

**AAUW WISCONSIN
EQUITY INITIATIVE PROJECT AWARD APPLICATION**

Project Name: Girls Inc. at the YWCA of Racine

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Narrative Summary of Project: Girls Incorporated is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to inspiring all girls, 6-18 years old, to be strong, smart and bold. Girls Inc. at the YWCA of Racine is one of two affiliates in the state of Wisconsin and it provides vital education programs to girls, particularly those in high-risk, underserved locations. Girls Inc. develops and implements research-based education programs that empower girls to understand, value, and assert their rights. Innovative programs help girls confront subtle societal messages about their value and help prepare them to lead successful, independent, fulfilling lives. Girls Inc. at the YWCA of Racine addresses societal equity issues, encourages girls to consider fields of study where women are under-represented, provides community leadership opportunities, and enhances and broadens the lives of Racine County girls.

Girls Inc. programs offered to Racine County girls address math and science education (STEM), media and economic literacy, literacy skill development, communication workshops, job readiness workshops, girls sexual health awareness and pregnancy prevention issues. Additionally Girls Inc. offers opportunities to high school girls to volunteer and mentor younger girls, as well as participate in programs for community action and leadership development. Racine Girls Inc. offers summer programming, out of school extension activities and after school programs in nine public schools, as well as special programs at two private schools. Saturday and after school workshops are open to all public and private school girls.

Impact: Through the Girls Inc at the YWCA of Racine, Racine County girls, especially inner city urban girls, are provided opportunities to gain knowledge and skills, to make positive choices, and to succeed in new environments.

Girls Inc-Racine has developed a solid partnership with Racine Unified School District, working through the federally-funded after-school program, Lighted Schoolhouse. In 2008-09, Girls Inc. provided services to nine Unified District schools and opened programming in a tenth on January 27, 2009. After-school programs are offered two days per week at nine elementary public schools. The Youth Education Director has dedicated her efforts to developing and strengthening networking between the school principal, school social workers, Lighted Schoolhouse coordinators, social service agencies and families.

Racine Girls Inc. has participated in ongoing public relation efforts with local TV channel CBS 58, as well as local media including The Journal Times newspaper, the Insider News newspaper, and the Racine Post website.

A Job Readiness Workshop on March 15, 2008 was held in collaboration with the Racine Public Library and the Workforce Development Center and attracted 24 girls, providing them with information regarding career skills, job applications, and appropriate work habits.

A Mother Daughter workshop was held on February 21, 2009 in collaboration with 21st Century Preparatory School and San Juan Diego Middle School (private nonpublic schools) and provided twelve mother-daughter pairs with information and activities regarding career developments, communication, and financial attitudes.

A Girls Health Forum was held at 21st Century Preparatory School on April 24, 2008 and provided crucial sexual health information to 52 middle school girls. Essential community collaborators included Racine Unified School District, 21st, Racine Family YMCA, Racine Health Dept., Youth Connections (a network of social service agencies), RAUW, Safe Start (prevention program). Girls Inc. girls were

enrolled in a weekly meeting for ten weeks in which they planned and implemented the format, arrangements, speakers, and the publicity. They even designed and printed t-shirts.

Girls Inc. collects data from National pre/post surveys, as well as demographics from Lighted Schoolhouse offices, which are entered locally into a UW-Parkside designed database. Statistics are also sent to the national association for calculation of local and national comparison of data and returned to Girls Inc. at the YWCA of Racine. Individual participants that show improvement or positive change based on pre-post test surveys are totaled to show number and percent of girls achieving the United Way outcome parameters.

In 2008, 145 Racine County girls participated in regular programming, with 63 participating in workshops or one-time events. Girls Inc. program participants ethnical demographics are as follows: African American 34%, White/Caucasian 35%, American Indian 2%, Hispanic 21% and Other/Unknown 8%.

Creativity: The national Girls Inc. association has responded to the changing needs of girls through carefully researched programs and public education efforts that empower girls to understand, value and assert their rights. The following eight areas were determined to be *identity programs*, addressing contemporary issues and problems.

