Girls Inc.

**Mind + Body Initiative**

Girls Incorporated of Greater Lowell is excited to announce that we are taking on the Mind + Body initiative with Girls Inc. National. Mind + Body is a whole health education program that focuses on the areas of physical activity, stress management techniques, positive body image, and nutrition.

We are fortunate enough to not only be a Mind + Body Champion site but also to be awarded the opportunity to be a pilot program for the new family nights. This summer our talented staff Marlene Roman, Ashley Carey, and Katelyn Adams each ran activities to help educate our girls and their families on ways to make meals healthy and affordable. On June 19th, families were engaged in discussions on the differences between herbs and spices and how they are a smart alternative to loading meals with large amounts of salt and sugar. The families used all of their senses to decide what various herbs were and which ones were their favorites. They then created their own indoor herb gardens. That same night families learned about daily serving requirements for fruits and vegetables and they discussed where they shop for fresh produce and why. Everyone participated in a community mapping project, labeled maps and rated different stores based on cleanliness, location, affordability and ability to find organic products. Families shared and supported each other by providing resources and information on their shopping experiences.

On June 26th, the girls and their families learned how the media targets children to buy less than healthy foods. They created their own advertisement that expressed what is really in those sugary snacks that kids love so much. They were then led through a workshop where they calculated prices of different meals that proved to families that it truly is much more cost effective and healthier to make meals than to buy fast food. All of these activities were very well received with over 30 people attending, and many parents gratefully thanked us numerous times for the opportunity. Each night we raffled off Market Basket gift cards and provided very healthy food options. Ashley’s famous black bean veggie burgers were an especially huge hit!
Girls Inc. is excited to introduce our Strong, Smart and Bold Staff:

Ashley Carey, Sarah Wilson, Jessica Disla, Kelsey Barowich, a former Girls Inc. member and a National Girls Inc. as well as a Loretta Duncan Scholarship recipient, Teen Coordinator Caitlin Sawicki, Program Coordinator Assistant Marlene Roman, Outreach Coordinator Charya Uong, Program Coordinator Katelyn Adams, and Program Director Jennifer Demers.

Most of our staff reside in the Massachusetts area and are recent college graduates with B.A. and M.A. degrees. They are highly trained in girls’ growth and development, intentional program planning and implementation, conflict resolution and group management. They have also been educated on how to incorporate literacy and STEM into fun, engaging, and self esteem building programs and are First Aid and CPR certified. Our Summer Program Specialists are enthusiastic and thrilled to be spending their summer with the Girls Inc. members.

“Nurturing is a word that comes to mind.”
- Susan Mitchell, Girls Inc. Board President

How exciting to see the hard work and focused effort of so many dedicated staff and supporters of Girls Inc. of Greater Lowell come together with the opening of the new Teen Center this fall.

Girls Inc. has deep roots in Lowell and surrounding communities. The organization has undergone many periods of growth and change in order to help meet the needs of girls in our area. The national mission of the organization is to help make girls: Strong, Smart, Bold.

I don’t think it’s necessary to explain to any of our readers the importance of imparting these skills to young women these days. The new space for teens will allow us to offer National Girls Inc. programs such as Discovery Leadership, Preventing Adolescent Pregnancy, and Girls Make the Message.

Nurturing is a word that keeps coming to my mind. As a gardener, I see the results of nurturing plants with the proper care and attention to sunlight, water, and fertilizer needs. That is what the staff at Girls Inc. does with the girls who participate in our numerous programs—pays attention to their needs for nurturing, providing them with the information, experiences, and guidance all young people need in order to grow into productive adult members of our world. It’s a constantly demanding job that they work hard to fulfill.

It has been a wonderful experience to work with many dedicated Girls Inc. board members during the last eleven years to insure the organization has the funds and support to carry out its ