No matter the odds, children from adverse backgrounds can live their best life with an optimistic perspective and outcome, guided by positive reinforcement.

MFA THESIS
by Jessica Gilmore
No matter the odds, children from adverse backgrounds can live their best life with an optimistic perspective and outcome, guided by positive reinforcement.

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ABSTRACT

Living My Best Life (LMBL) is a qualitative research study that explores how creative products can help provide a positive impact on children. Research shows that various forms of art are utilized in therapy, classroom settings, outreach programs, and in homes to help children overcome complicated, disturbing, and disruptive behavior due to adverse circumstances they have experienced in their life. The research revealed how strategy that utilizes and implements creative products and activities can actually alter the perspective of children in a more productive and optimistic manner. The products serve as long and short-term interventions against negative thoughts and actions. This study has inspired a gifting program solution as a tool, using creative products, to aid in the psychological recovery of children who have endured traumatic hardships.

No matter the odds, children from adverse backgrounds can live their best lives if their capacity to build and use a positive perspective and outcome is taught, strengthened and guided by positive reinforcement. LMBL is a gifting program designed for children who have experienced abuse, neglect, and other traumatic situations, to provide encouragement through motivational messaging. Recipients would receive monthly gifts such as positive games, activities, birthday cards, prizes, books, and apparel tailored to promote confidence, perseverance, and healthy choices throughout their life, spiritually, mentally and physically.

“Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.”
Proverbs 22:6
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CHAPTER 01
Introduction

RESEARCH STATEMENT

This thesis will offer ways to implement positive thinking strategies into the minds of children who have experienced neglectful or abusive trauma in some way. It will not be a cure for the harm they have endured but it will equip them with resources needed to deduce the reasoning it takes to desire and act upon a better way of life. To accomplish the goal of this thesis, first, a study will examine research conducted on what influences a positive state of being—spiritually, mentally and physically. It will explore the therapeutic treatment provided to victims of childhood abuse and hardships.

Second, research will explain how positive reinforcement can be established through creative products that engage all of the senses and aid in the rehabilitation after childhood trauma. Products will be designed to ignite all five senses and support findings in the study, to include motivational quotes, stimulating audio play, positive activity through indoor and outdoor games and soothing textures and smells.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Children from negligent and abusive homes tend to repeat the negative pattern they have experienced throughout their life; therefore, it is important for them to receive positive reinforcement to learn and understand a better path toward a positive outlook that will inevitably encourage better and more positive choices.
Lastly, a government-funded subscription based program will be developed to deliver the products to the children. The vision is for the gifts to follow recipients wherever they live in order to provide a positive form of therapy throughout their childhood.

**Introduction**

Up until the age of 18—before they become adults—children are not often in control of their own environment. Ideally, every child would have both of their parents, a stable and nurturing home, and all that they need to develop into a healthy and happy adult. Unfortunately, that is not the background that many children in society experience.

A large percentage of children grow up in broken homes and endure unpreventable involuntary hardships. Some of these circumstances inflict indelible harm and trauma onto a young developing mind. These negative circumstances become a way of life and as these children become adults. They tend to repeat some of the adverse behaviors that they experienced as a child. The adults who were once victims of childhood abuse are at a higher risk of exhibiting these behaviors, even when they are aware that the pattern is not healthy physically, mentally, and spiritually. This creates a destructive pattern that is very hard to break. Data from child protective services recorded over 670,000 victims of abuse or neglect in 2016. This constitutes 9.1 unique victims for every 1000 children under the age of 18 (Hanson 1066). Children also experience abusive behavior at school. In 1993 the National Center for School Safety indicated that 30,000 students were physically assaulted every month. (Franzen & Kamps 150)

Some children get placed away from their parents into the foster care system. On Sept 30, 2017 it was recorded that more than 400,000 children were placed in foster care environments. (“Foster Care Statistics”) Many foster children may move from home to home making them unable to maintain a stable home environment for extended periods of time. This is a disruptive pattern in their growth and can cause additional childhood stress. These unforeseen adversities can cause many of these children to have a negative outlook on life and feel that they aren’t able to overcome this type of lifestyle. Children who have been exposed to these negative lifestyles need positive direction to teach them healthy behaviors and show them a better perspective on life in general.

Through art and design, humans are able to be influenced on an emotional level when they view and interact with what is in the world. Art is a creative outlet that can be utilized to encourage a positive state of mind for children in their own environment. Art can also be used as a tool to tap into each of the five senses as a motivational resource to help children develop and maintain a positive mindset and help lead them in a better direction for their life.

The research for this thesis is conducted on topics related to childhood behavior, and therapy that utilizes art as a tool. A focus is directed towards children and adults that have experienced childhood hardship, abuse, and neglect with short-term and long-term effects. The therapy in the research is designed to help rehabilitate children that express disruptive or oppressive behaviors and other negative reactions that occur from traumatic experiences that they have endured. The goal is to teach the children...
to express themselves in a more positive and healthy manner. It encourages children to have an optimistic mindset and to move forward with life in a positive way. Within the research, a case study was conducted on five gifting programs that offer a positive result for children. Three of the case studies are programs provided to less fortunate children. Two of the case studies are for all children. These are all creative strategies to introduce positive perspective and behaviors into the lives of children. None of the programs directed toward children from adverse backgrounds are provided on a residual basis for each child. The programs that are residual have an age limit and they only target specific educational goals. There is a need to provide a continuous source of positive messaging that will encourage each child from adverse backgrounds to grow mentally, physically and spiritually throughout their entire childhood.

A gifting program was developed to fill that need and it is designed to reach children of all ages up until 18, when they are legally adults. This program will not be limited by gender, religion, social status, or family structure. The criteria will be set for any and all children that have faced traumatic situations through abuse or neglect. The program will not be a remedy for the harm that these children have sustained but it is a tool that will provide a continuous reminder that they are loved, their lives matter, and that they can do great and wonderful things in the world. It is a repetitive rehabilitative approach to help them be the best that they can possibly be mentally, physically and spiritually. This adds purpose and value to them as individuals and as people entering into society.

“For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.”

Jeremiah 29:11
CHAPTER 02
Research

The research conducted will answer the below questions with the goal to design the gifting program concept described in this document. The program will aid in providing a solution to the disruptive problems that often follow after a child has been exposed to abuse and neglect.

- What are the benefits of being positive, spiritually, mentally and physically?
- What are the long-term effects of child abuse for an individual?
- How is society effected by victims of childhood abuse and hardship?
- Why is child abuse an economic issue?
- Why is therapy a useful form of treatment for children that have experienced hardship or abuse?
- What type of creative tools are commonly used in treating children with behavior problems?
- Can an object provide comfort and motivation to a child that has experienced hardship?
- How does art and design contribute to a positive experience?
- Why is repetition key in supporting good habits, goals and a growth mindset?
- What gifting programs currently exist for children from diverse backgrounds?
- What motivates children to make positive choices?
Child Abuse and Its Effect on Society

There are long-term effects that can occur with children from adverse backgrounds, especially when they have been victims of child abuse. “Childhood sexual abuse is one of the most investigated forms of maltreatment and has been identified as a modifiable risk factor for mental disorders across the life course.” (González-Chica 2) (James) However, in analyses published in 2012 and 2016 it was reported that early psychological/emotional abuse attributed to depression later in life and can have greater effects than physical or sexual abuse. (González-Chica 2) Bullying is one of the most common forms of psychological/emotional abuse and is typically seen amongst children and their peers. Although any child is susceptible to this type of behavior, victims of child abuse are more prone to being bullied and even inclined to become a bully themselves. Long-term consequences of bullying has been associated with anxiety, depression and suicide.

Studies have shown that individuals who suffered four or more abusive situations are between two and seven times more likely to have problems with drugs, alcohol, sexual misconduct, and self-directed violence than those with no history of child abuse. (González-Chica 2) Studies also show that prolonged exposure to stress at a young age can cause permanent damage to the cardiovascular system, increasing the risk of stroke later in life. It can also cause other health issues with memory development, mood disturbances, decreased brain development, increase in sexual disorientation, obesity, higher rates of asthma, and is also linked to diabetes, cancer, endocrine dysfunction, dementia, heart disease, and nervous system changes. (James 45-46, Moffitt) There is a direct economic impact from the short and long term effects of child abuse. Factors include hospitalization, counseling, support programs, operation of child welfare systems, law enforcement, juvenile court cases, other legal systems cases, special education services, early intervention services, effects of criminal behavior from the abused and the abuser, along with other potential life-long effects from victims. In 2012 a study showed this being an economic effect on 1.2 million maltreated children with a marked cost of $80,260,411,087 in the United States. (James 46) It is crucial to reach victims of child abuse at a young age with measures of intervention against the high rate of negative long term effects that occur.

Benefits of Being Positive

There are programs that provide rehabilitation for victims of childhood abuse to set their minds on a more positive track. Repetition is the key when introducing anything that will help children from a traumatic background, mend and move forward in a more constructive way physically, mentally and spiritually. Children that are victims of maltreatment can be effected even while in the womb and can show signs of abuse through their reactions to certain experiences even without remembering the trauma. Very small children may show signs of pain, uncertainty, defensiveness, and unalleviated distress. There are ways to intervene and introduce security, and comfort back into the minds of these children. (Ribaudo)

Studies have shown that consistent positive reinforcement is necessary to initiate security that will help these children heal. Some clinical therapy is provided as much as twice a week, this includes extensive conditioning beyond the nurturing care that they should already be receiving in the home. Therapy is an ongoing process that helps the children with proper expression of their feelings, healthy coping practices, aid with learning disabilities, and building self-confidence. The use of games, activities, crafts, and other creative expression is commonly used in the therapy process as a way to reach and understand each child, but it also
Art therapy is a common approach used in treatment for children that have experienced trauma.

Art therapy is a common approach used in treatment for children that have experienced trauma. Children that have a positive mindset and spiritual tranquility will inevitably be more resilient through good times and bad times.

Becoming More Positive Through Art
Art can promote a positive experience and be a motivational tool for children that have experienced adverse circumstances. Art therapy is a common approach used in treatment for children that have experienced hardship and traumatic events. Art therapy includes painting, music, drama, games, writing, drawing, dancing and other creative activities. Creative art activities can reinforce therapy by serving as a medium for communication. It can be used to reduce anxiety, depression, and traumatic stress symptoms. (Rolfsnes & Thormod 3-10, van Westrhenen, Strehlow 167-175) These methods can also assist in developing self-awareness, coping skills, and encourage heightened self-esteem.

Children that experience trauma can be so emotionally distraught that they cannot find the words to express how they are feeling to get past oppressive events that have occurred. Through therapy, clinicians work to teach these children how to express what they have been through with tactics that include art therapy. Games, picture books, storytelling, toy role play, song lyrics, and painting can be used in a practice called abreaction. This can help to uncover and reveal what the child has experienced in order to help the child move forward. (Terr 54) Overall, art expression can be soothing and therapeutic for adults as well and offers a positive outlet for pent up negative feelings and emotions. (Drake, Coleman, & Winner 26)

Reaching Children with Objects, Rewards and Gifts
Children respond favorably to positive reinforcement and motivational incentives. They also enjoy receiving things that they can call their own, a little something that makes them feel special, accomplished, cherished and loved. A study was conducted in 2000-2002 on 180 first, second, and third-grade students to encourage improved behavior. These
students transitioned to second, third and fourth grades during this study. It was conducted at a midwestern school that implemented a structure with positive behavior support using a “Give Me Five approach. These school rules were, Be Kind, Be Peaceful, Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Be Safe.” To encourage students to follow these set of rules they also implemented a token reinforcement system. For compliance, the students could receive elastic loops that would fit on their wrist along with hearing verbal praise. The loops were collected at the end of each day in a collection container. The class would have a celebration once the loop container was full. With the combination of more involved teachers and positive reinforcement using the token program, the results showed a significant decrease in problem behavior. (Franzen & Kamps 150-161)

