



**girls  
inc.**<sup>®</sup>  
of the Central Coast



*Annual Report*

**OUR IMPACT  
in 2020-2021**

**INSPIRING ALL GIRLS to be STRONG, SMART, and BOLD**

# STRONG, SMART, and BOLD

## Who We Are

Girls Inc. of the Central Coast inspires all girls to be strong, smart and bold, to respect themselves and the world around them. Our commitment is to ensure that participating girls and young women are active partners in program design and service delivery. Our vision is to create a community of girls and women who have the strength and experience to become leaders and agents of change. Our role is to cultivate and grow those qualities. We offer girls the right tools and support to succeed, including trained professionals who mentor and guide them in a safe, girls-only environment, peer leaders who share their knowledge, drive, and aspirations, and research-based programming. At Girls Inc., girls learn to set and achieve goals, boldly confront challenges, resist peer pressure, see college as attainable, and explore exciting career paths, including non-traditional fields such as science, math, technology and engineering. Informed by the experiences of girls and their families, and local affiliates like ours, national Girls Inc. works with policymakers to advocate on key legislation and initiatives.



[www.girlsinccc.org](http://www.girlsinccc.org)



## COMMUNITY

“ The program helped me become aware of the power I have to change someone’s future simply by sharing my story. Words have power and we need to use them to improve the lives of those around us.”

Catalina Perez, 18  
North Monterey County High School  
Aspires to be in Public Health

# EFFECTIVELY PIVOTED AND DELIVERED

## Our Year in Review

This year has been one of new insights, significant adjustments, skill building, and organizational improvements for Girls Inc. of the Central Coast. Despite the disruption of the COVID pandemic and its devastating impact on our communities, we are continuing to bring our innovative, youth-led programming to the girls in Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties.

We learned to effectively handle a totally unexpected situation that directly impacted our ability to deliver programs. We were able to pivot our approach to virtual platforms so that we were able to deliver programs to elementary, middle and high school girls. We have developed the means to recruit without being on site, train girls to expand their skills, and work with our staff to improve our programming. We have clearly improved our capacity to deliver programs in an alternative format that made it possible to reach girls that we would ordinarily serve at school sites. Because of the flexibility of the online platform, we were also able to expand our programming to girls outside our regular geographic footprint. We now have the confidence of knowing we can face a crisis and take appropriate steps to manage and grow from the experience.

It is important to note that because of the limitations of offering programs and recruiting girls using Zoom, the number of girls we served in this program year was lower than normal.

We are pleased to share with you our progress since the start of the new fiscal year in July. Your support and generosity made it possible for us to help girls excel and grow.



“ Girls Inc. has provided me with an engaged and supportive community of girls. It has helped me improve my communication and leadership skills.”

Brooke Toomey, 17  
Salinas High School  
Aspires to be a Film Director

# HELPING GIRLS EXCEL AND GROW

- From July 2020 to June 2021, **we served 677 girls**, ages 8 to 18
- Worked with girls from 31 school sites in 11 cities: Salinas, King City, Castroville, Seaside, Monterey, Soledad, Greenfield, Seaside, Hollister, Watsonville, and Aptos
- In July 2020, **33 elementary school girls** participated in a two-week virtual camp, developed knowledge and skills in media literacy, learned about building a positive body image, and engaged in nontraditional activities and adventures, including hands-on science activities.
- We **hired and trained 27 high school girls** as Youth Leaders to facilitate the high school, middle school and summer programs.
- **195 girls**, participated in a yearlong leadership/mentoring program.
- **80 8th grade girls** participated in a series of workshops on communication, teen health, healthy relationships, and avoiding risky situations.
- **91 7th grade** girls participated in a unique program that approaches substance-abuse prevention as a peer issue, using the positive influence of young people modeling healthy behaviors.
- **158 4th and 5th grade girls** participated in the second phase of the substance abuse prevention program, facilitated by 7th grade girls who had gained skills in leadership and public speaking.
- **93 elementary school girls** and their mothers/fathers participated in the Growing Together program.



