



Inspiring all girls to be strong, smart, and bold

GIRLS INCORPORATED
of Limestone, Algonquin, and Lakeshore



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United Way

Hastings & Prince Edward

Kingston, Frontenac
Lennox & Addington

MISSION:

Inspiring all girls to be strong, smart, and bold!

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

Girls Inc. welcomes all girls regardless of their assigned sex at birth. This includes those who are exploring their gender identity or expression during their time at Girls Inc. We have adopted the use of a + in all marketing materials to identify our commitment to this service equity. For more information, please see our [Human Resources Policy Statement](#) and the [Girls Inc. National Position Statement on Gender Identity](#).

Girls Inc. Limestone serves girls+ and women+ in Frontenac, Lennox and Addington, Hastings, and Prince Edward Counties in Southeastern Ontario, Canada. (KFL&A and H&PE.)

This includes:

- School-aged girls+ – typically 6 to 18
- Youth 15 to 30 based on the Canadian federal definition of youth
- Families of Girls Inc. participants with no age limitations
- Women+ experiencing trauma with no age limitations.

Girls Inc. girls grow up healthy, educated, and independent. Their experience at Girls Inc. is the confluence of people, an environment, and programming that collectively empower girls to succeed. Trained staff and volunteers build lasting relationships in girls-only spaces that are physically and emotionally safe, where girls find a sisterhood of support with shared drive, mutual respect, and high expectations.

Research-based programs provide girls with the skills and knowledge to set goals, overcome obstacles, and improve academic performance. Informed by girls and their families, Girls Inc. also works with policymakers to advocate for legislation and initiatives that increase opportunities for all girls.

The Girls Inc. vision is a world where every girl values her whole self, discovers her inherent strengths, and achieves her goals.

THE ISSUES

“As Canada grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic, many want to return to “normal” as quickly as possible. But “normal” is deeply flawed, especially for women, girls, and Two Spirit, trans, and non-binary people. The pandemic exposes hard truths.”

Canadian Women's Foundation – [Resetting Normal Reports](#)



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Societal gender inequity sharply increased the incidence and severity of experienced trauma for girls and young women during the COVID-19 pandemic. Multiple studies have reported that girls and women are in the top two of three groups that will suffer the most and the longest from this crisis. We can confirm this as fact in our community as poverty, gender-based violence, and mental health concerns have sharply increased for our service demographic.

Throughout the pandemic, girls and their families with multiple barriers to success have been acutely and disproportionately affected by the worsening of gender inequity in the following ways:

- Extreme poverty
- Domestic violence
- Mental health concerns
- Unemployment and underemployment
- Insecure housing and homelessness
- Food insecurity and shortages

At Girls Inc., we know girls can *thrive* when they receive the support they need, messages of aspiration rather than limitation and the resources and mentoring needed to overcome adversity and be resilient. We are committed to providing enhanced recovery support to as many girls and women as possible to meet this time of extreme need and reduce the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

WHY GIRLS INC?

The Girls Inc. Experience empowers girls to succeed. We provide girls with trusting mentoring relationships, a girls-only environment, and research-based, hands-on programming.

Three critical goals drive our programming - that girls lead healthy lives, succeed academically, and have the life skills needed to prepare them for adulthood. Participation in comprehensive Girls Inc. programming leads to significantly improved outcomes for Girls Inc. Girls.

An independent research organization conducted an in-depth survey of girls participating in Girls Inc. programs and found that on 24 dimensions, Girls Inc. girls did significantly better than girls who had not had the Girls Inc. Experience. They were more likely to engage in pursuits and express beliefs that lead to physical and mental well-being, academic achievement, and strong character and leadership.

Compared to their peers, Girls Inc. girls are significantly more likely to:

- Be more engaged in school
- Exhibit postsecondary readiness and confidence
- Think math is fun
- Get excited about science
- Exercise daily



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- Exhibit strong leadership skills and see themselves as leaders
- Believe in their ability to contribute to their community
- Stand up for fairness and their own beliefs
- Rely on positive relationships with adults

These results are truly compelling, providing strong evidence that Girls Inc. changes the trajectory of girls' lives and sets them up for life-long success. The results validate what we have known all along:

Girls are innately powerful and are the strong, smart, and bold leaders we need for the future!

Through outcome-focused work and the heartening results above, we know that Girls Inc. programs are working to help girls and young women overcome the grim statistics on the status of girls and women in Canada.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Our 2021 to 2025 Strategic Plan is focused on areas needed to ensure we are positioned to support many more community girls and women long into the future. We will focus on sustainability to ensure a thriving community of strong, smart, and bold girls and women through intentional actions in the following priorities:

- Innovate funding and revenue streams to develop a sustainable organization.
- Leverage the collective knowledge of the Girls Inc. Network to support organizational resiliency.
- Enhance the core components of Girls Inc. to enable our affiliate to thrive
- Deepen our commitment to Justice, Equity and Inclusion in every area of our work.

Click on the link to view the [2021-2025 Girls Inc. Limestone Network Aligned Strategic Plan](#) in its entirety.

GIRLS INC. LIMESTONE CORE PROGRAMS

Girls Inc. delivers life-changing programs and experiences that help girls and young women navigate gender, economic, and social barriers. All programs are free to ensure accessibility for all girls and young women and are delivered throughout Frontenac, Lennox & Addington, Hastings and Prince Edward Counties.

THE GIRLS ED PROGRAM

The Girls Ed Program provides programming for school-aged girls, youth and families throughout Frontenac, Lennox & Addington, Hastings, and Prince Edward Counties, Ontario.

School-based After School Programs:

Our school-based after school programs are delivered in community schools throughout our service district and provide three-pillar support for participating



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girls. These groups address specific issues affecting participants and provide critical ongoing support within a preventative framework. Program delivery includes healthy and fun physical activities, after school snacks and healthy eating education. Topics addressed include relational aggression, bullying and exclusion, self-defence, personal safety, body image and self-esteem, STEM education, media literacy and economic literacy.

In-School Groups:

We deliver intervention-based programs in classrooms during the school day. Each program round is designed to assist girls in overcoming and avoiding adversity and becoming more resilient. Topics include relational aggression, bullying and exclusion, self-defence, personal safety, poor body image and low self-esteem.

Rideau Heights Kingston After School Program:

This after school program provides 9 hours per week of comprehensive programming for girls in Kingston's north-end community. This program focuses on healthy physical activity, nutrition, self-esteem, life skills, and education. Topics addressed include relational aggression, bullying and exclusion, self-defense, personal safety, body image and self-esteem, STEM education, media literacy and economic literacy.

Community Groups:

We deliver groups in targeted communities and for community partners who seek our support in providing a program for the girls and young women they serve. Programs are tailored to meet the needs of each group. They can be long-term, comprehensive programs or a single Girls Inc. program that provides a solution for a specific problem such as relational aggression, stress, or poor body image.

Day Camp Program:

We provide free day camps for girls on March Break, winter holiday break and in the summer months. Our day camps offer comprehensive programming with fun hands-on activities. Week-long programs provide great opportunities to introduce girls to science, technology, engineering, and math activities. Examples of these activities include building and cooking in solar ovens, archaeology digs, building bridges, and creating and running small businesses.

Group Mentoring Program:

A weekly group program that provides intensive, long-term support for girls who will benefit from frequent, ongoing support. Girls and young women participate in fun weekly activities and receive individual support from Girls Inc. staff and volunteers.

Girls Summit:

An empowering day conference for more than 100 girls from H&PE and KFL&A that provides unique and exciting strong, smart, and bold workshops.



