

# *IMPACT REPORT*



2025

**girls  
inc.**

of Westchester County



“

“I'm very thankful for enrolling Zaryah in this program. The staff is amazing – they're dedicated and get to know each girl personally. We're lucky to have so much support for our kids. I hope the program keeps helping our kids grow and succeed.”

”

**Girls Inc. Parent**

# LETTER FROM BOARD CHAIR ANDRENE SMITH



Dear Friends,

This past July, I had the honor of becoming Board Chair of Girls Inc. of Westchester County after three years as Vice Chair and more than a decade of service to organizations dedicated to empowering youth in underfunded communities. My journey, from growing up in Jamaica and the Bronx, where education was my pathway to opportunity, to serving as a corporate and nonprofit leader has given me a deep and personal connection to our mission. I know firsthand what it means for a girl to have people in her corner, believing in her potential when the world seems determined to underestimate her.

This year, Girls Inc. of Westchester County served 446 girls from across the County and 85% of them were girls of color—inspiring them to be a voice and not an echo. Through leadership councils, STEM and financial literacy programs, and college and career readiness initiatives, we saw girls not just participate, but lead, innovate, and inspire. One of my proudest moments was hearing a Girls Leadership Council participant share how our facilitators helped her “find her voice instead of being an echo.” That is the transformation your support makes possible.

We also face headwinds. In an increasingly difficult political and economic climate, where resources for programs like ours are harder to secure, we have had to be more creative, more collaborative, and more relentless. We aim to strengthen partnerships with fellow nonprofits, launch new funding strategies, and plan bold new engagement efforts. This will include high-profile events and deeper connections with local leaders, which will help us expand our reach so we can serve more girls, and ultimately provide them with the resources they deserve.

As Board Chair, my vision is clear: expand our reach, diversify our funding, and build partnerships that ensure our programs are here for the next generation of girls. That means bringing in committed new board members, leveraging AI-powered tools to connect with donors, and working closely with community partners to make our impact even greater.

Our girls are growing up in a world that challenges them daily. The question is: will we, the adults in their corner, rise to meet that challenge? I invite you, whether you are a long-time friend of Girls Inc. or someone just learning about our work, to join us. Recommit your support, come to our events, share your expertise, and invest in the next generation of leaders. I am in this position because at key moments in my life, someone believed in me, challenged me, and helped me see the strength I didn't know I had. You can serve a similar role in helping our girls step forward to lead. Together, we can ensure that every girl in Westchester grows up knowing her worth, her power, and her limitless potential.

With gratitude and determination,

*Andrene Smith*

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DR. SHARLISE SMITH-RODRIGUEZ

Dear Community Members, Partners, and Families,

At Girls Inc. of Westchester, we believe in the limitless potential of every girl. Over the past

year, that belief has been reflected in the powerful stories of leadership and growth shared by the girls we serve and the families that felt supported—and made possible through the unwavering support of our members in our community.

This Impact Report is more than a summary of numbers and programs; it is a celebration of the collaborative strength that drives our mission to inspire all girls to be Strong, Smart, and Bold. We have created spaces where girls feel seen, supported, and empowered to grow into the leaders of tomorrow. Whether through caring mentorship, school-partnered programming, A Day In Her Heels experiences, or advocacy initiatives, the outcomes we have achieved are rooted in community.

As you read through the accomplishments of the past year, we invite you to reflect on the lives you have helped shape. The impact is real and the momentum is growing.

With gratitude and hope,

Sincerely,

*Sharlise Smith-Rodriguez*



“

Girls Inc. has taught me so many skills and lessons. It's shown me how to be more independent, how to advocate for myself, and how to communicate effectively with others around me. I've learned the importance of taking hold of my responsibilities, been given opportunities to explore different career paths, and gained important skills in navigating my relationships with others. Most importantly, Girls Inc. has empowered me to be Strong, Smart, and Bold. I am grateful to have been a part of Girls Inc. I now have the tools and confidence to make my own impact as I continue to navigate the world as a young adult.

”

**Sienna, Graduating Senior**

“

“I joined Girls Inc. when I was in the 8th grade, virtually of course. But I loved the sessions and everything I was learning. I made so many new connections and learned so much. When I started meeting with them in person, I loved it even more. I learned so many lessons that have contributed to who I am today, a woman who is strong, smart and bold. Within our meetings, I bonded with the girls, looked forward to learning more and more, and set goals for myself on how I can be my best self and be more comfortable in my own skin.”

”

**Madison, Graduating Senior**



# MISSION/VISION

**OUR MISSION** is Inspiring all girls to be strong, smart, and bold.

**OUR VISION** is to empower all girls in our program to be strong, smart, and bold by cultivating a thriving and active community with access to programs. Girls Inc. of Westchester County pursues this vision by creating a safe, secure, and empowering environment where girls can explore their individuality, build lasting friendships, and develop themselves and their skills. Our programs help all girls achieve their full potential while building their confidence and self-esteem so they can be healthy, educated, and independent. Together with our girls, we will advocate for our girls, their communities, and our Girls Inc. family. Our focus is predominantly on girls in underserved communities but we strive to operate in all communities.

We promote a sustainable, thriving community that continually adapts to the changing needs of the girls in the communities we serve.





“

“She is motivated to socialize more and leave behind her shyness. Because of this program, I know she can become a leader.”

**Girls Inc. Parent**

“

“I like that my daughter has the opportunities to meet other girls along with staff that help her feel comfortable and confident in herself.”

**Girls Inc. Parent**





## High Impact Programming

9

School Partner Programs

26

Community Partners

22

Educational Enrichment Trips

446

Girls served

31%

Identify as Black

45%

Identify as Hispanic/Latina



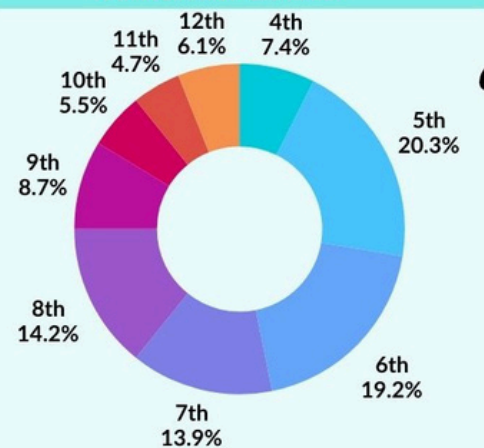
MORE INFO

- Leadership and Community Action
- Goal Setting
- Economic & Financial Literacy
- 21st Century Skill Building
- Academic Enrichment
- STEAM
- College and Career Readiness
- Critical Thinking Programming

### LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

- Girls Leadership Council
- Youth Leadership Summit

### PARTICIPANT GRADES

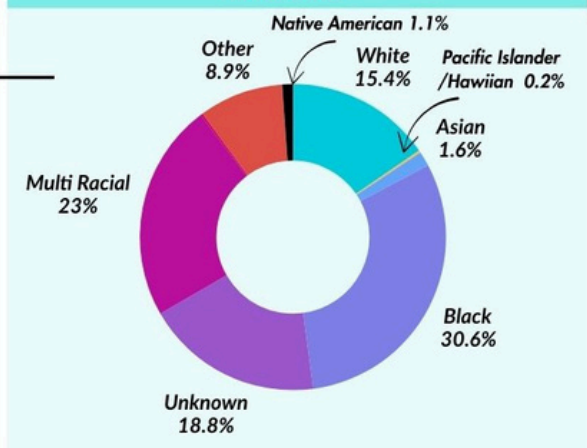


## Girl Testimonials

“I learned so many lessons that have contributed to who I am today, a woman who is strong, smart and bold. Within our meetings I bonded with the girls, looked forward to learning more and more, and set goals for myself on how I can be my best self and be more comfortable in my own skin” - Madison

“Girls Inc. has taught me so many skills and lessons. It's shown me how to be more independent, how to advocate for myself, and how to communicate effectively with others around me” - Sienna

### ETHNICITY





# EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## Building Strong, Smart, & Bold Futures

We believe education is the key that opens doors to opportunity. Our educational development programs give girls the tools, knowledge, and support they need to succeed in school, prepare for higher education, and envision meaningful career paths. Through homework help, academic enrichment, college readiness workshops, and hands-on learning opportunities, girls strengthen their skills in critical subjects while also developing the confidence to advocate for themselves in the classroom and beyond. Just as importantly, our programs expose participants to new ideas, industries, and professional pathways—broadening their sense of what is possible for their futures.

### The Impact Is Clear:

**Academic Achievement** – Girls gain the confidence and skills to improve performance in school and prepare for higher education.

**Critical Thinking & Problem-Solving** – Our curriculum emphasizes life skills and decision-making, ensuring that girls leave with tools they can use in all areas of life.

