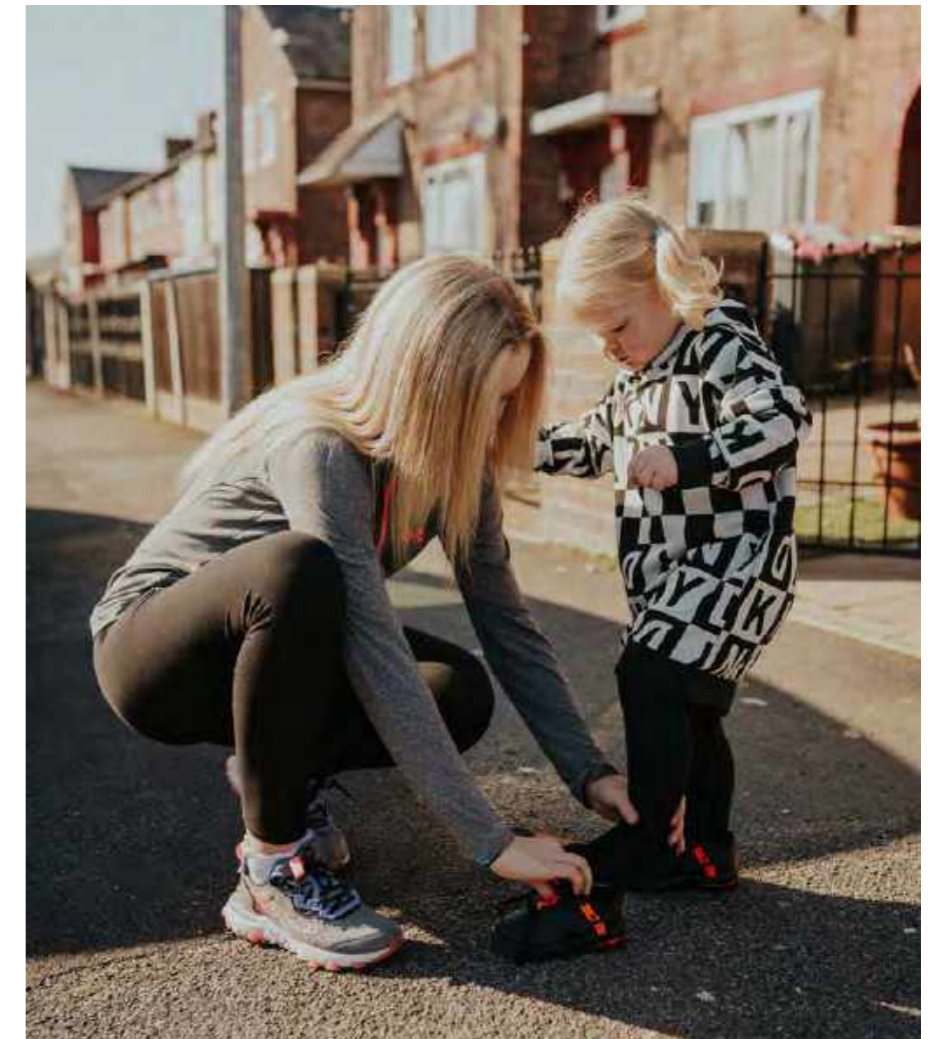




Photographed by
Sophia Carey

In cooperation with
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SUMMER,13

“EVERYTHING IS HARD ABOUT BEING A GIRL RIGHT NOW. I DON’T LIKE EATING IN FRONT OF LADS. THEY ALWAYS SAY SOMETHING.”

SUMMERS’ SISTER, GEORGIA

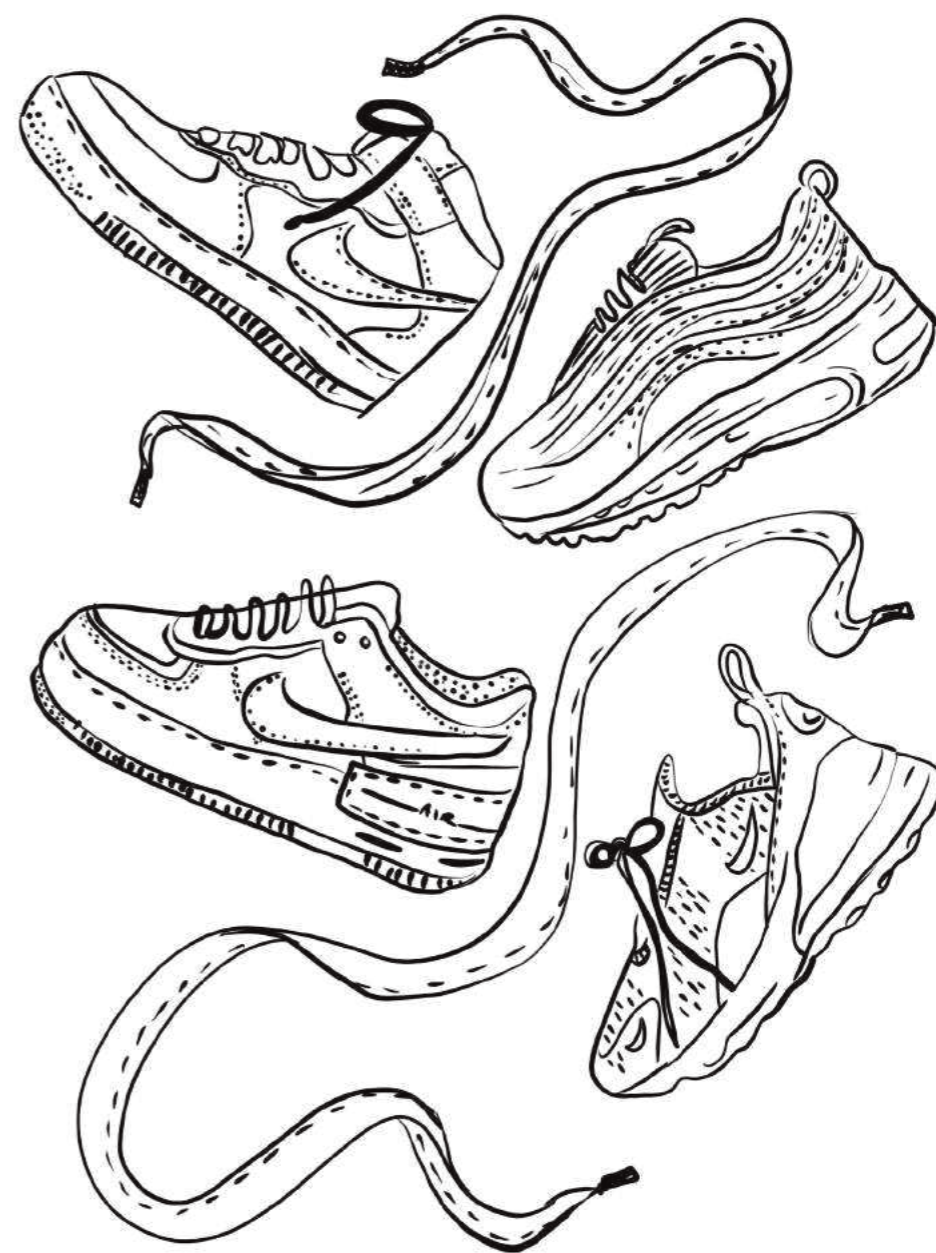
I want Summer to do something in life, because I was naughty in school, I was bad. I want her to get her GCSE’s. She wants to be a Nurse and I told her to go for it. I was pregnant at the age of 16, so I do want her to make something out of it.

People need to hear everything about women. We go through a lot, us women. Loads. It is actually always men we hear about now you’ve said it! There’s not enough of us, it’s all about the men.

