



2013 Annual Report

Girls Incorporated® of the Greater Capital Region

962 Albany St., Schenectady 301 Washington Ave., Albany
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Inspiring ALL girls to be strong, smart, and bold!sm

**girls
inc.®**



GE Celebrates with

Girls Incorporated of the Greater Capital Region

THANK YOU FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE



imagination at work

More girls are coming to Girls Inc.!

In the Fall of 2013, our daily attendance increased 46% in both our Schenectady and Albany sites.

To determine a concrete explanation for the significant jump in participation, a brief survey was given to parents and guardians during pick-ups and drop-offs and results are certainly worth noting.

Our after-school programming is offered for FREE and thus, is very attractive to parents and guardians. But being cost-free was not the reason that was most often cited for the influx in attendance. More parents and guardians are regularly bringing their daughters to Girls Inc. today because of the **quality of programming, safety, and the girls-only environment.**

By May 20, the agency was fully staffed with the addition of a Director of Program Development and Partnerships, a Director of Development, and a Development Coordinator, all of which are full-time positions. Use of social media to publicize events and activities increased sharply among the entire agency staff, and promotion of Girls Inc. quickly spread by word of mouth and in print and broadcast media.

With afterschool programming, summer camp, and all outreach activities, a total of 16,704 girls were served by Girls Inc. of the Greater Capital Region in 2013.



Schenectady's community playground is dedicated to local female veterans

After a two-part spring clean-up, the Schenectady site's community playground was dedicated to local female veterans on June 24, the first day of the Summer Fun camp program.



The clean-up and dedication were made possible with donations and volunteers from corporate partners Bank of America, BlueShield of Northeastern New York, Schenectady's The Home Depot, PepsiCo, Price Chopper, and Stewart's Shops. Members of Zeta Phi Beta sorority and YouthBuild/Americorps at Northeast Parent & Child Society also donated time and talents.

Noney Grier of the Department of Veterans Affairs spoke, as did Congressman Paul Tonko and Schenectady County Assemblymember Angelo Santabarbara. Director of Schenectady County Veterans Service Agency William Frank received the dedication on behalf of local women veterans. Representatives from Schenectady County Chamber assisted with the ribbon cutting and officiated the playground's "reopening." Many Girls Inc. members and their families participated in the festivities.

Back row left to right – Noney Grier, William Frank, Schenectady County Legislature Vice Chair Karen Johnson, Congressman Paul Tonko, Assemblymembers Jim Tedisco and Angelo Santabarbara, Schenectady Council members Leesa Perazzo and Marion Porterfield. In front row with current Girls Inc. members is Ashley Jeffrey, Girls Inc. of the Greater Capital Region Executive Director.



Agency marches in Schenectady to recognize International Day of the Girl

On Friday, October 11, agency members and staff marched with more than 50 people in downtown Schenectady to observe the United Nations' International Day of the Girl. The event helps to raise awareness of girls' education rights and gender stereotypes that still exist today in the U.S. and around the world.

Right behind our march leader, New York State Assemblymember Angelo Santabarbara, were about 15 Girls Inc. members along with New York State Senator Cecilia Tkaczyk.

Also participating were individuals from local chapters of Working Group on Girls and Girl Scouts, as well as representatives of Union College Kenney Community Center and Women's Union, The Sage Colleges, and Schenectady County Human Rights Commission.

The march began at the corner of State and Clinton Streets downtown and proceeded to Jay Street and on to City Hall where Mayor Gary McCarthy spoke, as did Senator Tkaczyk and Assemblyman Santabarbara.



Above: At the podium inside Schenectady City Hall, Naionna speaks in favor of education equality for girls around the world as well as here in the U.S. in observance of the United Nations' International Day of the Girl March on October 11, 2013. Behind her is Schenectady Mayor Gary McCarthy and to her immediate left is Girls Inc. of the Greater Capital Region Executive Director Ashley Jeffrey. Top: (Times Union photo) Local Girls Inc. members lead about 50 marchers down Jay Street in downtown Schenectady to City Hall. New York State Senator Cecilia Tkaczyk is seen here marching with them.

A letter from the office of Congressman Paul Tonko was read aloud. Ashley Jeffrey, Executive Director of Girls Inc. of the Greater Capital Region, addressed the march's purpose and recognized the many groups and organizations that participated.

Local issues get agency attention at first-ever event

In addition to inspiring ALL girls to be strong, smart, and bold, Girls Inc. of the Greater Capital Region takes notice of local issues affecting our members and girls everywhere. With the increase in bullying incidents occurring across the U.S. and in schools right here in the Capital Region, some of which are attended by our girls, the agency took an assertive step and put a spotlight on bullying at the local level.



On November 7 in Albany, the agency held its first-ever Strong, Smart, and Bold Breakfast and introduced keynote speaker Robyn M. King (pictured at top left), chosen as our agency's anti-bullying Ambassador. Ms. King was thrilled to accept our invitation to represent Girls Inc. while bringing attention to this topic of focus over the coming year through presentations to our members and to adults throughout the Capital Region.



A licensed mental health counselor at Schenectady County Community College, Ms. King was bullied as a child and wrote about the lasting psychosocial effects of bullying in her book, **“Eating Lunch in the Bathroom: My Story.”** She spoke about what she experienced in middle school, and fielded numerous questions from the audience about recognizing

bullying and how to combat those behaviors at school and even in the workplace. Attendance at this new mission-focused fundraising event was more than 100, including Mark Streb, representative for New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo; New York State Senator Kathy Marchione, Assemblymembers John McDonald and Angelo Santabarbara, Schenectady Council member Marion Porterfield, and Albany County Executive Dan McCoy. Emcee

January Keaton, News10 ABC's weekend anchor, gave alarming statistics she discovered while doing research for her series on cyber-bullying, which happens online.