**Representation & Mentorship** – Meeting women leaders, educators, and professionals helps girls see themselves reflected in positions of influence and possibility.

**Confidence in the Classroom & Beyond** – By building both knowledge and self-esteem, participants are equipped not only to achieve academically but also to lead in their communities.

For many girls in our programs, educational development is more than just learning—it’s about unlocking potential. With support, mentorship, and exposure to opportunities, they are able to imagine bold futures and take steps toward making them a reality.

9 school partners programs

446 girls served

9,159 attendance hours of programming

# PwC

# CIBC



## A DAY IN HER HEELS “

### Opening Doors - Expanding Futures

Our Day in Her Heels program provides girls with transformative opportunities to step into the professional world and envision themselves as future leaders. Through visits to leading corporations across Westchester and New York City, participants gain exposure to a wide range of career paths they may never have considered—or even known existed.

#### **The Impact Is Powerful:**

**Career Exploration** – Girls meet professionals in diverse fields, expanding their understanding of the many roles and opportunities that exist within an organization, from entry - level to the executive suite.

**Mentorship & Connection** – By engaging with women at all levels of the companies we visit, participants see firsthand how career journeys unfold, and they build relationships with potential role models and mentors.

**Representation & Inspiration** – Meeting women in leadership positions shows girls what is possible for them, while connecting with women in early- and mid-career roles makes success feel both tangible and attainable.

**Building Confidence** – Exposure to professional environments, networking experiences, and open conversations with accomplished women empower girls to picture themselves thriving in these spaces.

For many participants, Day in Her Heels program is their first time walking into a corporate setting. By the end of the program, they leave not only with greater awareness of career possibilities, but also with the confidence to imagine themselves there - and the motivation to pursue their own bold futures.

“I learned that it’s okay if I want to change my career, it’s okay to not have everything figured out. But to also stand firm in my passions and what I’m interested in.”

Girls Inc. Participant”



# MENTORING & SUPPORT

## Meeting Girls Where They Are

Every girl is met with care, respect, and belief in her potential. We know that no two girls' journeys are the same, which is why our programs are designed to be age-appropriate, relevant, and responsive to their lived experiences.

From middle school through high school, our professional staff and trained mentors walk alongside girls, helping them navigate challenges, celebrate successes, and plan for the future. Whether it's offering academic support, providing a safe space to talk about personal challenges, or introducing them to role models and new opportunities, our commitment is to support the whole girl—mind, body, and spirit.

### **The Strength Of Our Approach Comes From:**

**Age-Appropriate Programming** – Ensuring that the tools, resources, and conversations reflect what girls need at their stage of development.

**Mentorship & Guidance** – Trusted adults who serve not just as teachers, but as listeners, advocates, and role models.

**Holistic Support** – Addressing academic growth, emotional well-being, physical fitness, health, financial literacy, self-esteem, and leadership development in an integrated way.

**Safe, Inclusive Spaces** – Creating environments where girls feel seen, heard, and encouraged to express themselves fully.

Through mentoring and consistent support, girls learn that they are not alone. They are part of a strong community that believes in their ability to succeed and that commitment makes all the difference in helping them grow up strong, smart, and bold.

95%

report activities help them feel Strong, Smart, & Bold

100%

created agreements that guided behavior

100%

families encouraged to be active participants in girl's journey



# GIRLS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

## Developing the Next Generation of Leaders

The Girls Leadership Council (GLC) is where girls put their voices into action. This flagship program is designed to cultivate critical thinking, confidence, advocacy, public speaking, and leadership skills—the tools every young woman needs to step into her power and create change in her community.

Through hands-on projects, workshops, and mentorship, girls in the GLC learn how to analyze issues that matter to them, articulate their perspectives, and advocate for themselves and others. They practice public speaking in real-world settings, meet with community leaders, and take on leadership roles that prepare them for success in school, careers, and civic life.

### **The Council Experience Ensures That:**

**Girls Build Confidence** in their ideas and their ability to lead.

**Strengthen Critical Thinking And Decision-Making Skills** - helping them tackle challenges with clarity.

**Learn The Art of Advocacy** - raising their voices on issues that directly impact girls and women.

**Develop Public Speaking Abilities** - gaining the poise and presence to command a room.

**Step Into Leadership Roles** - modeling what it means to be strong, smart, and bold for their peers.

The Girls Leadership Council is more than a program, it's a pipeline for future leaders. By investing in these girls today, we are preparing the next generation of changemakers who will influence workplaces, communities, and the world.