Every year, Operation Christmas Child sends out thousands of toy-filled shoe boxes to underprivileged and impoverished children. These children overflow with joy when they receive this type of gift and many of them later accept Jesus into their hearts as a result of the impact it made. It becomes a life changing experience when they receive this symbol of love and then often times, they will want to project that same generosity and love to others. (“Operation Christmas Child”)

This same sort of compassion is seen in Uganda through a children’s club that was started by Mt. Elgon Self-Help Community Program. The program enables children to take action on their impoverished circumstances and contribute to their family needs. One child from each home was gifted seeds to start their own economic project. The seeds would bear fruit that they could sell for a profit and then contribute to the purchase of their schoolbooks. This spawned a new system that would encourage the child to then give to a sibling or family member. The child would give money or produce gained from their original gift to help others in the family prosper with economic growth. This was not only rewarding for the child, but it also helped strengthen families and communities. There was also a significant change in their education, self-worth and home life all from a simple gift. (Wakhungu 51-53)

Positive Intervention

Not all children that have experienced abuse will develop debilitating and oppressive issues. However, there are mental health problems that can develop from childhood abuse and neglect. Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a common diagnosis among other mental health issues that need trauma-focused intervention. “The most effective and widely disseminated psychotherapy intervention for children and adolescents to date is trauma-focused cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT)” This type of treatment includes positive coping skills, ways to address incorrect and oppressive thoughts, ways to express their feelings in a healthy way, as well as teaching parents/guardians how to work with their child. (Hanson & Wallis) Intervention therapy uses an array of tactics. Art therapy is incorporated in many programs designed to help express emotions. It promotes improved behavior, improved comprehension and understanding of emotions through art. Creating art challenges rigid and perseverative thinking while focusing on the overall goal of the art piece along with details involved to achieve a finished result. Art therapy can utilize any tools and mediums that help the creator express their vision. This
provides a positive solution to potentially negative feelings that the child may be experiencing or hardships that they have already gone through. (Lock 62-67)

**Effects of Positive Words**

People are surrounded by words everywhere they go, in song lyrics, ads, blogs, memes, quotes, textbooks and in how we communicate on a regular basis. What we say, hear and read effects how we perceive ourselves and others. Words can stimulate sublime emotions and convince the minds of those that read or hear them. Positive words can motivate, inspire, and encourage people to perform better and have a higher self-worth. (Muthusamy 105) A dad shares a story about a golf trip with his 12 year old son, Jeffrey. Jeffrey was not a fan of golf and his dad describes that he would rather eat cabbage ice cream. Jeffrey and his dad soon met Jim and Neil, the other members of their foursome team. Jim and Neil could see that the son was not thrilled about playing golf, so they began lifting his spirits with kind words. “You swing just like Tiger Woods!” If he duffed a ball they’d say, “That’s okay, here hit mine.” Throughout the entire game they continued to uplift Jeffrey’s spirits with encouraging and positive words. The next day as father and son were traveling home, Jeffrey said “Dad, let’s go golfing.” This was something that his dad had never heard his son say. It made his dad grateful. The words of Jim and Neil changed Jeffrey’s entire perspective of a sport he used to be bored by and opened a new opportunity for he and his dad to bond. (Callaway “Simple words can encourage or discourage”)

There are great programs in place that help children from adverse backgrounds, those who have experienced neglect, or who have been placed into foster care. The focus for the case study research was finding programs that help troubled children develop a more positive perspective utilizing creative products. Programs that offer items like birthday gifts, books, photo books, backpacks, bicycles, Christmas presents, and other product gift programs were found. All of the programs offered items that would bring joy into their heart and let them know that they are important and loved. However, none of the gifting programs were available throughout the duration of the recipients’ childhood. The program that presented the best results on the long-term impact from the gift was Operation Christmas Child. The programs that are mostly targeted towards children who have experienced childhood neglect and abuse are Together We Rise and Embrella.

**Case Study Analysis**

Case Study 1:

*Together We Rise* is an organization that provides foster children with essential items they will need when entering the foster care environment. Many times, foster children are given a trash bag to take some of their belongings from one destination to the next. *Together We Rise* provides foster children across the United States with a new duffel bag filled with items like a teddy bear, blanket, hygiene kit and more. This organization also recognizes that foster children lose many of their toys once they are placed away from their home. So, they also supply free bicycles to many children in foster care. Additionally, they report that only 3% of foster care children will graduate from college. Every year, they issue $90,000 scholarships to 10-15 college freshmen. *Together We Rise* also provides birthday boxes, superhero boxes, skateboards, and other methods of support to help these children realize their worth. They
gain financial funding and support from local corporate partners, campaigns, percentage of sales promotions, donated products, and other community support. They have a fun and clean brand presentation, well known supporters, an easy to understand approach, and a simple way to contribute towards a complicated situation. ("Together We Rise") This program is exclusive to the aid of foster children and it is limited to how often the support is provided. There are children outside of foster care that also need this type of support.