- Girls Inc. Preventing Adolescent Pregnancy® bolsters girls' communication and skills as well as their motivation and resources for being in charge of their sexual health and avoiding teen pregnancy.
- Girls Inc. Operation SMART® builds girls' skills and interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.
- Girls Inc. Economic Literacy® introduces girls to basic economic and financial concepts, including money management, investments and global economics.
- Girls Inc. Leadership and Community ActionSM builds leadership skills and creates lasting social change by partnering girls and women in community action projects chosen by girls.
- Girls Inc. Sporting Chance® builds movement and athletic skills, cooperative and competitive spirit, health awareness, and interest in all sports as girls explore the benefits of an active lifestyle.
- Girls Inc. Project BOLD® strengthens girls' abilities to lead safer lives by developing strategies for self-defense, seeking out caring adults to help with personal violence and advocating on violence issues.
- Girls Inc. Friendly PEERsuasion® builds girls' skills for resisting pressure to use harmful substances such as alcohol, tobacco, household chemicals and other drugs.
- Girls Inc. Media Literacy® encourages girls to think critically about media messages and fosters their awareness of the power of the media and its effects.

The Racine Girls Inc. after-school programs currently include: Operation SMART, Economic and Media Literacy, as well as additional programs as Girlstart (a literacy enhancement program), Discovery Leadership, and Adventure Sail with Women's Sailing Association. Additionally, new initiatives and programs provide out of school extension opportunities throughout the school year. The Bold University, a girls' middle school leadership camp, was piloted on December 22nd and 23rd, 2008. "Hello

World, It's Me, A Girl" was a letter-writing project, widely publicized, that provided all Girls Inc. girls the challenge of considering what they had to offer the world and how they should record it.

As with every nonprofit, a major concern of Girls Inc. of the YWCA is providing financially for the programs. A fundraiser event was held on Sunday, October 5, 2008 at the Racine Theatre Guild. The internationally known African American dance troupe from Milwaukee, Ko-Thi, performed. An hors d'oeuvres buffet was provided along with a silent auction and just prior to the performance, a power point slide show explained the purpose, goals and needs of Girls Inc. of Racine. Girls Inc. girls helped as hostesses and ushers - and all wore the bright red Girls Inc. t-shirts.

Continuity: Under the umbrella of the YWCA of Racine, Girls Inc. is an ongoing, continuing program assisting girls of Racine to become strong, smart, and bold. Through a full-time director and seven part-time instructors, the programs are funded through Racine Unified School District, United Way of Racine, as well as private grants and committee fundraiser. The national Girls Inc. Association continues to provide assistance to Girls Inc. of Racine and awarded them a \$6,000 federal grant specifically for expansion and training of staff. The Girls Inc. committee of the YWCA board is currently exploring additional means to achieve a more diversified income stream.

Strategic planning for continuity includes both short-term and long-term goals. Immediate planned projects provide creative insights as well:

- A Girls Health Forum is scheduled for April 30, 2009 at 21st Century Preparatory School.
- Friday Night Chick Flicks will be offered at the YWCA River Bend Nature Center to all Girls Inc girls and their friends.
- Bold University will be offered to all Racine County middle school girls on days off of school and during the summer.
- She Volunteers is a new initiative for qualified high school girls to mentor middle school and elementary school girls.

Long term goals for Girls Inc. of Racine include the following:

- Expansion of sites and programming for additional schools, including private schools.
- Partnership within the Racine Unified School District for Girls Inc. programs to be offered year round at the schools.
- Programming to be offered at city Community Centers weekly.
- Partnership with Girls Scouts for several events, training, and programming.

Girls Inc. at the YWCA of Racine is indeed worthy of recognition of the AAUW Initiative for Education Equity award.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Ramagli 3/24/09
Susan Ramagli, IEE Chair for Racine AAUW