Claudenea and her Nan, Morlene

Claudenea is a 15-year-old in her second year of the FBB programme. Her and her Nan, Morlene, live in Brixton, London.





CLAUDENEA,15

It's important for girls and women to share stories about their lives to prevent yourself from going through what they went through. People go through many things: with men, with racism and men get more privileges than women. Speak up and make sure your voice is heard, because you could really help other girls out there and really make a change in someone's life.

My trainers represent me because they are very trendy. I just like trainers and the way that it's the first thing someone sees because that's what I see when I look at someone. I like my trainers because of the bright colours and when you put a flashlight on it, the tick reflects. I hope to be wealthy and to just live my best life. Meaning I can travel, not be in debt, pay for everything and afford things that I want.



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Serena Brown

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Aramide Okekunle

The Elmgreen School,
London

CLAUDENEA'S NAN, MORLENE

Sharing stories is important between women and girls because you can tell them what life was and what life is. You can talk to someone, most girls talk in confidence but you can say something too and they give you the voice that you want to hear. You listen and you think to yourself: "yes it's ok," and you can follow their advice.

The biggest lesson I learnt from my past is that you've got to be an independent woman. I will pass that down to Claudenea, so she becomes an independent woman and nobody pushes her around.

My hopes for my granddaughter Claudenea, is to grow up, work and be the woman she wants to be. Where life takes you, that's where you should go. Be the head but not the tail. If you fall you can rise again. Always put your head straight, lift up your head and never look down.



Olivia and Mum, Danielle

Olivia, 13, is from Eccles in Manchester. Her Mum, Danielle, wanted Olivia to be the star of the shoot and chose not to be featured in the photography. Instead, she was pictured with her dog, Koko.



“It’s actually hard being a teenage girl because adults expect you to do so much, like more than when they were younger. You’ve got to be what you’re expected to be, you can’t be yourself. Society expects you to be this perfect person but no one is really perfect.”

OLIVIA,13

Photographed by
Sophia Carey

In cooperation with
Roya Mehdizadeh
Valoujerdy

Salford City Academy,
Salford

My story is that I’ve lived round here all my life, with Olivia. I went to my high school, which I wasn’t very keen on. Olivia goes there now. She’s not liked school, it’s not been her best thing.

Since starting with FBB I have noticed a change in her, a positive change. She does want to go to school now. Because the deal is that if she doesn’t go to school, then she doesn’t go to FBB on Wednesdays. I wish she could stay with FBB outside of school too. Like a youth club or something. I want Olivia to do well in school.

I know she’s not going to get A*s and things but she will get social skills that she can build upon. Build on that and on her friendships. It’s okay having grades but if she’s got no social skills then she’s not going to go far.

OLIVIA’S MUM, DANIELLE



Amina and her Sister, Sammar

Amina, 13, lives with her sister Sammar and the rest of their family in Nelson, Lancashire. Amina is in her second year of the FBB programme.





I think women should have the same rights as men. There shouldn't be a difference between them. Equal rights. Feminism. We were learning about this in English. It's not really spoken of that women should be allowed to do the same as men. I've got the same parents as my brother but to me they're more strict.

AMINA,13

Photographed by
Naomi Ogbeta

In cooperation with
Roya Mehdizadeh
Valoujerdy

Marsden Heights
Community College,
Nelson

“WE DON’T HEAR A LOT OF STORIES ABOUT HOW WOMEN ARE NOT TREATED EQUALLY IN WORKPLACES, WHERE THEY DON’T GET PAID ENOUGH.”

AMINA’S SISTER, SAMMAR

I am doing A levels in Biology, Chemistry, Psychology and Spanish. I’ll soon be going to university to study Pharmacy. My hopes for Amina are that when she grows up, or even now is she’s to stand up for herself, she can look after herself and she can speak up against the wrong actions people take. I really hope she can talk against the wrong people. I want her to be dominant, even though in today’s world it’s really hard for a woman to be dominant. I personally feel like the women’s stories that we don’t get a lot are women’s personal stories, especially when she’s been through a traumatic time. For example, when a woman is raped nobody really talks about it. It should be spoken about more often, because it’s not the girls fault she’s been raped and they should give her support. I feel like when a woman is raped she doesn’t tell anyone. The family tries to keep it down to her and apparently it’s dishonour, especially in this Asian community that we live in. We don’t hear a lot of stories about how women are not treated equally in workplaces, where they don’t get paid enough. There is a lot of inequality within work too: there are cases where male bosses sexually abuse the staff and we don’t hear about that because of the fear of losing jobs. I feel like we need to hear more about it, so we can work together as a community to put an end to all of this.



Alleeshah and her Mum, Somia

Alleeshah and her Mum live in Nelson, Lancashire, in the North West of England. Alleeshah is 14 and in her second year of the FBB programme. Prior to this shoot, Alleeshah's Mum had not been outside for months due to her health. She wanted to come out for Alleeshah and the photo.





“They feel like if they don’t look a certain way they won’t be accepted by society.”

Many women in the world are not heard. There are a few selected women in history that you see that are praised, or they have some type of connotation. Like Rosa Parks, she sat on the bus, but then people don’t go into the depth of what she did and that she worked with Martin Luther King. She was the one that was telling him that we need justice for black people, to stay on the bus because we can’t have racism forever.

I think people don’t understand how many young girls are told by the media that they need to look a certain way and dress a certain way. They feel like if they don’t look a certain way they won’t be accepted by society.

Nowadays, it’s quite a toxic media and social media. You see so many pretty girls but you don’t always know if she looks like that, they could photoshop it. You don’t really know what they look like and you don’t know how they feel.

People need to understand that young girls have problems as well. They don’t feel happy with the way they look even if they are pretty.