Case Study 2:
Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library has mailed over 130,000,000 books to children in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and the Republic of Ireland. She started the organization in 1995, inspired by her father who could not read. She believes that books can inspire young minds to achieve monumental things. Children from birth to age five can receive these free books, no matter the family’s income. This program is a great way to encourage children to begin reading at a young age. This program also offers the ability for lower income families to obtain books they might not be able to afford, even though the program is not exclusive to the lower income bracket. The brand of this organization seems to be outdated and there is a central focus on Dolly Parton and how many books have been disseminated. This organization accepts donations to help support the cause. However, there are no details readily available about how the books have impacted the children. There are also no details that demonstrate why supporting literacy for children is so important. This would be key information that could encourage more support from potential donors and parents to get their children involved with reading. ("Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library")

Case Study 3:
Embrella was founded in 1972 as a New Jersey organization that provides advocacy and programs to empower families and youth to thrive. Their focus is to provide support for foster children. Some of the programs that they offer include: We Heart Birthdays to send birthday gifts to foster children, Dreamers and Believers that provides grants for education, Fostering Wishes that helps with little extras for the kids, The Backpack Program that provides a new backpack, Holiday Celebration for Every Child is a holiday party foster children can attend, Summer Camp Scholarship pays for summer camp, private scholarships and grants for education expenses, and The Life Book that provides a book for memories that the children can record and post pictures of their positive experiences as they go. They have a consistent and fun brand with a very informative website that offers many great resources to help children in foster care. They gain support through corporate partners, community support, donations, and they are affiliated with the NJ Foster Adoptive & Kinship Family Support & Advocacy. ("Embrella") Similar to Together We Rise, this program is also exclusive to the aid of foster children and it is limited to how often the support is provided. It is also a program that is only limited to children in New Jersey.

Case Study 4:
Operation Christmas Child is a program offered by Samaritan’s Purse to children in need around the world. It was started in 1993 with the concept of filling shoe boxes with toys for children to receive Christmas gifts and the love of Jesus. 28,000 boxes where created and sent to the war-torn Balkans in 1993. Today, over 170 million in more than 150 countries have been distributed with a tangible expression of God’s love. They report that in many cases, this is the first gift that the child will have ever received. There is also  

A NEED REMAINS for additional resources that can broaden the number of children reached.
a follow-up discipleship course for the shoe box recipients. 23.3 million children have been enrolled in the program since its inception, to teach them how to follow Christ and witness to others. There are 11.2 million of these children that have since accepted Jesus into their hearts, shared God’s word and even started new churches as they grew into adults. These shoe boxes are provided by people who volunteer to fill the box with their own funds; they also pay an additional $9 to handle any additional fees that it will cost to ship the boxes. The boxes are available at churches and worship centers around the United States. Additional volunteers work to meet the deadline of when the boxes need to be filled and sent in time for the children to receive them for Christmas. (“Operation Christmas Child, Samaritan’s Purse”)

Case Study 5:
KiwiCo is a company geared towards providing a source for STEAM related kits for kids of all ages. The kits can be purchased on a singular or monthly basis. STEAM is a commonly known system of learning in the area of science, technology, engineering, art and math. KiwiCo has various options based on the age range from young to older children based on the scope of skills within each age grouping. The kits are fun to build and entertaining to play with. They encourage innovation and activity among their young audience. This type of program is a great educational resource for any child. It has no specific criteria but each subscriber is responsible for the fees of this product. It is not a program funded by donors so it is not likely to reach children that are more susceptible to traumatic abuse and neglect. Middle to upper income families would be the targeted audience for this type of product.

Conclusion
Childhood neglect, abuse and those misplaced from their homes prove to have long-term effects on children into their adult lives. It can cause self-destructive behaviors, poor health conditions, and an overall negative outlook on life. It is important for children who have been victimized in this way to receive positive reinforcement, therapy, and learn to obtain a more optimistic perspective in life, even when faced with unforeseen circumstances. Children need to know that there is a better way to live and grow into productive individuals. Art can be used to help children express emotions in positive ways. It can serve as a consistent tool that supports a more optimistic outlook. There are organizations that offer gifting programs to children from adverse backgrounds. These programs are designed to help these children feel special, heal and overcome their hardships, help provide educational resources, and provide items that encourage and support an overall wellbeing. There is hope for victims of childhood adversity, they can be reconditioned to view life in a more positive way and become a productive part of society. Although tools and programs exist to help improve their overall wellbeing, a need still remains for additional resources that can increase the number of children reached and lengthen the amount of time that each child can receive support.
The objective of the thesis research has been to provide a foundational structure to create a program that can help children that have experienced hardship through traumatic situations from abuse and neglect. The research has provided examples of how children in these situations can have long-term negative effects and how important it is for them to receive therapy to help them succeed through life as children into their adulthood. Children from these adverse circumstances tend to repeat the negative pattern they have experienced throughout their life; it is important for them to receive positive reinforcement to learn and understand a better path to equip them with a positive outlook which will inevitably encourage better and more positive choices. In the research, various forms of therapy and intervention are provided and the use of creative tools like arts, crafts, music, rewards, toys and gifts are among the resources utilized to promote self expression, healing, better thinking, and more positive behavior. It is important to note that the tools discussed in the research and utilized in the conceptual program created for this thesis are only a tool and not a replacement for the vital support needed from adults responsible for guiding, nurturing and caring for children. Although there are other programs that exist, they lack the ability to reach all children who have experienced neglect and abuse. The other programs are also limited to how long children can receive positive support.
To meet the goals of the thesis objective, a conceptual program has been developed as a constant reminder to children from adverse backgrounds that they are important, loved, unique, strong, and capable of living their best life. It was only natural to title the program after a commonly used acronym by youth termed “LMBL”, which means “Living My Best Life”. As mentioned in the introduction, LMBL is not a cure for what the children have experienced but it is a tool that can help implement an optimistic perspective on life. LMBL will provide repetitive messaging through monthly gifts to encourage each child recipient in a positive way on a physical, mental and spiritual level. The program is designed to reach all age groups throughout their childhood once they are registered through the LMBL program. The registry will capture their unique qualities and interests to provide gifts more tailored to their own personal preferences. The concept is intended to be implemented through a government funded resource that can be accessible to the children through parents, guardians, counselors, therapists, teachers, foster parents, social service and other organization designated for the health and welfare of children. Providing a program through the government would protect each child’s information. It would also provide an easier solution for the program to follow the registered children wherever they may move throughout their childhood.

