

About Girls Inc. of the Central Coast

Our Mission: To inspire all girls to be Strong, Smart, and Bold™ and to respect themselves and the world around them.

Our Vision: Empowered girls achieving success in a complex and diverse world.

Girls Inc. of the Central Coast is an affiliate of Girls Incorporated, a national organization that has been providing programs for girls since 1864 in the United States and Canada. We deliver innovative, research-based programs designed specifically to address the strengths and needs of girls ages 8 to 18. Our programs focus on empowerment, health and leadership, preparing girls for economic independence and confident adulthood.

Founded in 1999, Girls Inc. of the Central Coast (Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz Counties) is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

In the fall of 2015, Girls Inc. began expanding its programs into Santa Cruz County. Over the past eight years, we have worked with 1200 girls at Pajaro Valley High School, Cesar Chavez Middle School and Freedom Elementary School among other middle and elementary schools in Watsonville. In 2018 and 2019, we brought our middle and elementary school programs to Mission Hill Jr. High School in Santa Cruz and Aptos Jr. High School, Mar Vista Elementary and Rio Del Mar Elementary Schools in Aptos. All programs are conducted after school at school sites. Girls Inc. of the Central Coast offers programs primarily facilitated by teens.

Teen graduates from our high school program return as paid youth leaders to facilitate programs. They are confident, strong, and passionate about working in their communities as role models for younger girls. They are hired as facilitators for programs aimed at younger girls – a model for leadership that not only provides these young women with practical skills and experience but allows us to reach a broad spectrum of girls.

Programs

1. ECHO Leadership Program: Works with young women in high school ages 15 to 17, to encourage them to pursue post-secondary education, and plan for future careers. This program meets once every other week after school on school grounds for an entire School year.

2. Youth Leaders Program: Provides opportunities for the ECHO graduates to continue their leadership development by delivering programs to girls in high school and middle school as youth leaders and teen teachers. GICC hires youth leaders to facilitate the high school program and teen teachers to facilitate the middle school programs. They both receive training on their respective curriculums and on-going support throughout the year.

3. Smart Choices Summer Program: This week-long summer program takes place on a local college campus and inspires girls entering high school to make positive life choices about health, relationships and school. Girls explore their potential for leadership, examine myths about cultural and sexual stereotypes, critically examine the influence of the media, and determine classes they should take to get into college.

4. Will Power/Won't Power: Is a series of workshops for girls ages 12-14 about assertive communication, healthy relationships, avoiding risky situations, developing sisterhood, and understanding female health and the reproductive system. Meets once a week after school on school grounds.

5. Friendly PEERsuasion: Approaches drug abuse prevention as a peer issue, with middle school girls modeling healthy behaviors to elementary school girls. This two-part program trains girls ages 11-14 to serve as role models and teachers for 10-year-old girls. Meets once a week, after school, on school grounds.

6. Growing Together: Designed to increase positive communication between mothers (or other significant adult) and their 9-to 12-year-old daughters. It helps them discuss questions about sexual behavior and puberty without embarrassment. Growing Together meets once a week in the evenings.

THE GIRLS INC. DIFFERENCE

Today in the United States, girls continue to encounter significant obstacles to their well-being and success.

1 IN 4 GIRLS will not finish high school.

78% OF GIRLS are unhappy with their bodies by age 17.

3 IN 10 GIRLS will become pregnant before the age of 20.

1 IN 5 GIRLS will be a victim of childhood sexual abuse.

Girls Inc. meets these challenges by helping girls explore and celebrate their strengths, their voices, who they are today, and who they will become.

Girls Inc. equips girls to navigate gender, economic, and social barriers and grow up healthy, educated, and independent. Girls build confidence and embrace positive decision-making to take charge of their health and wellbeing, and achieve academic, personal and career goals.

THE GIRLS INC. EXPERIENCE HELPS GIRLS TO GROW UP:



Strong (Healthy): Girls gain knowledge to embrace physical activity, positive body image, and nutrition while decreasing or delaying substance use and risky sexual activity.

Smart (Educated): Girls increase their love of learning, improve performance in school, explore STEM and non-traditional careers, and aspire to and plan for education beyond high school.

Bold (Independent): Girls build life skills to set and achieve goals, have healthy relationships, and increase resilience in the face of obstacles to live productive and fulfilling lives.