girls inc.®



Helping girls realize their potential

Girls Inc. program reaches
out to preteen females

BY JOHN DOBBERSTEIN
Journal Times

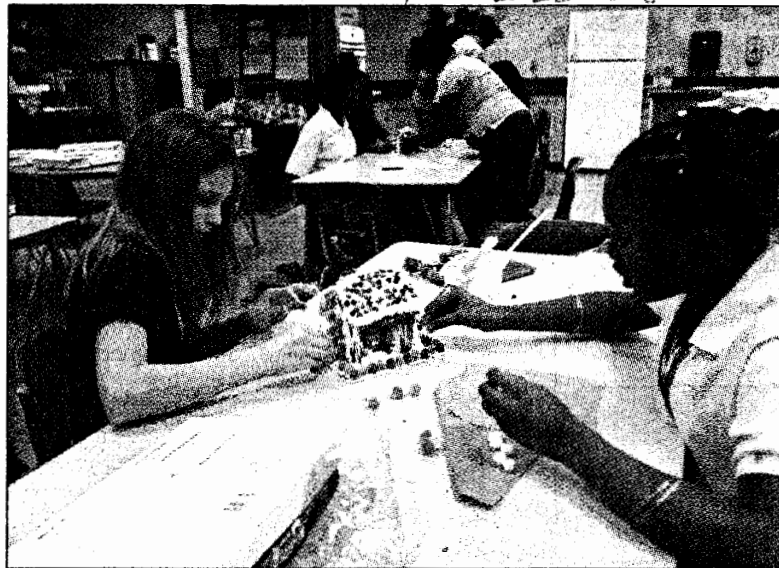
RACINE — After the final bell rang on a recent school day, four students at Jerstad-Agerholm Middle School were still hard at work in a classroom.

They weren't talking about math or science or English, but something more personal — themselves.

"I used to be mad a lot, but now I can express my feelings. What's said in here stays in here," said sixth-grader Aireyanna Barkley, who participates in the Girls Inc., a program run through the Racine YWCA.

Barkley and her three friends are among dozens of students this year taking advantage of Girls Inc., a national youth program that debuted in Racine in February 2007. Girls Inc. started as a reading literacy program for elementary students, but has spread to nine schools in the Racine Unified School District with a curriculum that is age-specific and addresses a variety of topics.

This school year, Girls Inc. is offered at Fratt, Janes, Jones, Mitchell, Wadewitz, Julian Thomas and Roosevelt elementary schools, and Jerstad-Agerholm and Gilmore middle schools. Some 500 students have been served by Girls Inc. in Racine since its inception.



GREGORY SHAVER *Journal Times*

Brittany Lasko, 12, and Zomorra Christian, 11, construct a gingerbread house during a holiday party Wednesday at Gilmore Middle School for Girls Inc., a national program started last year in Racine to help at-risk middle and elementary school girls improve their self-esteem.

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Girls Inc. is attempting to help girls boost their self-esteem, develop leadership skills, improve their academic success and prepare for life in the work force. The program's organizers, citing the students' own surveys, believe the results have been positive. But with about 8,000 girls living in Racine between the ages of 10 and 19, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, Girls Inc. is desperately looking for more funding. The program is currently funded by the United Way, Lighted Schoolhouse in Racine and private donors.

More on **GIRLS INC.**, Page 13A

GIRLS INC.

The program helps students in Racine improve their self-esteem, learn to become leaders, improve their academic skills and prepare for entering the work force. Kids interested in Girls Inc. must fill out an application for the Lighted Schoolhouse program and have it signed by their parents. For more information on Girls Inc. in Racine, call (262) 989-9693.

The mission of Girls Inc.® at the YWCA of Racine is to inspire all Racine area girls to become strong, smart, and bold.

Saturday, December 20, 2008
page editor: Jason O'Connell **13A**

GIRLS INC. / Program

From Page 11A

Marie Block, a Girls Inc. coordinator in Racine, said many girls at Unified need help discovering who they are.

"In their classroom there's just not room for that. At home a lot of times they don't have those supports," Block said. "With public middle schools, they're large, so even if they're going to the same school or same grade, you don't know everybody and a lot of times not knowing somebody creates, maybe, a sense of fear or distrust. And by having girls coming together with other girls that they don't know, they can see these girls are not different than them."

Through writing essays, going on field trips, engaging in team-building exercises and getting some focused academic attention in a small setting, the students are gaining some confidence, she said. Through "Dear World" essays the middle-school students can tell the world, on paper, what they should know about them. Another exercise lets students pretend to be president of their community for a day so they can discuss what their community ought to be like, Block said.

"A lot of these girls, they're in certain neighborhoods or families that don't allow them to see everything that's out there available to them," Block said. "What we really, really want to show them is what is available to them, how they can get there, what supports are in place for them."