## EXPOSURE

“Girls’ Inc. has made me into a strong, smart, and bold leader in my community. This program gave me skills to improve in public speaking, interviewing, and resume building to help me succeed as I set my eyes as a future college student.”

Arly B. Lara, 17  
Alisal High School  
Aspires to be a Broadcast Journalist

## Youth Leaders

The program is unique to Girls Inc. of the Central Coast. Youth Leaders are graduates of ECHO who continue their leadership development by delivering programs to girls from elementary, middle and high schools, in their home communities.

- We hired and trained 27 Youth Leaders and 3 Senior Youth Leaders to plan, facilitate and evaluate our programs.
- The Youth Leaders received training via zoom on how to read a curriculum, public speaking, facilitation, classroom management via Zoom, conflict resolution, team building, how to work in a Youth-Adult partnership, job readiness, and mandatory reporting to Child Protective Services.
- The Youth Leaders met monthly for staff meetings to discuss, exchange information, and collaborate—providing the necessary information, tools, and engagement that Youth Leaders need to

deliver the best programs to their participants. Youth Leaders also motivate each other to do their best work by sharing ideas and offering feedback to improve the sessions and curricula.

# SKILL BUILDING



## INSPIRING

“Girls Inc. has provided me with resources about health, time management, budgeting for the future, and different career paths.”

Chinemerem Elleleh, 15  
Soledad High School  
Aspires to become a Doctor/OBGYN

# INNOVATIVE YOUTH-LED PROGRAMMING

## Outcomes

- **100%** demonstrated facilitation and public speaking skills
- **95%** demonstrated skills in team building and decision-making
- **95%** demonstrated skills in working in partnership with others
- **100%** articulated the value of being role models to other girls and of giving back to their communities



# CAMP ENGAGES GIRLS IN EXPLORATION

## Strong, Smart, and Bold Summer Camp

The two-week camp consisted of a combination of research-based programs and exciting field trips. Girls Take Another Look and Media and Me/Media Smarts increased their awareness of the scope and power of the media as well as the effects media messages have on girls and women. Girls enCourage is designed to sustain girls' interest in sports through adolescence by introducing them to nontraditional activities and adventures. In Operation SMART, girls were engaged in science, engineering, math and technology through hands-on STEM activities.

- We **implemented our Summer Camp via Zoom** for 2 weeks
- We **served 33 girls**, ages 8-11.
- The **girls participated in workshops** that included career exploration, college knowledge, bullying, peer and media pressure, STEM activities (such as astronomy, engineering, marine science and the environment), physical fitness, mental health, self-care, self-esteem, nutrition, guest speakers and crafts.



# CAMP ENGAGES GIRLS IN EXPLORATION

## Outcomes

- **92%** defined media and identified examples and purposes of different types of media
- **93%** identified stereotypes about girls and women; create positive female characters
- **88%** understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction
- **92%** gained knowledge about the many careers available to them in the media
- **89%** recognized advertising techniques and the hidden messages in ads
- **89%** developed enthusiasm for a career in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM)
- **97%** understand the importance of working as a team and communication skills when working as a team
- **100%** completed 1 or 2 hand's on science project





## ECHO Leadership and Mentoring

The purpose of ECHO (Education, Careers, Health, and Opportunities) Leadership and Mentoring program is to encourage girls to pursue post-secondary education and plan for future careers. The sessions are designed to inspire girls to value themselves, reach for their dreams, develop an action plan to achieve their goals, and see themselves as leaders.

- We served 195 high school girls.
- They participated in 13 modules focusing on leadership, decision-making, planning for college and careers, public speaking, civic engagement and women's health and wellness.