Through the development phase of the LMBL program various solutions were explored to determine what products could be included as possible gifts to the enrolled children. Factors that have also been considered are gifts within a certain price bracket to make it more easily funded. Products could include items like, activities, games, music, clothing, toys, stickers, books, and crafts. The LMBL gifts are recreational, educational, interactive and aesthetically pleasing. All products that can include positive messaging and activity that can leave each child feeling special and important physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Although the LMBL program would be for children of all ages, the deliverables in the concept for this thesis are focused on children five to eighteen years of age. Deliverables will include the LMBL Brand, packaging, a mobile app concept, and a few product samples.

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**Deliverables**

- Logo & Brand
- Packaging
- Mobile App
- Birthday Card
- Stickers
- T-shirt
- Poster
- Activity Journal
- Game Craft
A Brand Inspired By Children

The gifting program name and brand for Living My Best Life (LMBL) was inspired by children in the way that they communicate, create and enjoy life. Adolescents are known for short texts like, LOL, which means laughing out loud used when something is funny; or SMH, which means shaking my head used as a sense of bemused incredulity (Merriam Webster). This shortened communication is also referred to as text talk. LMBL is a common initialism that expresses living a good life. It represents the mood that LMBL children are encouraged to embody as they participate in the program. The freehand illustration style and hand drawn lettering that is implemented throughout the brand is symbolic of what is found in doodles and artwork that children create. Fonts, illustrations, colors, word phrases, and photography used in the brand have the common goal to promote positive influence, be easily understood and provide relatable content for the young audience.
### Brand Structure

#### Brand Identity

The LMBL logo is simplistic, fun and happy. The initialism LMBL and the full spelling of Living My Best Life will be utilized throughout the brand. The logo will feature sun ray elements and warm hues to mimic the warm, beaming and joyful feeling that most people get from an actual sunshine. It will also have a hidden meaning of God and his son, who is the light of the world and the light to direct our path in a positive way.

#### Colors

LMBL will have three main colors and three subsidiary colors. The three main colors will be yellow and two shades of orange to represent joy and warmth. The subsidiary colors will be used to complement the main hues as a way to introduce visual interest when needed. All of the colors work well together and present a nice harmony that communicates happiness, personality, and excitement.

### Fonts

LMBL will include one decorative font for the logo and for use with some headers. There will also be a sans-serif font for use with headers, sub headers and body content. Amatic bold is a decorative font with a hand drawn style. It is playful and embodies a youthful rudimentary tone. Helvetica Neue Light is a nice clean and easy to read complement to Amatic. The light weight is a subtle version of Helvetica Neue and will not overpower the slender shape of Amatic. There are also other weights of Helvetica Neue that will be useful in sub headers and other necessary areas.

**Amatic Bold**

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

1234567890

**Helvetica Neue Light**

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

1234567890

**Other Weights & Styles:**

Aa Bb Cc | **Aa Bb Cc** | Aa Bb Cc | **Aa Bb Cc**
Imagery

LMBL will include photos of children of various age groups, gender and race that are full of joy and excitement. These images could depict children engaging with the LMBL products. Photos of environments that children are involved with will also be utilized. There will be illustrations with a childlike freehand style that will be featured throughout the branding. The textures will include paint splatter, brush strokes and potentially distressed ware to emulate childlike artwork.
**Logo Influence**

The logos in images 1:1 - 1:4 represent large corporate companies that cater to children. The Walt Disney logo in this image, features a castle graphic element but it is also often represented with a single word, Disney. Hasbro includes a smile. Mattel displays a sans-serif font within a seal. Lego utilizes a rounded decorative font with a layered effect. All of them are simplistic without a lot of decoration. This allows the logo to be easily recognized and easily used throughout the product line brand.

**Brand Influence**

The designs in images 1:5- 1:9 are targeted towards a young and energetic audience that introduces fun elements. There is a combination of clean and structured design along with decorative illustration, photography full of emotion, colorful palettes, and exciting decorative fonts. Color combinations do not have to include multiple hues to portray a colorful selection. Image 1:5-1:8 Lego, Off, Mattel and Optus brands only have 1-2 main hues with white as their color selection but each of the brands still communicate excitement, joy and happiness. The color plays a predominate role.
along with the other graphic elements to express the tone that each brand intends to project. Image 1:10 is a concept design that utilizes a more colorful selection. All of the elements and color have a pleasant and cheerful outcome that work really well together and although the audience is not specific to kids, the overall concept still appeals to a younger audience.
Emoticons, Word Phrases, Photography & Textures

In the development phase of the LMBL program, it was important to create a style that children of all ages could relate to. In the age of smart devices, small emoticon characters have gained a lot of attention from people of all ages. Emoticons, also referred to as emojis, are a popular source of communication used and enjoyed by children through digital devices. Emojis help provide a quick visual reference to emotions, people, places, and things. Even small children learn first from visual cues before they learn speech. Positive words and phrases will be utilized in the LMBL program and are also mixed into the pattern that has been developed. The combination of the positive visual and verbal messaging will help reinforce the overall uplifting objective of the LMBL program. There is a freehand illustration style that is also being implemented. This style embodies the characteristics of fun doodles that kids often create in their artwork.

In addition to illustrations and positive word phrases, the exploration of stock photography, textures, color and letterforms was researched. These factors communicate directly with what the targeted audience appeals to and helps visually communicate the objectives of LMBL. This strengthens the success of the LMBL brand in marketing, packaging, and product presentation. It was important to find stock images of children that had a smiling face but could also look like they were interacting with LMBL products. It was also a nice effect to create a monotone color with the LMBL color palette. Textures like paint splash, brush strokes and paper grain gave a youthful, rudimentary vibe to the materials that children would be familiar with and recall from crafts and art projects. Inevitably making the LMBL brand relatable to the targeted audience.
DO EVERYTHING WITH LOVE.