ALLEESHAH'S MUM,
SOMIA

**“WE HAVE A GOOD RELATIONSHIP,
MY DAUGHTER AND ME, AND ALL
THE FAMILY. I WISH MY DAUGHTER
A NICE LIFE.”**

Photographed by
Sophia Carey

In cooperation with
Roya Mehdizadeh
Valoujerdy

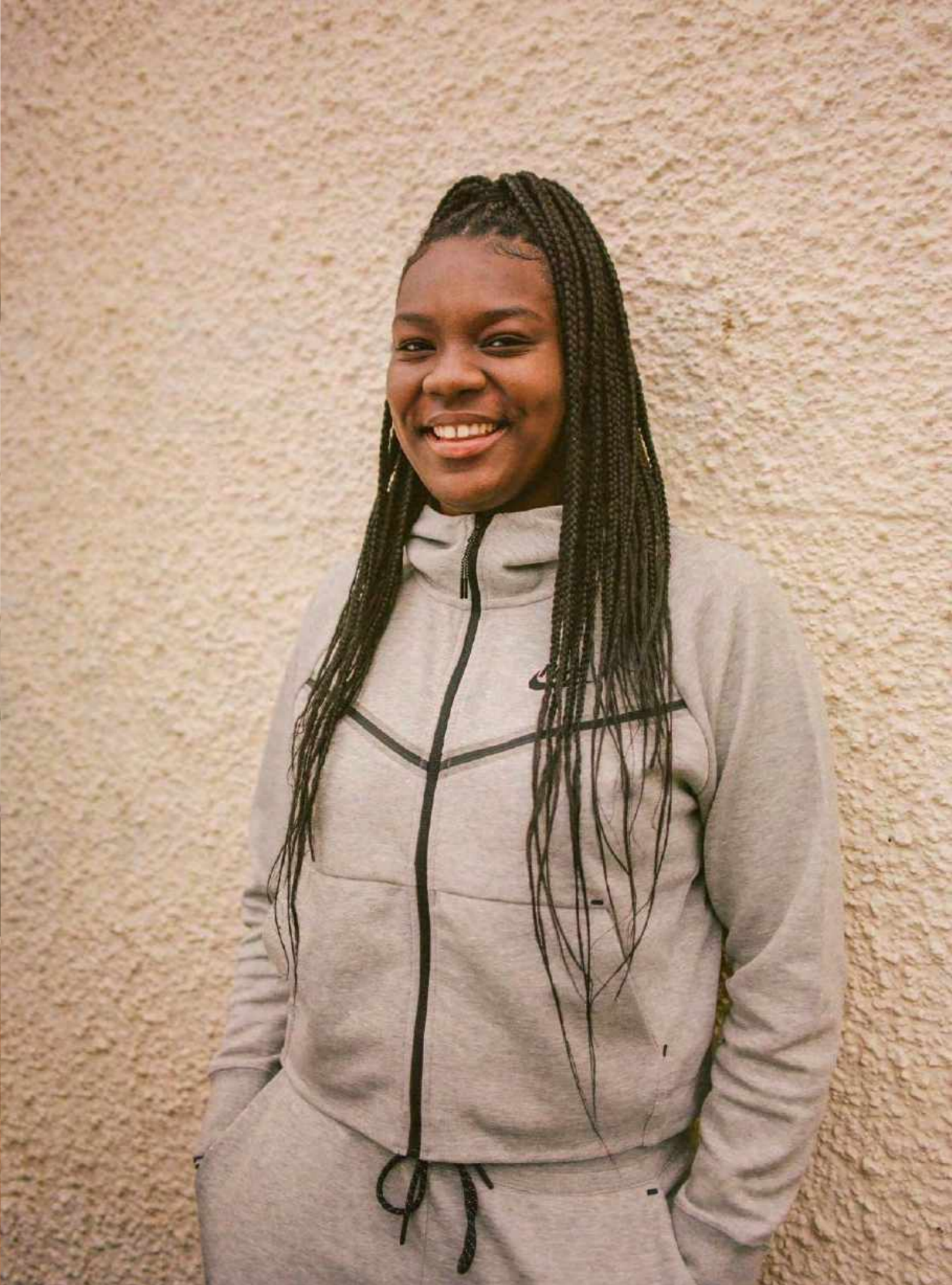
Marsden Heights
Community College,
Nelson



Shalukah and Debra

Shalukah is 15 years old, from Croydon, London. She was joined by FBB practitioner and once participant, Debra (19). They have known each other for 3 years. Shalukah's group are the first girls group within FBB to receive the full 3 year programme.





I was born in October 2005. I am Sri Lankan, unprudly because there's a lot of corrupt politics that they cover with the beautiful scenery of Sri Lanka. Me and my little brother went to primary school in Wimbledon and it was really fun. I remember I loved learning. I loved reading books, I loved going to school and school was just it for me. I was really, really independent, so I was just like, "as soon as I turn 16 I'm leaving the house, I'm going to this college, then I'm going to uni."

It was really good going to a school in Wimbledon, but I realised I felt like an outsider quite a lot because I was the only person with a single parent. I had friends who'd go home to their big houses and I would just go home and my family was just getting through. That was just weird, because from young I saw this big dynamic, it was crazy.

I changed primary schools and I went to the worst primary school in Croydon. But I felt part of the community because I just felt like I had some sort of a common ground with someone. I didn't feel uncomfortable talking about my household because there were so many people like me, but yeah, primary school was already for me like it was seeing two different worlds in the same world. I got into secondary school and year 7 and 8 were just crazy because everyone is just so emotional. There are loads of highs and loads of lows, I think a lot of us just realised we had so many emotions and so many things we understood about the world, and it's weird to start realising how dots connect, why things are the way they are and just trying to make sense of that as a teenager is so weird.

Then I had FBB in year 8, it was a massive change because I had someone there and I was like, "wow that's weird", and that was really nice because I felt like I had an outlet. In Year 8, I lost a lot of people: a lot of my friends were just getting excluded. I lost some of my grandparents so I needed people and it was so nice to have FBB there. Then in Year 9, I realised I was maturing, I'm becoming older, like a woman. So I was just like, "ok what do I really want out of life?" What do I need to start thinking about?" I realised looking around at older people in my life, like Debra and some of the older FBB mentors. Just looking at how they are progressing, having conversations about how to revise, and what I want from university. I think stories are your experiences and experiences are what make you, you. It makes you the type of person that you are growing into.

It makes you realise what's right and wrong and it's how you connect with people. The stories of teenage girls are often overlooked because we get labeled as hysterical, over emotional, over exaggerated and stuff. It's like "no, our opinions and our emotions are valid and you can't be put off by us just cause we're hormonal."

I think people make assumptions about teenage girls. We start to make sense of things, everyone has different experiences in life and it's really hard for young women to process that. You can't write our stories for us and tell us what we should be like, if we're not really understanding our stories for ourselves.

"I THINK STORIES ARE YOUR EXPERIENCES AND EXPERIENCES ARE WHAT MAKE YOU, YOU."

Photographed by
Hollie Fernando

In cooperation with
Ciara Monahan

The Archbishop
Lanfranc Academy,
London

SHALUKAH, 15





SHALUKAH'S FBB PRACTITIONER, DEBRA

“...that’s why our work is so powerful, and why we are so passionate about getting inner city girls especially into the sport.”

My story starts from 2015 when I was in Year 8. I had been playing football for 4 years prior to that but I just didn't really see it as something that I really wanted to pursue because of the lack of facilities, and the emotional and financial strain I saw it having on my family.

I stopped playing but then FBB came into my life in Year 8. It really took me back to my primary school days when I first fell in love with the game. From there I had really supportive people around me and my FBB journey started from that moment. I moved on to volunteering for that organisation and eventually working for them as a project assistant which I'm currently doing now.

I guess being the only girl on the football pitch alongside loads of boys and seeing the drop off of so many of my friends, who initially came into secondary school really loving football, and being like "I don't want that to happen to so many other girls younger than me". I found what my purpose is - or one of my purposes in my life - which is that I try and encourage more girls to get into sport. And just feel comfortable in that space and really own it. So that was why I wanted to become a project assistant and help grow the girls project in FBB.

It's also how I met Shalukah. So 3 years ago, one of my first projects actually, outside of my own school, was with the Lanfranc girls. Shalukah was in Year 8 and her and all the other girls on the project kind of just became my little sisters, and I've seen their growth of exactly what I've just said. They are now feeling that the football pitch is a space for them where they can feel comfortable, where they can take real ownership of the football pitch and master it. They'll play alongside the boys who are using the other half of the pitch and feel no way about it whereas in the beginning some of the girls might sit out because they don't feel comfortable, there are different things stopping them from wanting to play. Now they just run on.

Even Shalukah, initially she'd ask to sit out on the side and then I would stand on the side and get her to coach parts or she would help me set up the drills. Now if I go and drop into a session she's leading the starter activity or she's encouraging that girl to come onto the football pitch. Seeing her grow specifically, she's always had those leadership skills in her and she's always felt so passionate and taken that caring aspect, always looking after the younger girls - for example Keana, Mia, she's always taking that responsibility on herself and it's beautiful to see. But then it's also beautiful that - when sometimes she might feel vulnerable - she wants mine or Ceylon's or Tom's advice, and she asks for those shoulders to lean on. I guess she's always lived those two kinds of life. One being the independent and supportive moments, but also those moments where she needs someone to lean on and get advice from.

I guess that's why our work is so powerful, and why we are so passionate about getting inner city girls especially into the sport, because you don't hear our stories. Those are the stories that we need to hear. Those are the stories that then allow us to create a path for those girls to make it there.

My hopes for Shalukah? She has the world as her oyster at such a young age. If you listen to her speak she's so articulate, she's so skilful, she's so aware and wise beyond her years.

