**Research Question**
What can guide leaders learn about fostering friendships and connecting youth guiders in new ways by participating in an inclusive art event for children called Common Threads?

**Project Overview**
Leaders Learning Together was a one hour focus group with five participants that followed the Common Threads event. The event included 100 girls ages 5-17 and emphasized collaboration and creativity. Both the event and the focus group were made possible through a partnership between me and the Girl Guides of Hurford District. Our collaboration was key to the success of the event. The focus group provided a reflective learning opportunity for me and the participants. Findings were identified by using a narrative analysis of the audio transcript of the focus group.

**Research Process:**
- Social Issue to Research: Exclusion
- Recruit a Community Partner: Hurford District
- Plan an Event to Recruit Leaders from: The Common Threads Event
- Invite Leaders to Attend Focus Group Following The Common Threads Event
- Hold Focus Group 1 hour in Length
- Audio and Visual Recording of Focus Group
- Data Analysis Device
- Submit Report on Findings and Recommendations that were Discovered

**Project Findings**
Guiding leaders said they learned more about how to host inclusive district-wide events, specifically:

- The necessity of thorough organization and preparation;
- The participant group noted that excellent organization and preparation is essential for hosting a large event with the goal of fostering friendships and connecting youth.
- The effectiveness of offering a wider range of activities to promote inclusiveness; Interactions and connections between the girls were observed during craft and trading time.
- Sharing a meal together provided opportunity for girls to have more interactions.
- The significant and active role leaders must play to initiate and foster new relationships during an event; Focus group participants shared what stood out for each of them in coming together as a district. Orientation for leaders is crucial so that they can understand their specific roles during the event.

**The Common Threads Event**
The Common Threads Event celebrated individuality and creativity. Each girl who attended contributed to a theme group and we shared this meal together. Each girl individually designed small paper quilting squares that were then traded among all participants. Each girl also placed one of her paper squares on a large friendship quilt creating a finished product showcasing every girl's unique creative abilities. The friendship quilt is shown below.

**Recommendations**
There are four recommendations for Girl Guides of Canada's Hurford District and their leaders:

1. Increase District Wide Events
2. Increase the number of groups that participate
3. Increase organization at the event
4. Orient Leaders in advance of event

**Conclusion**
The Common Threads Event was successful at providing an inclusive experience that guide leaders were able to reflect on afterwards during a focus group. It provided a model for creating events that not only promote inclusiveness but also revitalize interest in the guiding experience.

The focus group demonstrated the benefits of group reflection after events like this. A report including recommendations were made to the Girl Guides of Hurford District following the Leaders Learning Together focus group that will allow the organization and the leadership to build on this success together.

The Leaders Learning Together met the intended aim of the proposed research question in that it provided a reflective learning opportunity for me, the researcher, and the participant group.