*The Girls Leadership Council hosts the yearly Girls Leadership Summit, an event open to girls across the county. The 2025 theme was Fashion Sustainability. Attendees learned about the issue, its effects on the planet and ways that they can make a difference in their personal lives and community through interactive workshops.*



# BREAK PROGRAMMING

## Enriching Spaces Beyond the Classroom

For many families, school breaks can be a stressful time—when structured learning pauses but the need for safe, supportive environments does not. Our Break Programming fills this critical gap by ensuring that girls have a place to learn, explore, and grow during Winter Break, Spring Break, Summer Programs, and educational program trips.

These programs combine safety, enrichment, and opportunity. Girls spend their time engaging in activities that broaden their horizons—whether through hands-on STEM projects, exposure to the arts, career exploration trips, or workshops that spark new interests. With the guidance of caring staff and mentors, they continue building confidence, social skills, and curiosity outside of the traditional classroom setting.

### The Importance Is Clear:

**Safe Spaces** – Families can trust that their loved ones are in supportive, supervised environments while schools are closed.

**Continuous Learning** – Enrichment programs keep girls academically engaged, helping prevent learning loss and keeping curiosity alive year-round.

**Exposure & Exploration** – Field trips and experiential learning introduce girls to new ideas, careers, and opportunities they may not otherwise encounter.

**Confidence & Community** – Girls deepen friendships, practice teamwork, and strengthen their self-esteem in an empowering setting.

Our Break Programming isn't just about filling time—it's about filling lives with possibility. We ensure that every girl has the chance to explore her interests, discover new passions, and continue her journey toward becoming strong, smart, and bold.

160 girls served

160 rated programs a 4/5 out of 5

88.5% are interested in joining more Girls Inc. programs



# OUR EVENTS

*Our events provide girls with enriching experiences that spark curiosity, confidence, and connection. Each gathering, whether a workshop, trip, or celebration, is thoughtfully designed to inspire learning, leadership, and a lasting sense of belonging. Through engaging and purposeful experiences, we open doors to new opportunities, helping girls explore their interests, discover their strengths, and envision bold futures. By bringing girls together in supportive, empowering environments, our events not only broaden their horizons but also remind them that they are part of a community that believes in their potential to grow up strong, smart, and bold.*

## **GIRLS LEADERSHIP SUMMIT**

The Girls Leadership Summit brings together girls from across Westchester for a day of empowerment, skill-building, and connection with inspiring women leaders. It equips participants with tools in confidence, advocacy, and leadership while fostering a powerful community of support.

## **TEENCON**

TeenCon offers girls the unique opportunity to stay overnight on a college campus, giving them a first-hand look at college life while engaging directly with administrators and student leaders. Through team-building, confidence-building activities, and shared experiences, girls leave empowered to envision themselves thriving in higher education and beyond.

## **ENRICHMENT TRIPS**

Our Enrichment Trips expose girls to new ideas, cultures, and career possibilities through hands-on experiences that broaden their horizons. These opportunities spark curiosity, build confidence, and help girls imagine bold futures beyond the classroom..

## **COLLEGE SHOWER**

The College Shower is a celebration as girls prepare to begin their higher education journeys, surrounding them with encouragement and practical support. From dorm essentials to words of wisdom, the event ensures they feel equipped, celebrated, and ready to succeed.

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# LEADERSHIP

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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## DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

**Monica Spears**

## DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS

**Krista Creacy**



# THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

Anne M. Dorner Middle School  
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Central Westchester

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Sony Music Entertainment  
St. Faith's House Foundation  
Stand Out For Good/Altar'D State  
State of New York  
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The Joelson Foundation  
The Robert & Lois Geller Foundation  
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UNI-T Fashion, LLC  
Volunteer Service Bureau (Volunteer NY)  
We Forgive To Live  
Westchester Black Women's Political Caucus  
Westchester County Board of Legislators  
Westchester School Medical & Dental Assistants  
Whippoorwill Club Inc.  
White Plains Hospital



## **Audriana, Girls Inc. Girl**

“

Girls Inc. has helped me grow into someone who is truly strong, smart, and bold. Through its programs, I gained confidence in my leadership skills, found my voice, and felt empowered to aim high—whether in school, service, or my future career. It’s shaped how I see myself and what I believe I can achieve.

”

**girls  
inc.**

of Westchester County

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**TO INVEST WITH US CONTACT:**

**Dr. Sharlise Smith-Rodriguez**

**Executive Director**

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**We thank you for your  
continued support.**

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