

## AGENCY OVERVIEW

### ***MISSION: INSPIRING ALL GIRLS TO BE STRONG, SMART AND BOLD.***

Girls Inc. Limestone provides life-skills education and mentoring programs for girls, and is at the heart of girls' lives and forefront of the girls' rights movement. With programs that are grounded in research and tested in the field, our organization celebrates and empowers girls and young women, and advocates for an equitable world.

The compelling voices and perspectives of girls and women are woven throughout our work, which includes engaging programs, original research that highlights underlying causes and effective solutions for girls' issues, and persuasive advocacy at both local and national levels.

Girls Inc. Limestone was founded as Big Sisters of Kingston in 1972 by a small group of women dedicated to improving the life situation of girls in the Kingston community. Since that time, we have grown to serve more than 1,200 girls each year. We have expanded our life-skills education programs, and have taken on a new name and a new national organization. These changes will facilitate our continued growth and a better ability to meet the needs of girls and young women in our community.

We at Girls Inc. are dedicated to providing quality life-education services to girls in our community because:

- Eating disorders are now the third most common chronic illness in adolescent girls – 30% of girls are likely to engage in severely disordered food and weight behaviours.
- Bullying, relational aggression and the constant bombardment of media and societal messages about how girls should look and behave are key contributors to widespread low self-esteem among girls.
- 37% of Canadian females age 11, 42% of Canadian females age 13, and 48% of Canadian females 15 admit they would change their looks if they could.
- 6,250 of girls in our service district are likely to experience sexual abuse in their lifetime. 80% of sexual abuse occurs in the home. 69% of sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victim. 10% of sexual assaults are reported to the police.



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A United Way  
Member Agency

- According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, only 30% of girls are active enough.
- In 2002, 23% of girls in Grade 6 and 36% of girls in Grade 10 reported at least one depressive episode per week or more in the previous six months.
- 80% of our youth are connected to the internet. 72% visit chat rooms; many visit adult chat rooms or private rooms.
- 43% of teens 15 to 17 years old say they were asked by someone they have met on the internet to meet in person. One in five accepted.
- A national survey of teens in Canada found that over 70% of Canadian teens have been bullied online; 44% said they've bullied someone online.

## **National Identity Programs**



### **GIRLS INC. PREVENTING ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY®**

Girls acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to take charge of and to make informed, thoughtful decisions about their sexual health. Girls learn to identify ways and reasons to avoid early pregnancy and to prevent sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. The program comprises three age-appropriate components: *Growing Together SM*; *Will Power/Won't Power SM*; and *Taking Care of Business SM*.

### **GIRLS INC. OPERATIONSMART®**

Girls develop enthusiasm for and skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Through hands-on activities, girls explore, ask questions, and solve problems. They also consider careers in these fields by interacting with women and men pursuing such careers. Components of the program include: *Eureka! SM*; *Girls Dig It*; *Career Action*, and *Thinking SMART*.

### **GIRLS INC. ECONOMIC LITERACY®**

Girls learn to manage money, invest, and begin to develop an appreciation for global economics. Girls as young as six explore how the economy affects us locally and globally and develop skills needed to be economically independent. Girls learn these skills through four age-appropriate components: *She's on the Money! SM*; *Dollars, Sense, and Me SM*; *Equal Earners*, *Savvy Spenders SM*, and *Futures and Options SM*.

### **GIRLS INC. SPORTING CHANCE®**

Girls learn to appreciate an active lifestyle as they develop movement and athletic skills, cooperative and competitive spirit, health awareness, and interest in sports and adventure. Girls also explore career opportunities related to sports and experience the benefits and excitement of taking healthy risks. Through three age-appropriate

components—*Steppingstones*<sup>SM</sup>, *Bridges*<sup>SM</sup>, and *Girls enCourage*<sup>SM</sup>—girls build a foundation for a lifetime of enjoying physical activity and participation in sports and adventure.

### **GIRLS INC. MEDIA LITERACY®**

Girls increase their awareness of the scope and power of the media and the effects of media messages on girls and women. They learn to analyze critically what they see and hear in the media, advocate for change in entertainment, news, and advertising media, and create images that are more realistic and reflective of their lives. Components of the program include: *Media and Me*<sup>SM</sup>, *Media Smarts*<sup>SM</sup>, *Girls Take Another Look*<sup>SM</sup>, *Girls Get the Message*<sup>SM</sup>, and *Girls Make the Message*<sup>SM</sup>.

### **GIRLS INC. PROJECT BOLD®**

Girls learn to lead safer lives by developing skills and strategies for self-defense, including physical techniques. Girls also learn how to seek out and talk to caring adults about personal violence and to advocate against gender-specific violence issues. Components of the program include: *Action for Safety*<sup>SM</sup> and *Living Safe and Strong*<sup>SM</sup>.

### **GIRLS INC. LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY ACTION<sup>SM</sup>**

Girls build their leadership skills and create lasting social change through community action projects. In *Discovery*<sup>SM</sup>, girls ages 9 to 11 celebrate the heritage of girls and women as leaders and develop awareness of themselves as community resources and trustees of the common good. In *In Our Own Hands*<sup>SM</sup>, girl ages 12 to 14 deepen their understanding of girls and women as social change agents and of leadership as a collective process grounded in belonging to and having responsibility for one's community.

### **GIRLS INC. FRIENDLY PEERSUASION®**

Girls develop skills to resist pressure to use harmful substances such as alcohol, tobacco, household chemicals, and other drugs. In this peer-education program, girls ages 11 to 14 learn healthy ways to manage stress and confront peer, media, and other pressures and then assume the roles of PEERsuaders for young girls

## **Local Programs and Services**



Girls Inc. delivers programs and services designed to meet the unique needs of girls and young women in our community. Our program grouping provides services for all girls – girls who need intensive, ongoing support, girls whose needs are best met through participation in a topic-specific workshop series, and girls who benefit from receiving ongoing girl-specific information and occasional support.

### **GIRLS ED**

Girls Inc. has been providing life-skills education for more than 20 years. Now, as a Girls Inc. agency, we provide workshop series' based on the Girls Incorporated® National Identity Programs.

Girls Ed is funded by our local United Way, topic-specific Government grants, community partnerships, and agency fundraising activities. We tackle the tough issues - bullying and relational aggression, violence issues, employment and careers, body image and self-esteem, healthy lifestyles, dating, family communication, and peer pressure, to name a few. Importantly, we deliver girls groups based on the topic or topics that best meet the needs of participating girls, and deliver all workshops in a fun, hands-on, nurturing environment, facilitated by trained agency staff members.

Girls Ed groups are delivered in community centers through neighbourhood partnerships, in schools through our partnerships with local school boards, and in our two program delivery sites, one in the center of Kingston and one at the Wally Elmer Neighbourhood Centre.

In 2008, Girls Ed programs were delivered to more than 800 girls.

Programs include:

- In-School Groups for Girls
- March Break and Summer Daycamp Program
- After School Program at the Wally Elmer Neighbourhood Centre
- FOCUS Program – Employment Readiness Program for Young Women
- Mother’s Network and Mother’s Network Education Series

### **GIRLS INC. ONE-TO-ONE**

#### **Friends for Life Program**

Formerly the “Big and Little Sister Match Program” this program was re-named in keeping with our new National organization and identity. The Friends for Life Program is a long-term mentoring program facilitated by agency staff who co-ordinate one-to-one relationships between female adults and girls aged eight through 16. Each pair is closely monitored by a staff caseworker. This program provides much needed additional long-term support for girls with complex needs.

#### **Friend for a Day Program**

The Friend for a Day Program is a popular program that was designed by our agency staff in 1995. It is a short-term mentoring program where volunteers and clients are paired for single outings. This program provides periodic companionship for girls with complex needs.

### **GIRLS INC. GENERAL MEMBERSHIP**

Girls Inc. registers all former program participants and all interested girls and young women to our general membership. As a member, girls receive our newsletters containing relevant local, national and international information pertinent to girls and young women. In addition, our general members are provided frequent program opportunities through Girls Inc. as well as access to our bursary and scholarship programs. We currently have 900 girl members.

### **GIRLS INC. FAMILY SUPPORT**

The provision of family support has always set our agency apart in terms of client care.

Girls Inc. delivers education groups for parents, and connects them with community groups who can help their family avoid and overcome adversity.

In addition, agency staff work diligently to ensure that all needs of each client and her family are met in a holistic manner through our agency programs, available community services, or individual support. Through this program, we coordinate summer camp or after school activities for girls, provide information to families experiencing topic-specific difficulties with their daughters, or to ensure a family is referred to another local agency who can assist them in dealing with an issue or problem.

Girls Inc. Limestone  
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