"These are wonderful, bright girls and if they're just shown that path and given some support, they can do wonderful things," Block said.

Students at the Jerstad-Agerholm program said they like being able to speak their mind without their words being fed into the gossip mill.

"It's kind of like a trust circle," Barkley said. "I've learned about trust and understanding and friendship."

Racine Journal Times 12-16-08

She Volunteers wanted

RACINE — Girls Inc. at the YWCA of Racine invites all high school girls to apply to be a She Volunteer.

If you can commit to two hours, once a week, after school next semester to help facilitate groups at elementary and middle schools, you can join the She Volunteers Winter Training. The mandatory training will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Dec. 29-30 at The DeKoven Center, 600 21st St.

Girls are asked to contact your school counselor or Marie Block via e-mail girlsincracine@yahoo.com or by calling (262) 989-2272 for an application or more information. The deadline to register is Friday.

BOLD University Girls Inc. camp offered

RACINE — BOLD University Girls Inc. at the YWCA of Racine in partnership with Lighted Schoolhouse offer middle school girls attending Gilmore, Jerstad, Mitchell and McKinley middle schools the opportunity to discover a new camp for girls.

Middle school girls will participate in Girls Inc. leadership development, group games and activities that will encourage girls to be their strong, smart and bold selves. A field trip is included. Lighted Schoolhouse has contributed a \$45 scholarship for every registrant. The remaining cost is only \$10 per participant.

BOLD University will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Dec. 22-23 at Assembly Hall at The DeKoven Center, 600 21st St. Girls are asked to contact your school's Lighted Schoolhouse coordinator or Marie Block via e-mail at girlsincracine@yahoo.com or by calling (262) 989-2272 for a registration form or more information. The deadline to register is Friday.

Racine Journal Times 12-16-08

"If we have girl or boy situations, we can let it out in our circle individually," said sixth-grader Maaliyah West. She added, "I started to take other people for granted, but I learned if I do I will feel bad. I need to be thankful for who I have."

Sixth-grader Diamond Spikes said she is learning more about who she is and that she "should always help others."

In 2009, Girls Inc. in Racine wants to address girl-relational aggression, substance abuse and prevention and prevention of teen pregnancy. The program also wants to reach out to a more diverse array of students "and not label anybody," Block said. In 2007, 67 percent of the students served by Girls Inc. in Racine were Hispanic or black.

"People like to label and it's too easy to put somebody in a box and say this person is going to have these outcomes because of their situation now," Block said. "We're trying to remove those barriers."

March 15 library workshop to help young girls find summer employment

"Job Search 101: Getting Ready for a Summer Job" should be a required subject for all young job seekers. However, the version sponsored by The Girls Inc. Group of YWCA of Racine, the Racine Public Library and the Workforce Development Center/Career Discovery Center, is just for girls.