YOUR WORDS & IDEAS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD.

WHEN IT RAINS, LOOK FOR RAINBOWS.

WHEN IT'S DARK, LOOK FOR STARS.

HAPPY.
A Mobile App That Can Motivate & Encourage.

This project represents a user interface for a mobile app designed to be used for children and by children to create personal profiles, social networking with other LMBL members and engage in games and activities. The interface created is an example of a profile screen which is an important factor to this program because it provides unique characteristics about each individual child that is enrolled into the LMBL program. This will allow LMBL to understand basic details like their age, grade, and birthday along with their interests. LMBL can then use these details to gift items that are more custom to each child. The gifts then become more significant and special to them. In the app, instead of an actual photo for the profile, the user can create an avatar to represent the child. Since they will be able to connect to others within the LMBL program, the avatar will add a layer of protection for the children enrolled. People that view their profile will not see their last name, the year they were born, their school name, or their full physical address. This will also add some protection to each child while they connect to others through the app.
Mobile App Visual Research

App Influence

The app platforms seen in images 2:1 - 2:2 are fun but clean and organized. It is important for children and adults to understand the app for LMBL so that they can easily navigate through all of the features. It is also important that the app be designed to appeal to all age groups that can use an app without assistance.

Image 2:1

Image 2:2
Mobile App Ideation

Mobile App Profile

To build a mobile app profile, there are factors that were considered for how LMBL could connect to the details of each child. The data entered into the LMBL app would create a more customized gifting program for each child. For example, being aware of their birthday would let LMBL know when to send a birthday greeting. This design evolved to be presented to other viewers for social networking and excluded details to protect the member. The concept of an avatar was created so that the members could have fun building their own character without sharing what they actually look like to people that they do not know. The app could feature their interests and goals to represent and demonstrate their own unique qualities. The could help members network with others kids that have common interests. They could encourage each other as well and feel that their own interests are important.
PACKAGING THAT IS EXCITING TO RECEIVE

LMBL packaging is designed to be exciting and make each child recipient feel important. The designs are different hues based on the child’s favorite color(s) in the LMBL color palette. The messaging includes phrases that are directed towards the child, letting them know the package is for them and that they are special. The messaging will utilize the emoji characters to associate the words with the emotion from the characters. For example, the smiling emoji will have a word cloud that says, “I’m so happy to see you!” or a birthday envelope will have a birthday emoji saying, “Specially made just for you!”. Each package design will be produced in an appealing two-color design. Two-color printing is less expensive to help keep expenses low so that funds will be more focused on the gift inside of each package. The LMBL deliveries will certainly stand out from the crowd and achieve the goal of bringing excitement to each child.
Package Influence

It is exciting for kids to receive something in the mail and it can be even more exciting when what they are receiving looks great on the outside and the inside. The images found in images 3:1 - 3:3 all feature fun and entertaining imagery. Image 3:1 provides visual interest because of the various styles throughout each package yet they all work well with a consistent aesthetic. Image 3:2 & 3:3 has illustrated characters that capture the attention of the viewer. Image 3:3 is only in black, white and yellow but the illustrations provide a good deal of movement, wonder and creativity.

Image 3:1

Image 3:2

Image 3:3
Pattern Feature

The LMBL gifting program will feature various types of gifts for the recipients so there will be different sizes needed for the packaging. It is important to mark each package with a distinct look that fits the LMBL brand. The LMBL emoji pattern was created with this in mind. The original pattern concept included black and yellow. As it was further developed, more than one hue was considered. The colors could be utilized to separate age range, indicate package sizes, identify types of gifts, or allow color preference based on their favorite color(s). Other positive messaging would be displayed on the packaging design. The pattern would be a consistent feature on all packages along with other graphic elements.
Greetings To Feel Special

Everyone likes to feel special for their birthday, and children are especially excited to receive greetings in the mail. LMBL will send birthday cards out to every child on their special day. A written note will be included by an adult counselor assigned to each child through the LMBL program to add an extra special touch. A birthday card design has been created with a letterform illustration. The letter B is illustrated as a birthday cake with the LMBL emojis celebrating on a cake with a fun birthday party. The greeting cards could include stickers and a gift card to get a free ice cream or sweet treat for the child’s birthday.

Textures

The LMBL gifts will include colorful flat designs as well as designs that also include three dimensional qualities. Textured brush strokes and accents will add more depth and visual interest.

Sensory textures will also be utilized in areas like this birthday card that is created on a 100% cotton bound cover stock paper. This is an added touch to provide quality to make each child feel exceptional.
Messaging
LMBL will include messaging that encourages and uplifts children as individuals to help build self-confidence, like in this Dr. Suess quote.

Personalization
LMBL could have assigned representatives designated to include special touches on greeting cards for each child. Messages that include the child’s name with a personalized message from someone they know make a gift more meaningful and significant to them.