“YOU CAN’T

WRITE OUR

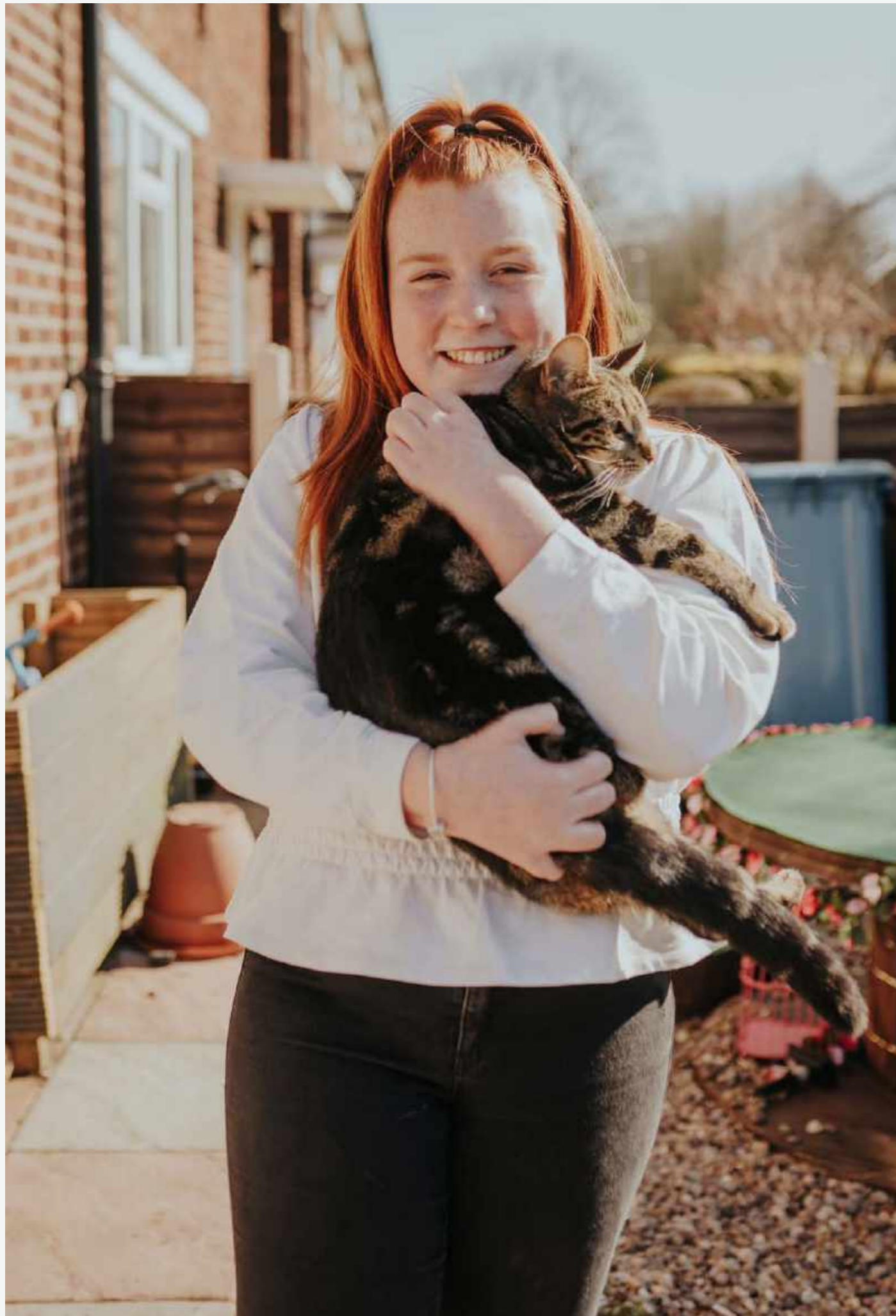
STORIES

FOR US”

Molly

Molly is 13 and in her first year of the FBB programme at her school in Salford, Manchester. She is also a member of the first ever FBB Youth Board. She is featured with her cat, Tom.





Photographed by
Sophia Carey

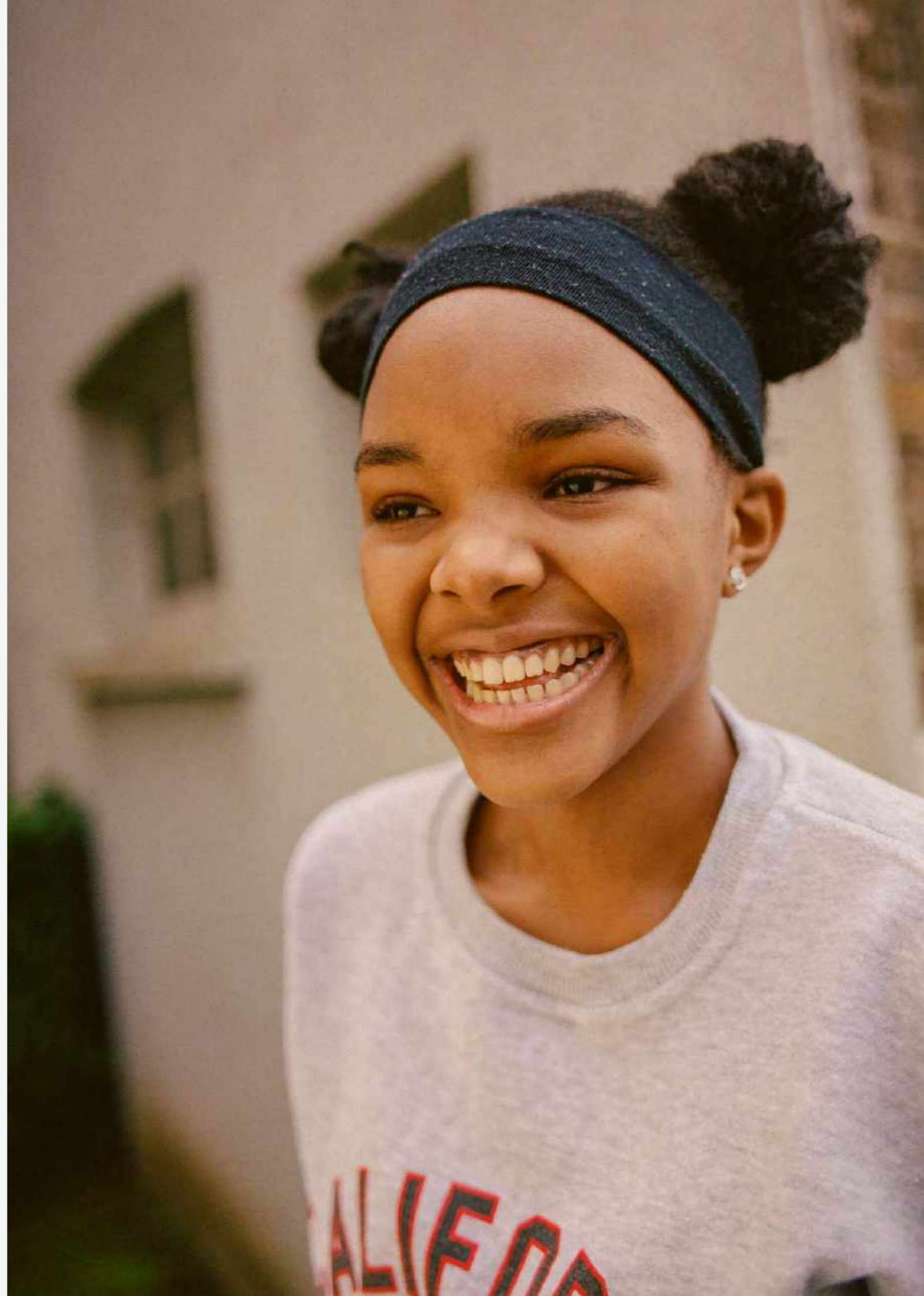
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Valoujerdy

Salford City Academy,
Salford

“The untold stories about teenage girls are about our mental health. Some people feel sad but you can’t really show it, because they think they need to be strong for their family.”

Anaiya and Mum, Rosalyn

Anaiya is 15 years old and in the third year of her FBB journey. She was joined by her Mum outside their home in Croydon, London. Anaiya is part of the first FBB girls group to receive the full three year programme.





“I kind of take sports into my self mechanism. It helps me to cope with things. I take that out with things like being creative, drawing and art.”



My story is like, I'm quite an athletic person. I kind of take sports into my self mechanism. It helps me to cope with things. I take that out with things like being creative, drawing and art. My dad, he's quite good at art so it kind of brought me into art, like how I can find myself through art. I look up to my brothers as well because my brother is quite into sport and now he's got an apprenticeship working in a bank. I want to do something too with a law firm. So my story is kind of like... the things around me make me who I am, the things I go through teach me lessons that I need to be taught. It helps me create a better person for myself.

My mum kind of shapes me into my personality. I get all my personality traits from her. She helps me with my schoolwork and motivates me with sports and makes me push myself into doing better things, being more flexible and proactive and not letting my mind sit to rest.

I think it's important that teenage girls' stories are told because everyone comes from different backgrounds and they all have their own stories to be told and each of them deserves the right to be heard. Teenage girls shouldn't be stereotyped into a certain category, they should each have their own persona and they should let their stories be heard in order for them to showcase who they really are.



Anaiya's very ambitious. She's very caring, loving, she's just a great girl. I love her very much. Both me and Anaiya like sports. I've always done sports at school. I've introduced Anaiya to a lot of sports because it improves our mental health. So me and Anaiya do basketball together, we do a little bit of football and also I work out. We bond very well regarding sports.

I'm very competitive. Actually all of us are competitive but, usually it's my team that wins! Of course my team always wins! I know Anaiya likes looking after people and caring about people, so I think she wants to be a lawyer when she grows up. So I'm hoping, fingers crossed, everything goes ok. That will be her role. That she gets into university, Cambridge hopefully! And then goes forward from there to be a solicitor. I think she'll be a great one, as I say, she's very caring, loyal and compassionate.

Photographed by
Hollie Fernando

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The Archbishop
Lanfranc Academy,
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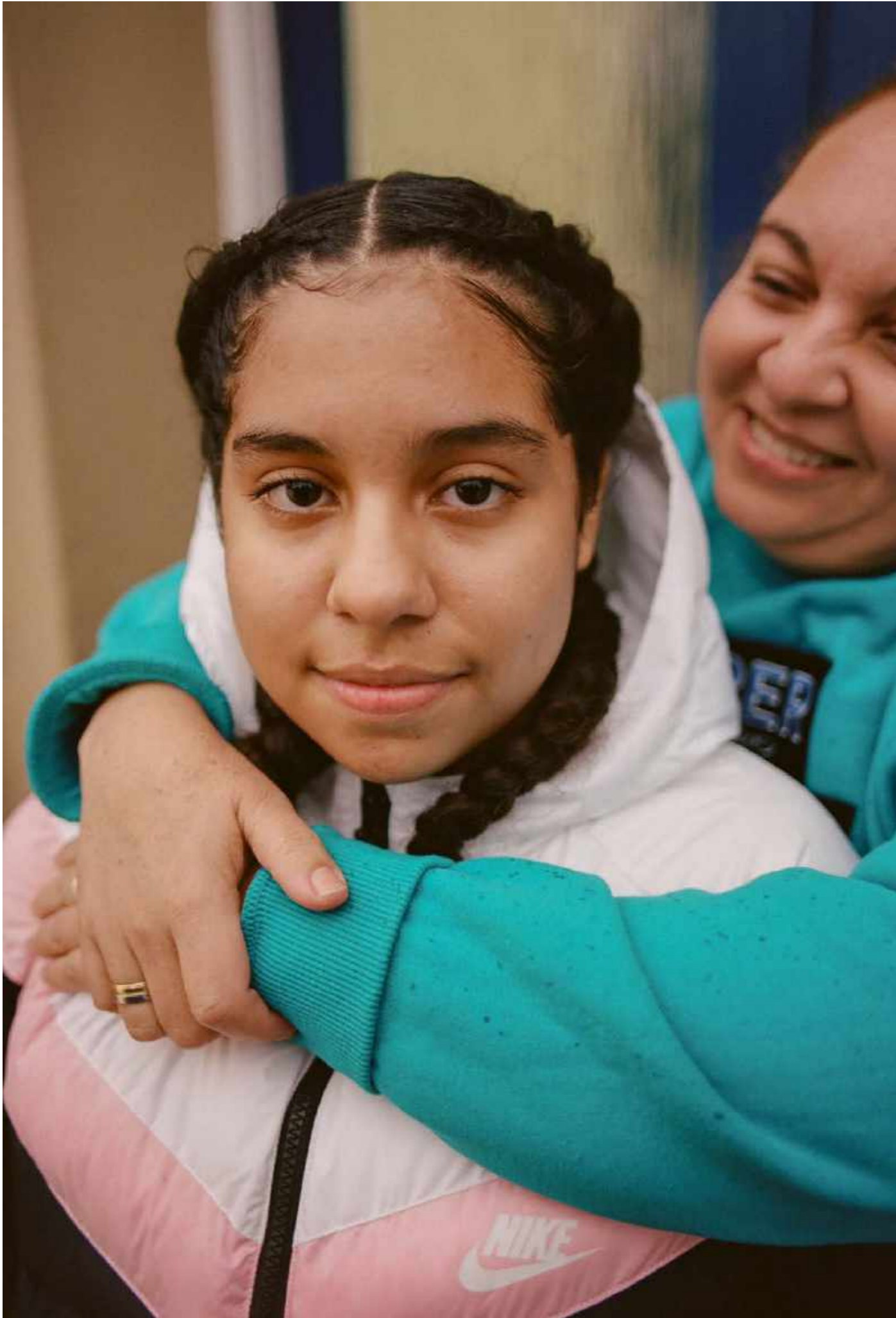
ANAIYA'S MUM, ROSALYN



Ashley and her Mum, Oneyda

Ashley is 14 and lives with her Mum, Oneyda in Lambeth, London. She is in the second year of the FBB programme at her school.





ASHLEY, 14

I think stories are important because we get to know each other. I've been in Elmgreen since year 7 and joined FBB in year 8. Since I joined, my behaviour has changed in school and I've found new friends.

It's good to go to FBB because we discuss different opinions and play football after our sessions, so I find that really good to do at school. I just like to play football. I just feel like myself, It's just a good thing I like to do.