### Program Outcomes:

- **94%** plan to attend college
- **94%** know the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships
- **85%** know what the UC/CSU requirements are
- **84%** feel comfortable giving a speech in front of people
- **85%** know how to write a resume
- **75%** know how to prepare for job interview
- **89%** know the names and functions of the female reproductive organs
- **81%** consider themselves to be a leader



## Will Power/Won't Power

The program offers a series of interactive assertive communication workshops for 8th grade girls. The program focuses on values and healthy relationships, helps girls identify and avoid risky situations, provides factual information on female health and the reproductive system, and encourages girls to value and support each other.

- We served 80 8th grade girls.
- We also hosted an in-person program at Spring Grove School in Hollister, with 15 girls participating.
- The middle school girls participated in a series of 10 interactive workshops dedicated to empowering girls to communicate assertively. The program addresses a variety of topics including different types of relationships, reproductive health and values, the effects of media messages, their dreams and goals, the importance of voting, resisting negative peer pressure and avoiding risky situations. The meetings were held once a week, after school, from September – December.



## INDEPENDENCE

“ I have gained strength, courage and reassurance that I am capable of doing anything I put my mind into. Girls Inc. reminds me of a pen’s “ink” because this amazing program has left its positive signature on me forever!”

Zena Al-Saidali, 17  
Monterey High School  
Aspires to be a Dentist

# FOCUS ON VALUES AND HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

## Program Outcomes:

- **93% understand** more about bullying and how they can stand up for themselves or others.
- **89% understand** how media and ads influence their behavior
- **95% practiced** effective communication skills and techniques and understand now understand why communication is important.
- **90% can identify** what a healthy and unhealthy relationship looks like.



## MAKING GOOD CHOICES



# POSITIVE COMMUNICATION

## Growing Together

The program is designed to increase positive communication between girls ages 9-12-year-olds and their mothers or another significant adult. The purpose of the program is to allow them to spend quality time together while learning about open communication, decision-making and physical life changes (i.e. puberty).

- We served 43 mothers and 50 daughters.
- They participated in 4 interactive sessions via zoom, once a week that promote the importance of assuming personal responsibility for one's health, including the ability to differentiate between healthy and risky behaviors – and to act accordingly. Participation also encourages families to
- access available health information and seek appropriate health care when needed.



### Program Outcomes:

- **100%** of moms felt more confident exploring their feelings and expectations with their daughter
- **100%** of participants felt that Growing Together helped them increase positive communication between mom and daughter
- **100%** of moms felt more confident about talking to their daughters about health and hygiene
- **100%** of participants felt more confident using problem solving strategies if any conflicts arise

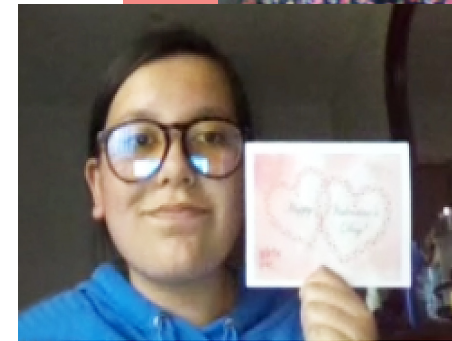
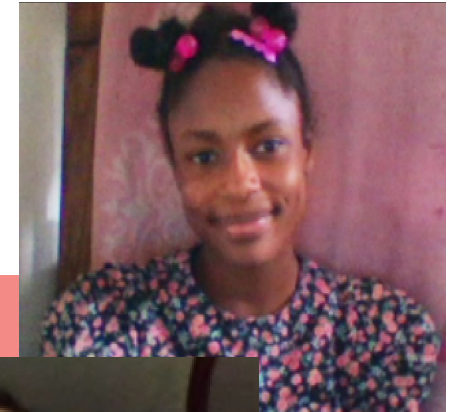
# POSITIVE INFLUENCES

## Friendly PEERsuasion

Friendly PEERsuasion is a unique response to girls' needs, approaching drug-abuse prevention as a peer issue, using the positive influence of young people modeling healthy behaviors.