A fun new sticker will be included in every package that the children receive from LMBL. The stickers can be collected, shared with friends, placed in the pages of their journals, or where they want to decorate. If they are placed in the journal then the stickers could help encourage creative writing or enhance a memory. Each sticker will include the LMBL emojis, words, or phrases to continue the overall fun-filled, happy and motivational message. Aromas could be added to stickers like a cake scent for the birthday cake sticker. Adding aromas to the stickers will enhance the experience and amusement, inevitably making this item a more enjoyable prize.
Card & Sticker Ideation

The LMBL program is designed to make children feel loved, encouraged, and important, among many other positive feelings about themselves and everyday life. It was important to include a product that recognizes them individually. A greeting card can be used to uplift, recognize accomplishments, just to remind them that someone is thinking of them, encourage goals and wishing a happy birthday. These are singular events that happen sporadically or on a regular basis that are specific and unique to each and every child. A letterform illustration provided a fun exploration for visual interest that could target this type of recognition. The winning illustration was designed specifically for recognizing their birthday with the letter B. Other designs considered were for other greetings like encouraging a goal with the image of a climber reaching the top of a mountain with a letter C, or a design with the letter H to represent happiness. These letterform designs would also work well on sticker designs as well. Stickers are fun and are likely to be placed in areas that children will view on a regular basis like on mirrors, lockers, notebooks, computers and in a sticker collection.
A T-shirt For Confidence

The t-shirt design was created for children of all ages. The word powerful was selected and illustrated in an isometric layout. The isometric style is a more modern design that can appeal to a younger audience. It is colorful and commands attention. The word tells the child and anyone who sees it that they are powerful. It is a word that communicates confidence, motivation, energy, and excitement. There are also visual cues that are associated with love, power, individuality, and faith within the illustration as well. This provides additional positive messaging along with the bright and cheerful color palette.
A Poster To Empower

The ‘POWERFUL’ design was also created to use on a poster design that is directed more towards tweens (ages 9-12) and teens (ages 13-18). This is a design that can be displayed on their bedroom wall as a daily message to remind them that they are powerful. The clouds add more visual interest and can represent that the viewer has limitless possibilities. This design can be altered to include different backgrounds like a night sky or more lightning. Seeing this positive messaging on a regular basis will empower kids to feel courageous, self-assured, strong, upbeat and perseverant.
The t-shirt and poster design goal was to create something to appeal to children of almost any age. Children could wear or display the design to help them embody the positive message. Encouraging words can be very influential on developing minds.

Through the ideation process I began developing various sketches that could successfully meet the positive messaging goals for this project. Words and phrases like: “climb high”, “adventurer”, “dream big”, “laugh anyway”, “unstoppable”, and so on. I made a decision to develop the word “powerful”. “Powerful” represents many things. Children often do not have power over their environment or the decisions made for them but they have their own minds, ideas and interests. They should know and believe that they are strong, what they think is important, and their presence is powerful. The illustration that was created is a hand drawn style that emulates how kids draw. The word “powerful” is arranged in a cascading vertical direction. It begins with an electrifying burst around the letter P. Then each letter has its own interesting pattern and characteristics, much like the many parts of a child’s personality. There is additional symbolism in the illustration with the lightening bolts for power: the letter R radiates like the natural radiant energy of children, the F has a halo for faith and spiritual growth, the U presents projecting hearts for unconditional love or loving each unique quality of one self and others, and the letter L is beaming like the inner light within us or the guiding light from God. The illustration includes bright and cheerful colors and provides visual interest throughout. It is a successful design solution for the goals and objectives of this selected topic.
A Journal For Expression

It is important for children who have experienced some form of trauma to express what they have gone through in order to get past the negative suppressed feelings. Journals provide an outlet to write what they are feeling that they may not be able to do verbally. The journal designs provide a cheerful and welcoming presentation to help children feel open and uplifted before they begin to write or draw. The purpose is to appeal to children ages 9-18 or even younger based on the maturity level of the child’s writing skills. The journals would include activities to further engage the children with writing to make it more fun and meaningful.
An Activity Sheet To Reduce Anxiety

Activity sheets can be calming and therapeutic. They help reduce anxiety, promote concentration, and can increase cognitive function. The illustration with the scuba diver is a fun photo search activity that also has symbolic meaning. To be a scuba diver who finds treasure involves goal setting and adventure seeking skills. The treasure represents earning a reward and accomplishment. The hidden emoji images are all positive symbols and can have more than one meaning. The activity offers children the opportunity to find their own hidden treasures. The illustration can work well in color or in black and white. The activity sheet could be given as single sheets, featured in an activity journal or available as an interactive digital design on the LMBL app.

Emoji Iconography

The emoji characters style created for the LMBL brand is also used in the journal and activity sheet design style. Each of the emoji icons represent positive symbolism to encourage physical activity, spirituality, and psychological well-being. Visual elements have the power of association without the need for words. A person can see an image and immediately affiliate it with similar items and topics to bring it to the forefront of their thoughts. For example, a child will see the mountains, trees, earth, and sun emojis and think of nature or being outside. This could influence them to become energized about going outside.
**Activity Journal Ideation**

**Journal Cover**

A journal can be a significant tool to get children to express themselves through words with how they are feeling, record memories, and document goals. An activity journal concept was considered to encourage children to have more fun in the journaling process. Activity journals include writing prompts to help guide children with various writing topics. They also include areas to doodle, color and accomplish puzzles or other activities. The focus for the journal cover design was to incorporate a positive phrase and illustration to enhance the overall image. Word phrases like, “When it rains look for rainbows, when it’s dark look for stars”, “Your words and ideas can change the world”. These types of phrases can be easily understood by children ages 9-18 and could also be designs targeted to an even younger age group. The graphic elements include images in nature, like clouds and stars and items that kids commonly use, like bicycles and books.
Activity Sheet

The goals set for the journal product’s activity sheet, were to create an illustration that children could relate to both visually and aesthetically. This image could be produced in color, or in black and white so that kids could color it. The image would include hidden emojis within the illustration to create a photo search activity. The small images that will be included in the image hunt will continue to represent the positive messaging of the LMBL objective. An activity sheet can promote cognitive and fine motor skill growth. It can also build social and emotional skills when a caregiver is involved with the interaction. Coloring provides an additional benefit to strengthen creativity, color awareness, and helps develop a sense of achievement. This type of activity is a positive source of distraction from negative thoughts, anxiety, and stress. The hidden emoji icons will not interfere with the scenic illustration. The concepts created in the ideation process were inspired by scenes that could inspire activity, encourage goal setting, and excite the viewer to engage in activities observed in the illustrated scene. For example, a sand castle on the beach may make a child want to build something similar or hot air balloons in the sky could inspire children to one day engage in that activity.
A Game Craft To Encourage Innovation & Activity.