Photographed by
Hollie Fernando

In cooperation with
Aramide Okekunle

The Elmgreen School,
London

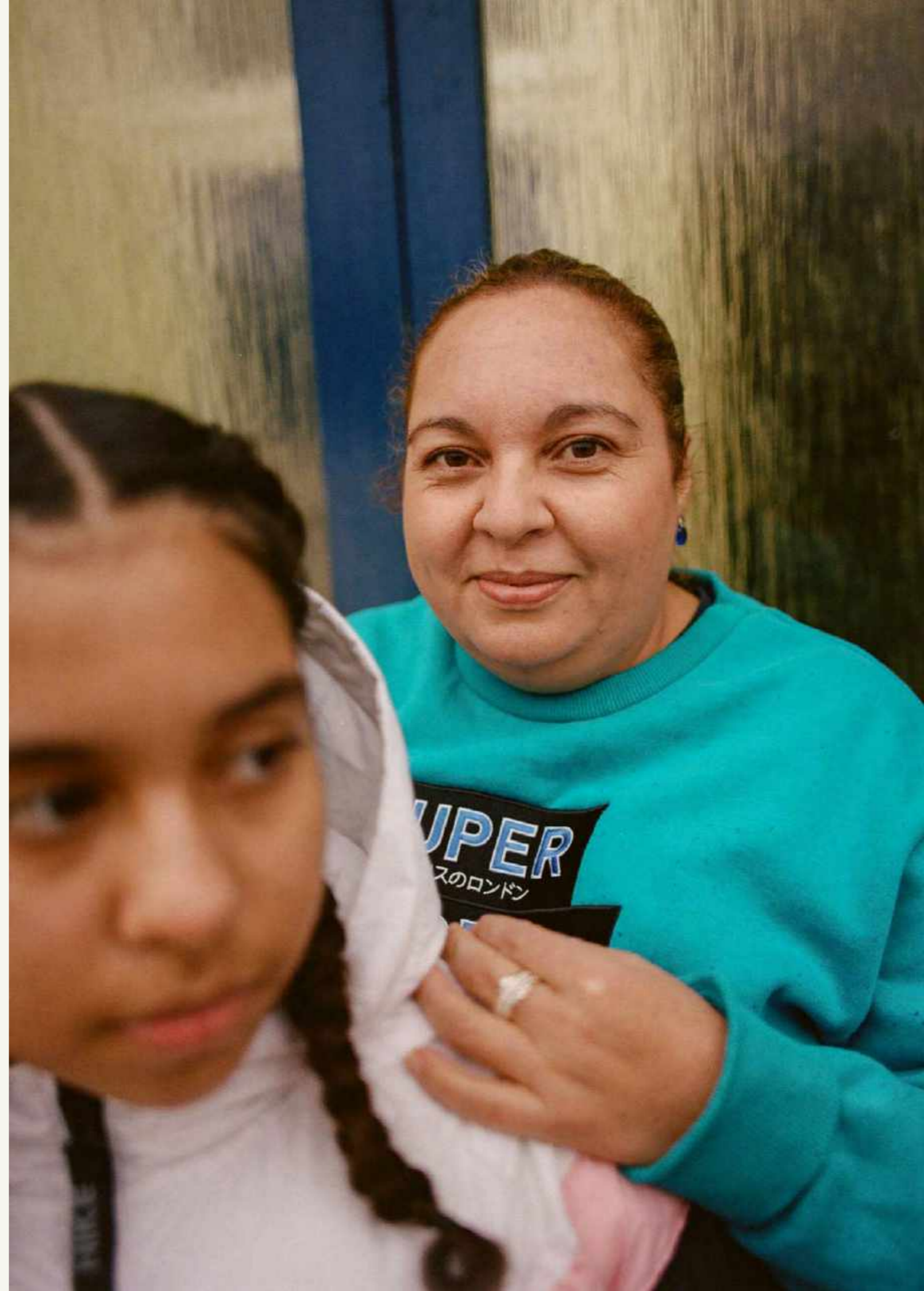
ASHLEY'S MUM, ONEYDA

I am Oneyda, I am Ashley's Mum, so I am a normal Mum. I work in this country now, I came from Spain. First from Nicaragua to Spain, and then from Spain to London. Basically I am a normal woman!

I read The Bible. You can find in The Bible the strong woman. I use any example of a woman in The Bible where the woman is strong and decides to fight for other people. I can therefore help, because I understand it's the most important thing to do for other people, not for yourself. The woman is not weak, the woman is strong.

Ashley's a good girl. She's a daughter and a friend as well. We enjoy eating together. Because I enjoy to cook and she enjoys my food!

If she selects football, I am happy to enjoy with her. If she selects basketball, or another choice, I am happy. I'm looking at her and I know if I can do it, then I know that my daughter can do it too.



Dream and her Mum, Melanie

Dream is 13, and lives in Forest Hill,
Lewisham, with her Mum Melanie. She is in
her first year of the FBB programme.





DREAM, 13

If I could give one piece of advice to young females it would be to love yourself, don't put a limit on yourself and be who you are.

I've got a little teddy dog called Patch and he's been to nearly every single hospital sleepover that I've been to since I was 5.

Photographed by
Serena Brown

In cooperation with
Aramide Okekunle

Sydenham School,
London

DREAM'S MUM, MELANIE

I think it's important for females to share stories about their lives because everybody's lives are so different. We come from different cultures, different backgrounds and different classes so it's nice to have experience of how other people live and things that have affected them.

Dream is my fifth daughter. She's a pretty loving cool kid really, I just want her to have fun with life. Life is a great thing and sometimes we get lost in doing the right thing or being the right thing, but it is just about having fun in life and her enjoying herself. Being a Mum to five daughters, each of them has taken me on a different learning curve.

I'd like her to have a career that she's happy in and something where she can help other people and children who feel disadvantaged, because she is a very good confidence builder. During this lockdown I went in her room to see what she was doing, because I could hear she was talking and it wasn't school work, and she told me that some of her friends were struggling with the lockdown. So she was giving them coping mechanisms, like how to set out their day and the things they need to remember to keep themselves strong and healthy.

When I came out of the room and spoke to Dad, I actually cried for a minute because I was just so proud that she had that kind of empathy for others.

My hopes for you, Dream, are that you have a happy life and that people treat you the way you deserve to be treated because you are a very lovely girl, even though you try to pretend to be a boy.





Jaida and her Mum, Brooke

Jaida is 12 and lives in Orpington, on the border between Kent and London. She is featured with her Mum, Brooke, her little sister Darcie. Jaida is in her first year of the FBB programme.



JAIDA, 12

Photographed by
Hollie Fernando

In cooperation with
Ciara Monahan

Kemnal Technology
College,
Sidcup

At my school I'm the first year of girls. There's only two sets of girls: girls in year 7 and year 8. To be honest, it's been quite hard being the first year of girls because we're not really used to the environment of being in an all-boys school, but now we're more used to it and we're adapting more to the environment there. But it's been quite hard for me because as I'm much taller than other girls and I look older than other girls, I get more pressure put on me. Especially by the teachers, because I'm apparently meant to be a role model for all the girls and children. When I'm walking along the corridors I see teachers look at the other children differently than they look at me.

But in my opinion, I don't think that should be allowed because I'm the same as other girls but I just look different, I can't really help the way that I look in like height and facial features, so that's like one of the most annoying things about being tall. I just want to be treated the same as everyone else. It's important we tell our stories because I am sure there are other girls who have the same problem as me and I think it just needs to be shown more. The way I present myself is important to me because it just makes me feel good about myself. I just love clothes, I love getting myself dressed for no reason. I just like looking presentable, I like taking pictures for everything.

My Mum will be cleaning and she'll just see an eyelash on the floor, she'll think it's a spider and she'll get the Hoover and get everything ready to kill it. She'll be like, "Jaida this is your eyelash?!", or my brother will just be in the shower and he'll see an eyelash in the bath. Like I don't know how it gets there!





JAIDA'S MUM, BROOKE

Being a Mum defines me because most of the time goes towards the children and it's just "Mum, Mum, Mum" and so I feel that there is little time for me. Sometimes I ask "who am I? What do I do? What do I like?" It would be nice to have a balance there, but I do enjoy being a parent because I see the qualities and the progress has to come from me. I have to take credit for that. Jaida and I have a very close relationship, she talks to me about anything and I can talk to Jaida about most things.

She's very open and honest and I think that's important for a child to express themselves and be heard and not be suppressed. It's not all about what the parent wants, you know, it's equally about what's going on for the whole child. We have a good relationship I'd say. In fact I'd say we have a brilliant relationship.