The agency received a significant amount of positive feedback from this event. A panel discussion is planned for February 2014 and will take a deeper look at bullying.

Two anti-bullying afterschool programs, Little Sister Listen and Bullies Among Us, are offered here. Our own "Girls Linc." program asks girls, parents, and guardians to write on a 12" strip of red paper their recent act of kindness, or how they helped stop or prevent a bullying activity. The paper strips are joined like chain links and placed visibly in the building as a symbol of our strength when we stand together against bullying.

September's annual Girls In Action event took on a "talk show" format this year with Executive Director Ashley Jeffrey as the interviewer of a panel of 6 current Girls Inc. members and alumnae. Held September 26 at the Century House in Latham, more than 150 guests, many of them brand-new to our mission, listened to each panelist's account of her personal Girls Inc. experience.

Before the event began, each was interviewed individually to reflect in greater depth on how their lives have been positively impacted by Girls Inc. The interviews are being included in a new promotional video for the agency which will be unveiled at the 2014 Dinner and Auction.



Left: Executive Director Ashley Jeffrey collectively asks six Girls Inc. alumnae and current members to reflect on their experience at Girls Inc. for the 2013 Girls In Action event.

L to R – Alumnae Jamaica Miles, Lisa Malone, Lisa Leary; current Girls Inc. member Ally Curtis, alumna Cheryl Collier, and current member Ha'Lena Acquasanta.

Executive Director makes the cover of November HERLIFE magazine



About a year after joining Girls Inc. as Executive Director, Ashley Jeffrey was the cover story of the November 2013 issue of HERLIFE magazine of New York, published in Saratoga Springs.

Judy Goppert wrote that Ashley is inspiring and passionate about her work and enjoys all the positive messaging on the walls inside the Schenectady and Albany sites. She is the biggest cheerleader for all Girls Inc. members.

About 100 miles north of New York City is Marlboro, where Ashley grew up. Although her parents divorced when she was 8, she says they always told her and her brother they could achieve anything they put their minds to. She graduated in the top ten of her high school class, and in 2004, graduated magna cum laude from Siena College

with a Bachelor's degree in sociology and minors in biology and in health care studies.

At the age of 21, her cancer diagnosis was a shock and required surgery, but radiation and chemotherapy were not necessary. This year Ashley celebrated ten years of being cancer-free: her "cancerversary," she proudly declares, and always with a huge smile!

While Girls Inc. works to change the lives of its members, Ashley says the organization certainly has changed her. As challenging as some days may be, she says "when you hear the sounds of young girls giggling and laughing, it makes you forget about everything else."

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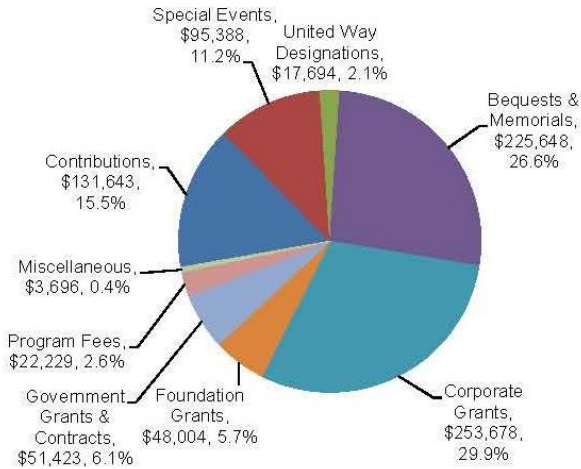
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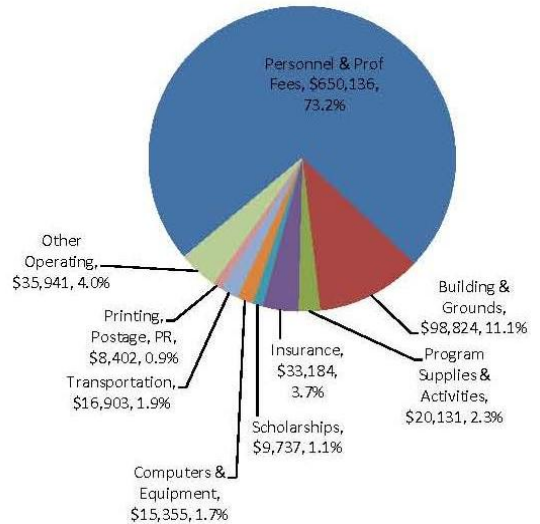
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"I thought GE Tech Day was really fun! I want to do it again!"

-Devynn, age 11

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When tasked with creating their own final project, Oneonta High School seniors Erin Bischoff (left) and Rachel Nader, both 18, chose a physical challenge and for a cause. They climbed Mt. Marcy, the Adirondacks' highest peak and at 5,344 feet of elevation, it's New York State's highest point. They called their project **Girls Climbing High**, and made our agency the sole recipient of the nearly \$2,200 they collected in pledges.



Along with three experienced climbers, the girls completed their project on Memorial Day weekend. Miserably cold and rainy at ground level, the icy conditions on the mountain challenged both their physical and mental endurance. Shining examples of "Strong, Smart, and Bold," the girls created a video of their adventure and played it at their reception at the Albany site, with Girls Inc. members posing numerous questions. Both girls were headed to SUNY as freshmen – Rachel to Binghamton University and Erin to Fredonia. See their video here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBwi3F6fmec>.



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