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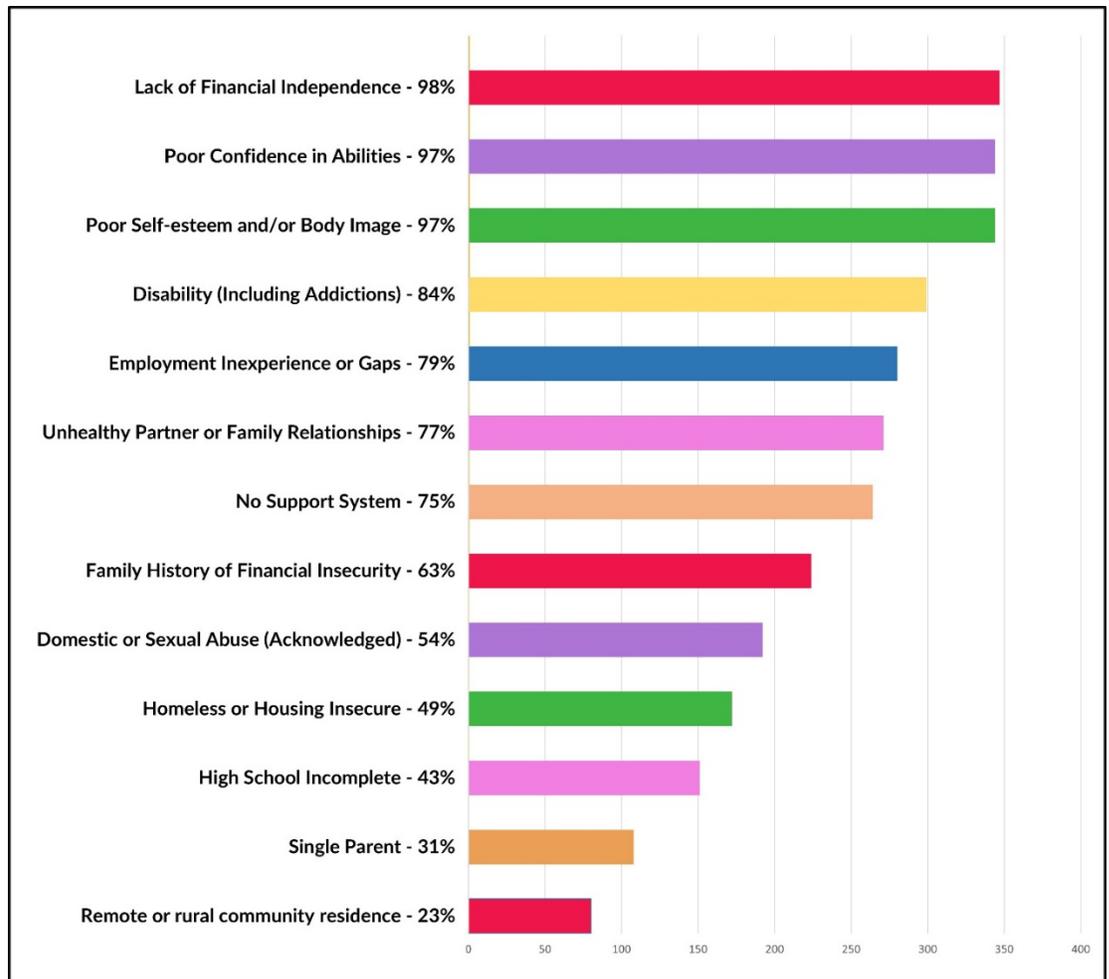
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SMART START YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Our Smart Start program is an intensive and life-changing program for young women with complex needs and multiple barriers to employment. Participants are supported as they work towards overcoming adversity, improving self-confidence, setting education and career goals, and returning to school or becoming employed. Smart Start participants identify and overcome barriers to education and employment and become confident, financially self-sufficient women with a plan for their future. With classrooms in both Belleville and Kingston, the Smart Start program serves young women throughout Frontenac, Lennox and Addington, Hastings and Prince Edward counties.

The image below illustrates the lived experience of H&PE and KFL&A Smart Start Participants over the past five years. 94% of these 327 women were employed or had returned to school by the end of their intervention and will continue to receive support as they work towards long-term goals.



INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

Girls Inc. provides individual support for girls and their families who need information, advice, or community referral. We also stay in contact with program alumna to provide long-term support to girls and young women as needed. We also continually submit grant applications for special projects that will better the lives of girls, young women, and their families in the community.



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Examples of this episodic programming include topic-specific teen groups, additional supports for single mothers, or trauma recovery programs.