I have high hopes for Jaida, not just because I'd like her to do well, but I believe as a person she is going to do well because she's very strategic. She has high aspirations and I think she's mature enough to take on more than the average 12 year old. It shows she's not going to make wrong decisions and she's mature enough to know what's right, what's wrong and what's best for her so I'm quite confident she'll make good choices.

The story we don't hear enough is that the term 'Strong Woman' gets thrown about too much. Because we all cry, we all hurt, we all have emotions and I think sometimes that, being a black woman as well, that gets bypassed. It's just about being strong. We've come from a time that's really hard and I just think for our children today, they aren't in that time and I think putting that pressure on them can have a massive impact and make them initially just start stereotyping and having their own opinions on things they don't really understand.

I think to be open, honest and know who you are can be a great basis for a good woman. You don't have to be out there protesting to be known as a good woman, or a strong woman. If you've got those good qualities you can incorporate them in your child and utilise them in the future. It's like a positive cycle of history repeating itself, rather than a negative, dysfunctional cycle. But I think I'm quite a strong woman, in my own way, raising Jaida by myself. It's extra hard for me to overcompensate for things and be both good cop and bad cop. With my persistence and keeping the strong boundaries, as well as letting her know that it's ok to be angry and sad, but knowing when to have that control and know that I'm here if she ever needs to talk about anything. I'm hopeful that I've done a pretty good job with showing Jaida what being a good woman is, so when she grows up she can look back and say my Mum taught me this. I am proud of her and her growth.

“THE TERM ‘STRONG WOMAN’ GETS THROWN ABOUT TOO MUCH.”



Bobbi and her Nan, Ann

BOBBI,13

There are stories we don't hear about teenage girls. Like how they can be bullied. How they are going through stuff at home. They don't want to talk about it because they are uncomfortable. They think people will judge them, because that's what people do nowadays.

They judge them for no reason, even though they have their own background and have been through stuff. It's very different at school because we are the only girls in year 8. The rest of the school is just boys, it's quite weird and different to primary school. Then again it's quite easy because the boys aren't that rude or they don't push you and shove you. They just stand there and let you go on with their day.

People need to share their stories because everyone can have a different background of where they come from and what they've been through. We shouldn't make them less of a person for who they are to have their own story.

Bobbi lives with her Nan, Ann, in Orpington on the border between Kent and London. She is in her first year of the FBB programme.





Photographed by
Hollie Fernando

In cooperation with
Ciara Monahan

Kemnal Technology
College, Sidcup



BOBBI'S NAN, ANN

There's not a lot to tell about my story really. All through my life, I've just brought up my children and my grandchildren, which is the most important thing to me. Bobbi is basically my daughter. She's not my granddaughter, she is my daughter. She's mine. I love her. She's a typical teenage girl. Been there, done it myself. Understand it. I think we've got a good relationship. I hope we have a good relationship.

When I was in school, I thought 'I don't need to do this and I don't need to do that' and I left school without any qualifications at all. I've said to my children, my two sons and then Bobbi comes along: I don't care if she fails, as long as she has her whole heart to try to achieve. I believe that if she tries her best, she will achieve what she wants to do with her life and don't let anyone put you down. If you need to try a bit harder, try a little bit harder. Don't follow her Nan. Don't take after me. Take it from someone that's been there and done it. Today's day and age is harder for the youngsters to go out and get jobs, to achieve what they want to achieve. I think it is, it's a lot harder than it was in my day. All I've asked from my children is that they try. If they try their best, I am happy. I don't want them sitting around, not doing nothing. That's all I ask from them. That you try your best.

I'm not gonna lie, I don't love football. I don't watch football. My husband is a Chelsea fan and football is always on the TV. Actually we had this discussion the other day, and I turned around and said, "why do you not see women's football on telly? Why is the women's football not as big as the men's?" Because sometimes the women are doing better than the men in football. Because I've watched a bit of women's matches and to be honest with you, I think the women are tougher than the men. All they seem to do is fall over all the time and play, "I've hurt me foot", "I've hurt me leg" and "I've hurt me head" but the girls seem to get up and get on with it. So, yeah, I strive for women. It should be equal and I believe in equality.

I'm quite a strong woman. I say what I gotta say. Please or offend. If I want to do it, I'll do it. I'll get a screw driver. I'll get a hammer out and I'll have a go. Women should have exactly the same treatment as men.

“ALL I'VE ASKED FROM MY CHILDREN IS THAT THEY TRY.”



Kacie and her Mum, Sammie

KACIE, 13

“I JUST THINK GIRLS ARE UNAPPRECIATED, UNDERRATED, AND DON’T GET AS MUCH ATTENTION. I LIKE MUSIC, WATCHING YOUTUBE, NETFLIX, PLAYING FOOTBALL, SPORTS AND YEAH. SOMETIMES I JUST SIT IN MY ROOM AND THINK I SHOULD DO A DRAWING!”

Kacie is in her first year of the FBB programme at her school in Orpington, Kent. She is 13 years old and lives with her Mum, Sammie.





I

JUST

THINK

GIRLS

ARE



UNDERRATED

KACIE'S MUM, SAMMIE

Photographed by
Hollie Fernando

In cooperation with
Ciara Monahan

Kemnal Technology
College, Sidcup

I'm Kacie's Mum. Mum to four as well, I have one teenage daughter and one teenage son. I think this project is so important because we don't get heard enough and especially girls, I think they tend to hide behind their mates and not really express themselves as much as boys do. Boys are able to go out to clubs and stuff and there isn't really that much for girls other than phones, TikTok and their friends. For girls there's a lot of undefined issues going into the outside world, you know from school. I don't think women get half as much chance really, and when it comes to the more important things. You know we've got a lot of skills, we can multitask, which is one of our very strong points so I think about something like, construction, and I think we'd do a damn better job than some of the men! Kacie and I have got a good relationship. We're really similar, we're really playful. I tend to annoy her quite a bit and act like a teenager sometimes but that's really just to get her involved, and not to be so serious in life! Kacie hates it, I come in her room singing and she's like "go away Mum, you're so embarrassing!" and I say "do you want me to be boring?" But Kacie, and other teenage girls. They need to be told that they can do anything they want to do. You're not subjected to hair and beauty, you can do anything you want.



01
Serena Brown
 02
Hollie Fernando
 03
Sophia Carey
 04
Naomi Ogbeta
 05
Tinuke Fagborun
 06
Jody McDowell

01 **Serena Brown** **Photographer**

What's your story?

I'm definitely only at the beginning of my story but I guess it's that I've decided to take on an industry where only 15% of photographers are women and even less are black. This was never a career path that seemed like a possibility for someone like me and I want to make sure I'm a part of changing that narrative by giving a voice to those we don't hear from.

Why are stories important?

It's important for all stories to be heard as it gives us a more diverse and representative view of society. For so long we've only really heard about one type of person which has left everyone else in the shadows but I think we're slowly seeing a change. If everyone gets a chance to share their story, we can create a more balanced society and create opportunities for those that are usually left behind.

Who was your female role model growing up?

I was raised in a family with really strong women. Between my mum and my two aunties I was taught the importance of independence, love and determination from an early age.

Why did you want to be involved in this project?

I love using photography to shed light on untold stories, particularly young girls whose voices are often overshadowed by boys. I loved getting to know their role models and seeing the gems they've passed down to the next generation of incredible women. They've all overcome so much and it's beautiful to see how they both support each other.

When it comes to women, what are the stories you don't hear enough of?

We need to hear more stories from marginalised voices. These are the people who aren't represented as much in the media and creative industry. It's important for working class, Black, POC and LGBTQI+ people to see themselves in successful careers which will in turn expose young people to new role models and new possibilities.

02 **Hollie Fernando** **Photographer**

What's your story?

I am a Brighton based photographer specialising in fashion and portraiture. I grew up in South London and knew I wanted to be a photographer from when I was quite young and started by taking pictures of my brother and sister.

