

How can it be in 2013?

Despite all the progress:

Women constitute nearly half of the Canadian full-time workforce but earn 82 cents for every dollar earned by their male counterparts. The gap is greater for women of colour, women with disabilities, and Aboriginal women.

Women 65 and older, at retirement age, are twice as likely as men to live in poverty.

For the one in 10 children and one in four First Nations children who live in poverty in Canada, what would their worlds be like if their moms were able to earn more money?

And, on the other side, women make up less than 15% of corporate boards at Financial Post 500 companies. They are less than 25% of the Canadian Parliament.

What policies and practices would change if women held positions of power in proportion to their numbers?

Young girls continue to face serious obstacles. Over 15,600 girls 19 and younger in Canada gave birth in 2011.

Girls as young as five years old are worried about being overweight. Women in movies are much more likely than men to show exposed skin, be dressed provocatively, and have an “unrealistic body ideal.” And, most tragic of all, there were nearly 27,000 girls between the ages of 12 and 17 who were violently victimized in Canada in 2011 — almost twice as high as the rate for adult women (aged 18 and older).”

Our society is sending a clear message that affects girls' education, aspirations, and leadership.

But it doesn't have to be this way.

Girls Inc. Leads with Solutions

At Girls Inc. we have a vision of a world where every girl values her whole self and her inherent strengths, has opportunities to develop her potential, breaks past serious obstacles, and leads a healthy, educated, and successful life.

These girls then grow up to become accomplished women, role models, and leaders: creating positive change and breaking the cycle of limitations for their families, communities, institutions, and all of us.

This is what we do for Girls Inc. girl.

Our mission is to inspire all girls to be strong, smart, and bold.

We believe deeply in the fundamental rights and abilities of girls and enact these values in our direct service work and in public policy efforts.

At Girls Inc. our out of school time, hands on programs and horizon-expanding experiences, delivered by professionals in a supportive, all-girl setting, equip girls to set goals, take on new challenges, and achieve their goals.

Girls discover interests and abilities they never knew possible, make the changes needed to complete each grade on time and well, and model healthy decision making with peers.

From rock climbing to robotics, if they falter, girls build self-reliance as they are encouraged to keep going. Quality mentoring relationships and peers provide supportive positive reinforcement in the face of personal pressures.

Girls take on STEM as areas that are “for girls,” while learning that women are capable of being successful in higher paying fields. Girls build practical money management skills and confidence with concepts from savings accounts to entrepreneurship.

Girls have opportunities for fun physical activity and learn strategies around positive body image, nutrition, and avoiding violence, teen pregnancy, and substance abuse.

And, teens are guided through the college preparation, application, and financial aid process. They can become Girls Inc. National Scholars through our girls-only scholarship program, the largest of its kind.

Girls like Tessa, who grew up close to her single mom, who often struggled to pay their bills. In her neighborhood, she saw other youth becoming teen moms, victims of violence or getting involved with drugs. At school, she endured constant comments about her weight and body as she walked the hallways. But at Girls Inc. she had supportive friends and women mentors who helped her cope with these stresses, make healthy choices, and grow her confidence and resilience. She also got internships that exposed her to the workplace and college and career guidance to plan and stay on track to graduate on time. Today, Tessa is a Girls Inc. scholarship recipient getting ready to graduate high school and study pre-med in university.

Our aspiration is for girls to not only graduate from high school, without getting in trouble, but be prepared to begin post secondary education and complete their degrees.

More than 70% of girls we serve live in families earning \$30,000 or less a year. More than two-thirds identify as a visible minority. Many are underestimated, their promise overlooked.

But clearly can and do develop the positive relationships, grit, determination, and work ethic to awaken their potential and succeed.

The lasting difference we make for and with girls sets us apart. There is no other national organization that does what we do for girls with the same level of intensity, consistency, and accountability.

Last year we served 136,000 girls, ages 6 to 18, through a network of 90 affiliates in the U.S. and Canada. 81% of our \$69M budget went directly to programming.

Invest in Growth

Together, we can increase the number of girls who have the opportunities to develop their special strengths, to break past barriers and achieve their full potential and help others, as they were helped, along the way.

Imagine a world in which many more girls grow up Strong, Smart, and Bold.

These young women are the influencers, role models, for their sisters, brothers, parents, other family and friends, and the next generation. They become leaders, positive contributors to their communities, institutions, and the larger society.

This is what your commitment of time, talent, and treasure can and will do for the enduring benefit of us all.

Please join us.