2023-2024 SERVICE GOALS BY PROGRAM

Girls Ed 1,395
Programs and Services for school-aged girls+ and teens in H&PE and KFLA
Target - 1,125

- ~ School-based after school and lunch break groups
- ~ After School Program in Rideau Heights Kingston
- ~ Group mentoring
- ~ Summer day camps
- ~ March and winter break day camps
- ~ Girls Summit

Smart Start
Comprehensive Youth Employment Program in H&PE and KFLA
Target - 100

- ~ Individual support
- ~ Six month needs-based intervention
- ~ Employment preparation
- ~ Education assistance
- ~ Life skills education
- ~ Career counselling
- ~ Mentored employment
- ~ Financial support

Individual Support and Special Programs
Target - 340

- ~ Crisis and Recovery Support
- ~ Employment Supports for women+ with disabilities
- ~ Ongoing support for Program alumnae
- ~ Family support and referrals

THE GIRLS INC. CURRICULA

In addition to a myriad of programs designed specifically to meet the needs of girls and women, we focus on the delivery of the following outcome-based Girls Inc. Identity Programs:

Project BOLD:

Girls learn skills and strategies to lead safer lives in their homes, in relationships, in their communities, and online. Girls learn specific self-defence techniques and how to seek out and talk to caring adults about personal violence. Older girls take on a community action project to advocate for a safer world for all women and girls. **Results:** Girls learn specific emotional and physical strategies that decrease their likelihood of victimization.

Media Literacy:

Media Literacy is designed to assist girls in identifying and combatting the negative effects of media messages. 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 critically analyze 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. **Results:** Girls learn to love and appreciate their bodies. They are better able to reject societal opinions on how girls should look and act and gain a better appreciation of themselves.

Allies in Action:

The Allies in Action curriculum empowers girls to acknowledge peer behaviours that are harmful to peer relationships and lead to a myriad of mental health issues. Allies in Action fosters critical thinking and pro-social skills and takes an empowering approach that is engaging, fast-paced and reflective. Owning and correcting individual behaviours that negatively impact others is a critical step to self-awareness. **Results:** Girls learn how enacting bullying and hurtful behaviour affects others. They gain important communication tools to avoid



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being a perpetrator and to successfully deflect bullying, exclusion and peer violence from themselves and others in their school or community.

Healthy Mind+Body:

Girls need access to information, resources, and skills to be effective partners in promoting their healthy development. Healthy Mind+Body focuses on four pillars that, according to research, play a major role in fortifying girls' ability to develop and sustain strong minds and strong bodies. The pillars are nutrition, physical activity, stress management, and body image. **Results:** Girls understand the importance of taking charge of their physical and mental well-being. They gain important tools to manage stress, avoid and overcome body image issues, and integrate healthy daily nutrition and activity into their daily lives.

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 the skills needed to be economically independent. **Results:** Girls develop skills critical to being financially savvy and to become economically independent adults.

Friendly Peersuasion:

Girls from 11 to 14 develop skills to resist pressure to use harmful substances such as alcohol, tobacco, household chemicals, and other drugs. In this peer education program, girls learn healthy ways to manage stress and confront peers, media, and other pressures. They then assume the roles of PEERsuaders for young girls. **Results:** Girls learn to avoid detrimental decisions that could lead to addictions and impact their ability to focus positively on the future.

Leadership and Community Action:

Girls build their leadership skills and create lasting social change through community action projects. This program celebrates the heritage of girls and women as leaders and the development of awareness of themselves as community resources and trustees of the common good. **Results:** Participating girls will discover the power of their capacity for formal and informal leadership.

Operation Smart:

Girls develop an enthusiasm for and skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Through hands-on activities, girls explore, ask questions, and solve problems. **Results:** Girls view these careers as exciting and realistic options for their education and career paths.

Healthy Sexuality:

The Girls Inc. Healthy Sexuality curriculum is divided into age-appropriate components to assist girls in understanding sexuality. Girls Inc. recognizes that sexuality is a key element of the whole girl. To be strong, smart, and bold, girls must have the knowledge and skills necessary to take charge and make informed, thoughtful decisions about their health. **Results:** Girls understand sexuality with a positive, empowered approach that provides a foundation



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based on accurate information, cultural sensitivity, and values of inclusiveness and respect.

Sporting Chance:

Through Girls Inc. Sporting Chance, girls build a foundation for enjoying sport, adventure and physical activity throughout their lives. Girls develop physical literacy and athletic skills, cooperative and competitive spirit, and healthy habits. They experience the benefits and excitement of taking positive risks that bolster their self-confidence and personal growth. **Results:** Sports participation helps lower the risk of obesity and associated diseases and decreases feelings of anxiety and depression.

*Girls Inc. Limestone
April 2023*