Why are stories important?

Stories are how we connect to one another. Each person on this earth has a voice and a unique story to tell and we can learn so much about other ways of life, other opinions and other ideas all from just listening.

Who was your female role model growing up?

My mum. She is so kind hearted and such a giver, she just wants everyone around her to be having the best time and be completely happy and carefree, even if it means sometimes not putting herself first. I definitely am like her in this sense and am told I'm the 'mother hen' of my friendship group.

Why did you want to be involved in this project?

I love what FBB offers young girls and am just so happy I could be even just a little part of the amazing work they do. Emotional guidance and support through teenage years growing up is so beneficial, and promoting girls from a young age to respect, connect, support and grow with each other is just so important. I also really wanted to meet some new people and take portraits and hear some new stories after being in lockdown for so long!

When it comes to women, what are the stories you don't hear enough of?

I'd like to hear more stories of women doing jobs that are stereotypically 'male' dominated, so its not breaking news for a woman to be president, or for a woman to be an army general - in turn neutralising job titles. And closing the gender pay gap for good!

03 Sophia Carey Photographer

What's your story?

My name is Sophia Carey, I'm 21 and I'm a photographer from London, now living in Manchester.

Why are stories important?

Stories are important as they allow us to hear of perspectives and experiences that we might not have otherwise. Stories are a chance for people to share the things that have made them into the person that they are and celebrate their lives because of those things.

Who was your female role model growing up?

Growing up, my female role model was definitely my Mum. I'm lucky that my mum was such an amazing figure of strength and inspiration in my life, and still is today. We might not live as close to each other as we used to, but our relationship continuously goes from strength to strength as I get older. I feel blessed to have a role model and a friend within my Mum.

Why did you want to be involved in this project?

Young women having a platform for their voices to be heard doesn't happen enough. Whether it's in the world of sport or in the creative industry, there are definitely still parallels between the two areas and their shared lack of female representation. It's great to be getting involved in a project that champions the voices of young women and allows their stories to be heard and I hope that we see more projects similar to this as time goes on.

When it comes to women, what are the stories you don't hear enough of?

There is a certain lack of success stories when it comes to the representation of women. It's not because of a lack of female success but rather that the space is usually already taken up. Seldom do you hear of a young woman's achievements, despite all of the struggles that still come with being a woman in the 21st century.

04 Naomi Ogbeta Photographer

What's your story?

My name is Naomi Ogbeta. I am the 7 times British Triple Jump Champion. Before I became an athlete, I was always creative. I used to make music videos on Youtube but I ended up removing them once I got laughed and teased at school for being different. Doing sports increased my confidence and by working hard I was able to represent my country and break national records. But I still longed to stay creative. Now I am not afraid to be creative and believe that's it okay to be multifaceted. Alongside my athlete, I also do photography and presenting.

Why are stories important?

Stories are important as it allows people to find a common ground with each other. Regardless of how we look or our age, sharing stories allows us to be interconnected.

Who was your female role model growing up?

The women in my life have inspired me.

Why did you want to be involved in this project?

Growing up in Salford I rarely heard the stories on Northern women. I would have loved to hear our accent represented more in the media. The lack of northern representatives within the media can make the women feel forgotten about.

When it comes to women, what are the stories you don't hear enough of?

Often times the stories of young people are told through statistics but not directly from the young people or women themselves. This allows them to take control of their own narrative and it will break some of the assumptions we hold about young people.

05 Tinuke Fagborun Illustrator

What's your story?

I am a British Nigerian illustrator. I see my art as an optimistic response to the world. I wish for my art to be a break from struggle. I want the audience of my work to feel something positive. Illustration is a way of telling stories visually and I create from my experience. My identity is ingrained in my work which explains why, for the most part, I draw Black Women. Also it's important to me to tell stories of women from diverse backgrounds which I believe stems from growing up acutely aware of my otherness and not feeling like I saw art that communicated that feeling.

Why are stories important?

Stories enrich the world. They are part of what distinguishes us from each other. Stories are part of culture and history. Many cultures don't have a written history but an oral one passed down through word of mouth from generation to generation, connecting us to our ancestors. Stories are also the original form of entertainment. We consume stories constantly and reach for them as form of escapism, which we all are seeking more and more

Who was your female role model growing up?

My mother and big sister were and still are role models to me. They are both self-starters and leaders in their respective industries. I'm lucky I had examples of strong emotive black leadership in my house growing up so I didn't doubt that it was possible for me. The year after I was born, my mother started her own charity to support women who have been abused. She saw a gap in services being provided to women from ethnic minorities and found funding so she could bridge that gap. For that she will forever be a role model to me she has endless compassion for all and a strong desire to help all in need.

Why did you want to be involved in this project?

Part of me wanted to get involved with this project because I believe that telling and hearing stories from female perspectives is necessary, especially for young girls. And any project that gives girls the space as autonomy to tell their own stories and empower them to know their voices matter and is beautiful. I think it's important to see these stories in print media, to have them in our homes, to see them on shelves so that it lives beyond a moment. It's something I aim with in my own work, it's all about representation and embodying something I would have needed and wanted to see when I was younger.

When it comes to women, what are the stories you don't hear enough of?

You don't hear enough stories of modern women who are currently making history and succeeding in fields outside of major public interest like stem and law and activism. My sister recently became a judge, something that is not frequently seen with people from our background and it would be interesting to know what other stories and women are slipping under the radar. I feel we should know the names of the women currently working towards

06 Jody McDowell Designer/Art Director

What's your story?

I'm Jody and I'm a 26-year-old Designer and Art Director from Manchester. Throughout the years I've worked with Art, Film, Photography and Graphic Design in order to create work that tells stories.

Why are stories important?

To me storytelling is about connection. The importance of representation and the variety of stories is how we as people grow and change. The more we hear of a certain story the more we become acclimatised to it. Whether it be by mouth, through pictures, through film or even through music, stories educate, inspire and communicate. It is important now more than ever that we carry on highlighting the unheard stories and voices.

Who was your female role model growing up?

My Mum and Dad separated when I was little and it was just me and her together for a while so we have a special bond. My mum did whatever she could to keep me happy and healthy (what most mums do every day that we take for granted). She's also a very hard working teacher. As I get older, I realise how hard it must be to be to juggle these responsibilities on a daily basis for little to no recognition. She taught me to be kind, not take myself too seriously and to think of my sensitivity as a superpower.

Why did you want to be involved in this project?

I wanted to help design this book as it felt like an important and well-intentioned project. I was excited to be able to give the pictures and text justice. 'Herstories' has heart and soul. Straight away I reflected on my own experience growing up and being on a girl's football team and the great memories I have of this time in my life. This book uses stories to spread awareness, highlight unheard voices and illustrate how girls and women share bonds through sport.

When it comes to women, what are the stories you don't hear enough of?

Personally, I don't think we see or hear enough stories about women's lives and friendships that aren't the usual one-dimensional stereo types. We're missing the diverse, authentic and genuine stories of girls and life growing up in the UK. I would love to see more projects and stories based on the real-life situations that we have pushed upon us and how we tackle life day to day.

Creatives Stories

- 01 Serena Brown
- 02 Hollie Fernando
- 03 Sophia Carey
- 04 Naomi Ogbeta
- 05 Tinuke Fagborun
- 06 Jody McDowell





WITH THANKS

Aramide Okekunle

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Kenza Bout-Albi

The Elmgreen School

Sydenham School

Salford City Academy

Marsden Heights Community College

The Archbishop Lanfranc Academy

Kemnal Technology College

Sport England

Impetus

Comic Relief

Paul Hamlyn Foundation

Esmee Fairbairn Foundation

Clarion Futures

One Goal

Mishcon De Reya

Produced by Alasdair Cullen

“YOU

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