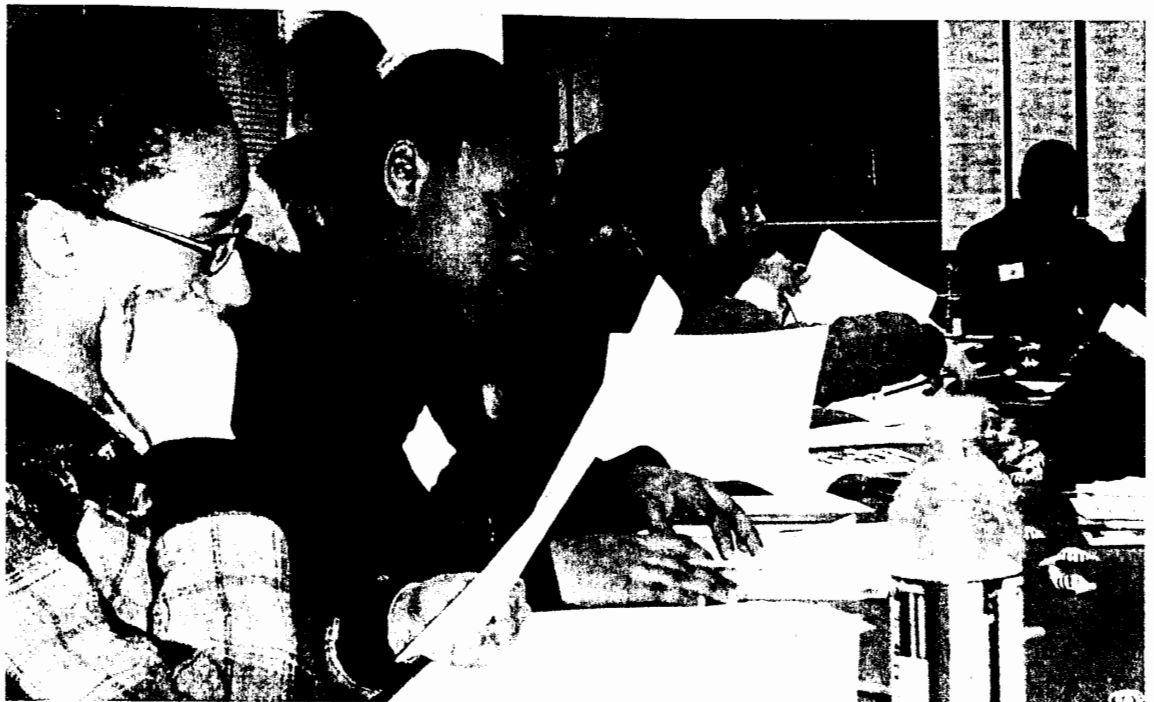
On Saturday, March 15, a job readiness workshop for girls ages 14 and older will be at the library from 1-4:30 p.m. The workshop is free, but registration is required on or before Friday, March 7.

The workshop will present information specifically for girls who might be entering the job market for the first time, said Karen Urben, YWCA board member. Topics covered will include exploring job possibilities, preparing for interviews and tips for good job skills in a new position.

There will be sample applications to fill out, and mock interviews, as well as a fashion show involving appropriate dress, Urben said.

Girls Inc. is a national research, education and direct advocacy organization that inspires girls to be strong, smart and bold, Urben said. The program is affiliated through the YWCA of Racine and currently has a number of programs running in Lighted Schoolhouse programs and at 21st Century Preparatory School.

For more information, call Urben at (262) 681-1280. To register for the workshop, call the YWCA at (262) 989-9922 or the library at (262) 636-9245 no later than March 7.



ADVENTURE SAILING

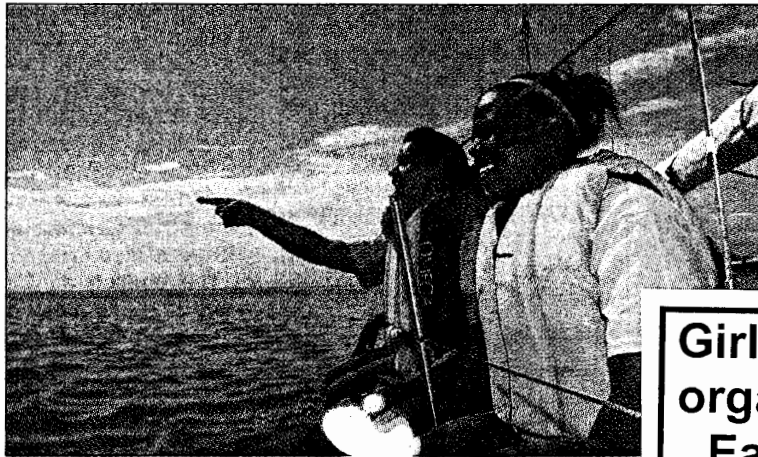


Photos by SCOTT ANDERSON *Journal Times*

Amy Cermak directs 11-year-old Denisha Harrison as she steers on T-Time, a 33-foot long sloop rig sailboat, on Tuesday in Racine's Harbor during the 9th annual Adventure Sail, a free program sponsored by the YWCA of Racine, the Racine Yacht Club and the National Women's Sailing Association.

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15-year-old Taylor Gardner,
8-year-old Skylur Gardner and
16-year-old Cheynile Johnson
watch a boat pass T-Time on
Lake Michigan on Tuesday.



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Afterschool Program Discovery Leadership®

Discover Leadership® proves that girls can make a difference! Girls and women partner to celebrate their heritage and discover the leaders within themselves. Working together, girls choose a social justice goal and take action to make a real and lasting change in the community.

