TO:

Lowell Telecommunications Corporation
Filming Project

What do you get when you combine the brilliance of a group of girls, the generosity of a local organization, and about 20 hours to develop and create an awesome product? A Girls Inc. of Greater Lowell commercial, of course! A group of our members, age 12 through 17, created, wrote, directed, and starred in an inspirational film this summer. Centered on the idea that Girls Inc. truly is a place for girls to come seek answers, give help, and become more confident in who they are, the video is a testament to how hard working and brave our girls are. With an enormous amount of help from Kat Strem, Madeline de la Cruz, Gloria Polites, and everyone at Lowell Telecommunications Corporation (LTC), the participating girls were involved in every step of the film making process.

Creating storyboards and scripto came first as the girls met in our library to flesh out their video concept. Once the idea became clear, girls learned how to use LTC cameras and audio equipment through a series of trainings led by Fitchburg State intern Kat Strem. After weeks of filming here at Girls Inc., the group sat in during the editing process to learn even more about video production and saw their weeks of hard work morph into a fully fledged 10-minute masterpiece.

We are so pleased and proud to announce that the film will soon be airing on local channels 10 and 22 for everyone in the Greater Lowell area to enjoy. If you see one of our budding film students around, be sure to say, ‘Bravo!’

Mighty Mighty Girls Inc.

Walk to be Fit Program

“...I sound my barbaric YAWP over the rooftops of the world...” Walt Whitman

It started as a muffled chant that could be heard coming from Lucy Larcom Park. A few people turned their heads to see who, or what, was approaching. As the women, teens and young girls neared St. Anne’s church, they could make out some words, and when the group turned onto Merrimack Street, those words were a proud “YAWP”, in true Whitman style:

Everywhere we go,
People wanna know,
Who we are,
So we tell them
We are GIRLS INC!
MIGHTY MIGHTY GIRLS INC.

My co-worker Sharon Galvin and I miss Tuesdays. For eight weeks, we were like children, watching the clock, waiting for freedom from projects, budgets, deadlines and email – to spend our afternoon walking the streets of downtown Lowell with a dynamic, energetic and inspiring group of young women.

Our group met at Girls Inc (3pm sharp!), and crossed the street to Whistler Park. The girls took turns leading our team in stretching exercises, while Sharon (our RN) would describe the muscle groups we were working and the benefits to our bodies. We always tried to suggest exercises that the girls could continue at home. Then, we embarked on our adventure!

Each week, we took a route chosen by the participants and tried to incorporate a bit of history or trivia along the way. We visited St. Patrick’s Church, where the girls learned the story of the Battle of Stone Bridge and the Irish Immigrants of Lowell. At Lower Locks, we discussed Francis Cabot Lowell and his amazing photographic memory, as well as the mechanics of a lock and gate system. We talked about immigrants, women, business, fitness, healthy eating, and family. I think the best part of the program was the conversations it generated. Sharon and I were there to teach the girls about fitness, but instead they taught us about determination (walking 1.5 miles in flip flops in 90+ degrees!), activism, integrity and friendship.

We covered an average of 1.25 miles per session - for a group total of over 60 miles walked (or 110,000 steps)! - pretty impressive! The girls we walked with not only had an incredible amount of energy, but a camaraderie and sense of power that was inspiring. Tuesdays truly were the highlight of our summer. I know I speak for Sharon in saying that we had an amazing, memorable time with the “Mighty Mighty Girls Inc.” girls, and we look forward to continuing the program next year!

-Erin Caples, Girls Inc. Board Member
For two weeks in August, Girls Inc. partnered with Maria Ingrid Urponen of the Lowell Public Schools to help welcome 10 refugee girls (eight from Burma, 2 from Africa) into our Summer Program. The girls were a delight to have and completely immersed themselves into our program. By the end of the first week, they were as much a part of the Girls Inc. family as everyone else in the program. While at Girls Inc., the girls participated in choices like Media Tech, My Community, Mind Boggling, Cheerleading, just to name a few. They also joined us on our field trips to George’s Island and the Museum of Science. The girls helped produce, as well as star in, a movie about a girl who is constantly being teased but overcomes her fears and stands up to her bullies. This project, of course, would not have been possible without LTC supplying the girls with video cameras as well as editing programs to make their movie. At the end of the second week, we were very sad to see the girls go but we wish them a bright future and plan to remain in contact with them.

In honor of the Berkshires Girls Inc. affiliate’s 100 year anniversary, Girls Inc. of Lowell, among other regional affiliates, was invited to a Region III Camp Out to help celebrate this milestone! The event was held at an 80-acre lakeside camp. Girls Incorporated of the Berkshires Camp Stevenson Witawentin on Onata Lake in Pittsfield, MA. Staff Charya and Charlette, along with 14 girls, took the 3-hour road trip to the campsite on August 5, 2011. There, they got the chance to meet other staff members and girls from other affiliates. The girls went kayaking, swimming, took hikes through the woods and sang songs by the campfire. One of the best things about any conference for the staff is that they get to meet people doing similar work to what they do from all over – so this was an amazing opportunity for the girls to have that same experience!

Self expression occurs every moment at Girls Inc. and this summer was no exception. We, along with several other Girls Inc. affiliates, were invited to participate in Be Bold!, an art project aimed to expose participants to several artistic mediums. Each Friday, girls learned about and practiced art forms such as photography, sculpture, community art, recycled art, music, fashion, poetry and more. At the end of the 8-week project, Lowell Telecommunications Corporation hosted a weeklong exhibit in its lobby for the public to see and be inspired by. A favorite project of girls and staff was our community art project. Using only chalk and positive words and images, every member contributed to a long mural located in the heart of Lowell. Working together to trace their bodies and create banner-sized lines of text, the girls used their collective voice to share the Girls Inc. message and even inspired members of the community to add to our mural with their own messages.

Thanks to Girls Inc. of Syracuse for inviting us to participate and share ourselves!

Girls Inc. is ranked 5th by the experts surveyed because of our commitment to passionate leadership, programming, and tremendous support of overall positive development of our girls!

Honoring a Son and Giving Back to the Community –

A mother loses her child and a park becomes more beautiful because of it. Girls Incorporated of Greater Lowell had the privilege of being invited to help a mother honor a wonderful son and also to beautify our great city. In partnership with Lowell Parks and Recreation, Carolyn D. has made it her mission to turn the skate park where her son once honed his craft into a beautiful and safe place for the youth of Lowell to zoom freely on skateboards. Girls Inc. entered the picture when Carolyn was looking for an artistic way to make trash barrels available at the newly renovated park in Lowell’s Highlands neighborhood. We were given four trash barrels to turn drab green receptacles into works of art, and it was a challenge we were pleased to accept. These barrels, decorated with wild flowers, skateboards, a brilliant rainbow, and a dreamy scene of animals riding a roller coaster, were designed and painted by members of our After School Program and Art Exhibit! Girls Inc. is ranked one of the top high-impact, youth-serving nonprofits by Philanthropedia, a GuideStar research organization!