The Foosball game craft is designed to encourage innovation, the ability to follow instructions, teamwork and activity. The message on the box clearly tells the child that they are a winner as positive reinforcement. These are empowering words that go beyond building and playing the game within the box. Although there are structured guidelines on how to build and play the game, kids will also have the opportunity to customize features within the game. They can color the team players, decorate the box and create their own game rules. Once they have finished building the box they can play with a family member or friend for additional fun. The Foosball game design does not currently include an audio feature but this could be added with the sounds of cheering fans when players score. Adding audio with positive game sounds would trigger the imagination and provide a more involved experience.
Research was conducted on the best way to create the Foosball table craft. There are a few resources online that demonstrate fun ways that this craft can be created with a shoe box. The goal with this product is to make the process easy to understand, fun to build, and durable enough to play again and again. Children can include their own design elements as well.

There will be an instruction sheet included in the game craft kit. This instruction sheet will show step-by-step instructions on how to build the Foosball game. These sketches present the ideation phase of how the instruction will look. There will also be positive messaging included and educational details about soccer. The positive messaging, educational content, creative engagement, and active play that this activity encourages is directly related to the objectives of LMBL.
The materials that have been selected for this activity are designed to be simple and complete. This kit will not need any additional material to build a finished product. This is to ensure the kids have all they need to fully enjoy this activity without the concern of a missing component.

A prototype was developed to help ensure that the concept for this activity is realistic and easy to build, and that needed elements are included in the kit. This process has proved to be beneficial and I discovered important steps that would need to be included in the instructions to build the game.

The prototyping process has identified crucial adjustments that would have to be made for a product like this Foosball game to be successful. I have discovered that the box would need to be larger for the pins to have a little more distance between them. The pins need to be able to loop around 360° for the game to be played more smoothly. Currently the pins have limited mobility at 180°. Also, if there were more distance, then it would be easier to place the pins onto the dowels when building the game. This process has also helped identify a way to add their own unique flair to make it their own, along with including creative expression.
During the prototyping process, images were captured of the game being built by my ten year old and twelve year old. They also played the game. Although human study was not utilized in this thesis, it did provide a more insight on how kids might interact with building the game, playing the game and their general reaction to the overall experience. This helped prove the importance of introducing human study in future development of LMBL to qualify the success of products being included, make revisions based on the targeted audiences engagement, or determining products that should be excluded in the gifting program.

The purpose of this interaction was to capture photography that could be utilized in a set of step-by-step instructions so that children could build the entire game craft without assistance from anyone. Photography offers key visual reference to help ensure the user that they are following the written instructions correctly. This type of visual clarification can alleviate confusion and assist in making the building process more enjoyable.
Product Influence

Each of the designs in Images 4:1 - 4:9 represent various products that could potentially be a gift sent to the kids in the LMBL gifting program. The concepts are products that kids can wear, interact with, or display for daily viewing. Each of these products would include positive and motivational, inspirational messaging that the kids can enjoy. The gifting program would not be limited to the product types seen here. If brought to complete fruition, there would be many more product types based on all age ranges, interests and other variables.
CHAPTER 04
Defense of Work

An extensive examination has been conducted on how art can be used as a motivational resource to help children develop and maintain a positive mindset to help them toward a better direction for their life. The research has helped determine that children can be reached mentally, physically, and spiritually through positive messaging and interaction with creative products that interests them. This type of outreach effort must be disseminated on a continuous basis to gain the full impact and transformative potential toward the targeted audience. Support from adults responsible for the health and wellbeing of children who would receive these types of creative products also play a significant role in the success of the impact it can deliver.

LMBL is a gifting program concept that was developed to empower children to truly live their best lives. The mindset of a child determines their outlook, who they are, and who they will become in life. With the LMBL gifting program, children will be reminded on a regular basis of how remarkable they really are. The products that they will receive can be tailored to their own unique and personal interests to increase the success and appeal of the program for each child. The LMBL brand is designed in a style that kids of all ages can best relate to by exhibiting qualities that are found in the art style of many children of all ages. Products included in LMBL come in a vast array of characteristics so that they are not only targeting one area of each child’s mindset. There will be games, music, journals, activities, crafts, apparel, decorations, stickers, fun packaging, and more to reach children mentally, physically and, spiritually. Mentally, children will be able to set goals and express themselves in writing and through the artwork they create. They will be able to socialize on the digital platform and be encouraged to build a greater relationship with people in their environment. Physically, the children will play games, be encouraged...
to expand on their interests, accomplish goals they have set, and get involved in their community. Spiritually, they will be able to receive guidance, be prompted to open up spiritually, and be encouraged to become closer to nature and learn about God. The children that are a part of LMBL will have active adult participants who enroll them into the program. These individuals will be a conduit to make sure children are applying the principles being delivered by LMBL. The mobile app will also be a tool that helps the success of LMBL continue to evolve with the children as they grow older and their interests change.

The LMBL program would pay special attention to what is trending in society, what specific age groups and genders gravitate towards, and how these parameters may evolve over time with children. This will help increase the success rate of the program in the event children are unable to utilize the mobile app properly. This program would also need to be implemented into a government system like social services to receive the financial backing needed to keep it going. Promotional campaigns would need to be developed to inform people that the program exists. Products would need to be developed on a regular basis to stay fresh, relevant, and interesting to the LMBL members. Staff would be needed to ensure the entire program operates properly for customer service, the mobile app, product development and fulfillment.

LMBL’s developmental stages proves to be a successful concept that encourages a better outlook on life for children from adverse backgrounds. As these children develop with a better mindset through this type of tool, they would also create a better future for a more productive and healthy member of society overall.

“But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God”

Luke 18:16
**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