I want to Know More!

- Information about how I can enroll my Girl(s) in an after school program.
- Volunteer Information
- Information about how to bring a Girls inc program to my school or organization.
- Information on becoming a Girls Inc. member
- I would like to help financially support Girls Inc at the YWCA of Racine's efforts to inspire all girls to be strong, smart, and bold™
- I have a question about: _____

Name: _____

Email address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip Code: _____

Contact Information

Jeanette Brown
Girls Inc. Director
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jbrown@ywcaofracine.org
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Racine, WI 53406

Please Mail Response Cards to...

Girls Inc. at the YWCA of Racine
1540 South Green Bay Rd.
Racine, WI 53406

GIRLS' BILL OF RIGHTS

- *Girls have the right to be themselves, and to resist gender stereotypes*
- *Girls have the right to express themselves with originality and enthusiasm*
- *Girls have the right to take risks, to strive freely, and to take pride in success*
- *Girls have the right to accept and appreciate their bodies*
- *Girls have the right to have confidence in themselves and to be safe in the world*
- *Girls have the right to prepare for interesting work and economic Independence*



girls inc.®

AT THE
YWCA
OF
RACINE



Girls Inc.® is a premier organization in South Eastern Wisconsin that educates and inspires all girls to realize their potential and exercise their rights.

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

What is Girls Incorporated®?

Girls Inc.® is a nonprofit organization serving 880,000 girls today in the United States and Canada. With roots dating back to 1864 and national status since 1984 (as Girls Clubs of America), Girls Inc® has responded to the changing needs of girls and their communities through research-based programs and advocacy that empower girls to reach their full potential and understand, value and assert their rights.

Girls Inc® At The YWCA of Racine

The mission of Girls Inc.® at the YWCA of Racine is to inspire all Racine area girls to become strong, smart, and bold.

- Nearly **60%** of girls served are from families earning less than \$30,000 annually.
- **52%** represent single parent families, mostly headed by women.

Ethnically, girls that have participated in Girls Inc. at the YWCA of Racine, identify themselves as:

- 32%** Latina, **35%** African American, **14%** White, **10%** Multi-ethnic, **9%** Other.

Afterschool Program

GIRLStart®

GIRLStart® is an after-school program designed to increase the literacy skills, self-esteem, and success of first and second grade girls, whose academic performance is below grade level and/or who are experiencing difficult family challenges. GIRLStart is based on Girls Inc.'s commitment to building girls' skills and capabilities for a responsible, confident, and self-sufficient adulthood through programs that focus empowering girls to overcome discrimination, while working to eliminate barriers to equity. GIRLStart participants will receive support in their reach toward grade-level reading through their participation in GIRLStart activities.

Afterschool Program

Discovery Leadership®

Discover Leadership® proves that girls can make a difference! Girls and women partner to celebrate their heritage and discover the leaders within themselves. Working together, girls choose a social justice goal and take action to make a real and lasting change in the community.

Afterschool Program

Economic Literacy®

Girls Inc. Economic Literacy® enhances girls' financial competence and confidence, empowers girls to recognize early on that they can exercise control over their financial future, and promotes within girls a sense of economic justice. Economic literacy—the ability to use basic economic concepts to make decisions about earning, saving, spending, and sharing money—is a skill. As with reading and writing, a working knowledge of basic economic concepts is essential for future success.

Afterschool Program

Media Literacy®

Media Literacy® encourages girls to examine how media messages are constructed, how these messages reflect social values, and how girls' active participation can influence the messages—and the values. The comprehensive after-school program equips young women to think analytically about media messages and ask critical questions. The program also provides opportunities for girls to craft and communicate their own messages, integrating media, technology, and civic engagement to help them build 21st century skills. Through-out the program, girls explore the business side of media, learning about advertising and commercial interests, media and democracy, and career options.

Afterschool Program

Operation SMART®

Operation SMART®, one of Girls Incorporated's hallmark programs, is organized around a philosophy: equity, exploration, empowerment, and fun. Hands-on activities give girls the opportunity to explore, ask questions, and solve problems. In Operation SMART sites across the country, over half a million girls between the ages of 6-18 have started on the path to becoming engineers, auto mechanics, and micro surgeons.