This program provides 6th & 7th grade girls the skills and information to recognize and resist pressures from peers, advertisers, adults or others to use tobacco, alcohol or other drugs. Additional topics include modeling healthy behaviors, setting goals, combating bullying, the causes of stress and its impact on the body, and safe ways to manage stress.

- In Phase 1 of the program, we served 91, 7th grade girls. They will also train to become facilitators of the program to elementary school girls in the spring.
- In Phase 2 of the program, we served 158, 4th and 5th grade girls.



### Program Outcomes for the 7th graders in Phase 1:

- **89%** Identified safe and unsafe practices for using over-the-counter drugs and dietary supplements, the effects of drugs and alcohol on the body
- **92%** where able to examine the messages in the media and where able to identify how ads influence behavior
- **98%** Learned and understood effective communication skills and techniques
- **96%** Recognized stress, its physical symptoms, and learned healthy stress management tools
- **90%** understand more about bullying and know what to do when they see it happening

# POSITIVE INFLUENCES

## Outcomes for the 4th and 5th graders in the Phase 2:

- **98%** learned about the effects of different substances and tips for staying healthy
- **95%** recognized that stress is unavoidable, but too much stress can lead to poor decisions
- **95%** learned the importance of good communication — asking questions, speaking clearly, listening carefully



## Outcomes for the 7th graders in the Second Phase:

- **99%** felt that their facilitation skills have improved
- **95%** are now more confident with public speaking



# SETTING GOALS, PLANNING FOR EDUCATION

## Smart Choices

Is a weeklong summer camp, held at UC Santa Cruz, for graduating middle school girls to help them make smart choices regarding education, relationships and health. This program offers girls entering high school the opportunity to experience college life and get a head start in planning for high school and beyond. The program addresses the issues facing these girls by focusing on pursuing higher education - setting goals, making decisions, taking the necessary steps and understanding the value of an education.

### Outcomes

- **96%** Understand the importance of college and reported that after participating in Smart Choices they want to go to College
- **85%** Identified a career they are interested learning more about
- **100%** Learned ways to cope with stress and anxiety and where I can get help
- **98%** Know what healthy and unhealthy relationships look like
- **98%** Say the program helped see themselves in college



## CONFIDENCE

Girls Inc. provided me with a confidence that makes me stronger and increases my will towards my goals and journey. It provided a support system, sisterhood, and memories that I will forever hold on to.”

Hala Al-Saidali, 17  
Monterey High School  
Aspires to enter the Medical Field

## Girls Inc. of the Central Coast Scholarships Awards

### Memory of Jackie McManus

We are pleased to announce the 2021 recipients of the Girls Inc. of the Central Coast Scholarships in Memory of Jackie McManus. Ms. McManus was a prominent employment law attorney with the firm of Fenton & Keller for 20 years. Despite her busy professional schedule, she made time to be involved in local community organizations. She served on numerous boards including the initial Board of Girls Inc. of the Central Coast when Girls Inc. was under the oversight of The Action Council. She was the first recipient of the Lady Justice Award for the Lifetime Achievement in Legal Advocacy and Community Service awarded by the Monterey County Women's Lawyers Association.

### Girls Inc. National - Lucille Miller Wright Scholarship

The Girls Inc. Lucille Miller Wright Scholarship program was created in 1992, when the female pilot and long-time supporter gave a bequest for scholarships for young women. Over \$6.5 million in Girls Inc. scholarships have made post-secondary education more accessible to high school women and has inspired them to succeed in school and consider a broad range of career possibilities.

### Girls Inc. National - Suzanne Patmore Gibbs Scholarship

The Girls Inc. Suzanne Patmore Gibbs Scholarship program was created in 2018 in memory of the long-time supporter. The scholarship is awarded to Girls Inc. girls who have the courage to dream big and have a character consistent with Suzanne Patmore Gibbs. "She was a fierce advocate for all that is right and good in this world. She fought for women's voices before it was a popular thing to do. She was incredibly brave, and she stood up for what she believed in."



