

GRANTMAKING: 2010 GROW STRONG GIRLS THROUGH LEADERSHIP GRANTS

a partnership between The Women's Fund and Kiki Magazine

In 2005 The Women's Fund (TWF) issued a call to action to **"grow strong girls"** in response to its PULSE¹ study on the status of women and girls in Greater Cincinnati. The study had revealed alarming disparities for girls in areas of health, education and leadership. As a follow-up, TWF conducted an assessment² of leadership development opportunities to inventory existing leadership programs for girls and women and reveal needs and gaps. While a few strong programs existed for girls, girls could clearly benefit by an increase in the number and diversity of opportunities.

A learning from the PULSE study and the review of existing programs was that leadership is not a spectator sport and that leadership efficacy must begin early in life. TWF partnered with Kiki Magazine³ in 2010 to inspire educators within Greater Cincinnati and across the country, to propose creative strategies for teaching middle school girls about leadership and provide them with the tools enabling them to succeed. Organizations that submitted applications were encouraged to identify funding partners within their communities to supplement and sustain the program beyond the grant period. Successful applicants agreed to disseminate their strategies and outcomes in order to raise awareness of the need for such programs, enable other educators to adapt programs to their school environments and to catalyze further innovation.

The programs funded through these grants inspired the girls to grow in many ways. Below are several excerpts from an activity in the WISE WOMEN program in which the girls were asked to write a poetic response to the prompt "Just because I am..."

From "Just Because I Am" poems written by girls in WISE WOMEN

"Just because I'm smart doesn't make me a nerd."

"Just because I wear black doesn't make me Goth."

"Just because I am Mexican doesn't mean that I can't speak or understand English."

"Just because I am not popular doesn't mean I'm not cool."

"Just because I dress different doesn't mean I'm a poser / Doesn't mean I'm a tomboy."

"Just because I am smart doesn't mean I don't have stupid moments."

"Just because I am ugly in your eyes, it doesn't mean that I am in somebody else's."

"Just because I have blonde hair doesn't mean I'm dumb."

¹PULSE: The Status of Women & Girls in Greater Cincinnati;

<http://www.gcfdn.org/DefaultPermissions/KnowledgeCenter/tabid/232/smId/920/ArticleID/87/reftab/247/Default.aspx>

² PULSE: Developing Girls' & Women's Leadership;

<http://www.gcfdn.org/DefaultPermissions/KnowledgeCenter/tabid/232/smId/920/ArticleID/89/reftab/247/Default.aspx>

³ <http://www.kikimag.com>

FUNDED PROGRAMS

In total, 9 proposals were awarded funding. TWF funded the Greater Cincinnati projects; Kiki Magazine funded the projects in other regions of the country.

Greater Cincinnati Programs

GIRLS UNITED AS ONE

Holmes Alternative School in Covington, KY / \$1,500

Girls who had struggled in a traditional school setting, some of whom were in the juvenile justice system, were brought together with teachers and parents to plan their own curricula around their personal health, safety in relationships and team building. They were also introduced to their cultural heritage.

LEADING LADIES

Roll Hill School in Cincinnati, OH / \$1,055

Primarily focused on expanding the "world view" of inner city girls, participants age 11-14 visited places outside their neighborhood, including a community garden, a bank, an art museum, a restaurant, and a job readiness training site for hands-on experience in developing a garden, budgeting and balancing checking and saving accounts, creating art, healthy eating and dining etiquette, conflict resolution, and completing a job application.

LIONS IN WAITING: LEARNING TO LEAD

Ursuline Academy in Cincinnati, OH / \$1,500

During a 2-week summer day camp, diverse inner city girls in grades 5-8 interacted with student "buddies" and educators from Ursuline Academy to experience the academic, social and cultural challenges of high school. The program included academic sessions, physical activities and games, arts projects and community service.

WISE WOMEN LEADERSHIP SERIES

Norwood Middle School in Norwood, OH / \$1,485

Girls in grades 7 and 8 met with and explored the careers of four successful women from their own community: an author and business owner, a professional roller derby athlete, a councilwoman and former health commissioner, and a police woman and star of the Police Women of Cincinnati on TLC network.

Grants Outside Greater Cincinnati

BECOMING A BETTER AMERICAN

James Workman Middle School in Cathedral City, CA / \$1,420

Middle school girls in grades 6-8 who were the primary English speakers for their families came together to determine social issues they might explore such as workplace equity, immigration and sexual harassment. They chose two issues that they, as young women, had themselves experienced – bullying at school and teacher evaluations by students. Their social activism skills were developed as they learned about the issues by accessing, reviewing and discussing the relative merits of several available resources. As a result, the girls recommended the use of the teacher evaluation form published by the Character Education Partnership and developed a "Bullyproof" website and a video about

bullying using the cover song "loser" from Glee.

GIRLS LEADERSHIP CLUB - PROJECT BREAKTHROUGH

Mickey Mantle School in New York City, NY / \$1,500

This self-contained, special education schools serves students with severe social and emotional disabilities. The program relied on documentary video as a learning tool. It emphasized leadership development, conflict resolution, and problem solving skill training, while encouraging girls to appreciate the similarities and differences of diverse cultures by exposing them to global girls' and women's issues. Girls developed PSAs and documentaries on conflict resolution, with an emphasis on the theme of "mean girls' and "girls bullying other girls".

MENTORING FUTURE WOMEN OF APPALACHIA

Trimble Middle School in Glouster, OH / \$1,500

This mentoring program for teen girls was established In partnership with Future Women of Appalachia, a female student organization at Ohio University. The program connected girls with opportunities to learn more about each other and themselves at an overnight retreat in a state park, develop skills in teamwork and leadership, and to achieve positive relationships with adult mentors. The goal is to continue the mentorship beyond the program time frame.

RESILIENT GIRLS-SUCCESSFUL WOMEN

PHILLIPS Programs for Children & Families in Annandale, VA / \$1,500

PHILLIPS serves the needs of individuals with emotional and behavioral problems and their families throughout Greater Washington. The weekly program encouraged girls in grades 6-8 to develop the social competence to rebound from adversity stronger and smarter. Nan Richardson's book Resiliency in Action formed the foundation of the curriculum, which emphasized becoming self-aware, practicing empathy, gaining decision-making and problem-solving skills and learning responsibility.

U GO GIRL!

Woonsocket Middle School in Woonsocket, RI / \$1,480

More than 60 girls in grades 6-8 plus their parents were able to spend 2 hours per week for 8 weeks learning about prominent women in society, building self-esteem and positive character traits, finding their voices, developing interpersonal communication skills and exploring career opportunities. In addition, each girl interviewed a senior citizen about what it was like when she was young and then shared her story with the girls in the program.

***A special thank you to Jamie Bryant, founder of Kiki Magazine,
for her support of and partnership in this project!
We also thank the generous support of Women's Fund donors
who made the Greater Cincinnati girls leadership grants possible.***

*For more information about these grants or the programs funded,
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