## Catalina Perez

Recipient of a \$25,000 Suzanne Patmore Gibbs Scholarship, and a \$1,000 scholarship from Girls Inc. of the Central Coast in Memory of Jackie McManus.

Catalina is one of 3 Girls Inc. SPG National Scholars selected in 2021 from across the United States and Canada.

Catalina Perez shared that joining Girls Inc. in fifth grade became a turning point not only for her but for her family, when a session on substance abuse helped her connect her father with resources to overcome alcoholism. Catalina says, "Without Girls Inc. I wouldn't be as informed about my own body, finances, policy making, healthy relationships, and my world." As part of her high school's Teen Leadership Council, Catalina has been involved in several community service projects including the 2020 Census. She also volunteers as a patient companion at her local hospital. Catalina plans to improve access to healthcare for children and families in her community by becoming a social worker. She demonstrates a deep determination to help others and a commitment to social justice. She plans to study Public Health.



## Zena Al-Saidali

Recipient of a \$5,000 Lucille Miller Wright National Scholarship, and a \$1,000 scholarship from Girls Inc. of the Central Coast in Memory of Jackie McManus.

Zena Al-Saidali felt at home, welcomed, and appreciated through Girls Inc. She says Girls Inc. pulled her out of a darkness, opened its arms widely and gave her a big welcome hug. Through the program, she gained confidence and was introduced to college life. She adds that being in an all-girl setting eliminated the pressure, shyness and comparison that occurs when boys are present. She felt more engaged to ask questions and understand how to make the right choices for herself, instead of ignoring her concerns. Zena shares, "Girls Inc. assured me of how Strong, Smart and Bold I am."



## Hala Al-Saidali

Recipient of a \$5,000 Lucille Miller Wright National Scholarship, and a \$1,000 scholarship from Girls Inc. of the Central Coast in Memory of Jackie McManus.

Hala Al-Saidali shares how she found a supportive community at Girls Inc. where she felt empowered to speak up for those who cannot. Her goal is to pursue a career in medicine to help alleviate the health issues of refugees and possibly work in a health center in an underserved community. Hala shares, "All the knowledge gained from Girls Inc. not only affected my life but the lives of those who come in contact with me. I can proudly say "I am Girls Inc. Strong, Smart, & Bold girl.



# SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

## Congrats 2021 Graduates

Careyta Acosta  
Hala Al-Saidali  
Zena Al-Saidali  
Rosa Alonso  
Samantha Hansen  
Angelica Lara  
Jessica Ornelas  
Anais Pacheco  
Catalina Perez  
Leslie Perez  
Marcela Perez  
Leslie Rosas  
Julissa Silva



**Careyla Acosta**  
CSU Channel Islands  
Pre-Nursing



**Hala Al-Saidali**  
MPC for transfer,  
Biological Sciences  
to be on  
Pre-Med track



**Zena Al-Saidali**  
MPC for transfer  
Dentistry



**Rosa Alonso**  
Sacramento State  
Nursing



**Samantha Hansen**  
Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo  
Animal Science, Pre-Vet



**Angelica Lara**  
UC Santa Cruz  
Critical Race and Ethnic Studies



# SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

Congrats  
**2021**  
*Graduates*



**Jessica Ornelas**  
Sacramento or  
San Diego State  
Criminal Justice



**Anais Pacheco**  
Hartnell College,  
Political Science



**Catalina Perez**  
USC, Public Health



**Leslie Perez**  
SJSU, Child Development  
for Pre-Dental track



**Marcela Perez**  
UC Berkeley  
Applied Mathematics  
for Pre-Med track



**Leslie Rosas**  
UC San Diego  
Social Psychology



**Julissa Silva**  
CSUMB  
Business Administration

*“The best way to  
predict your future  
is to create it.”*

– Abraham Lincoln



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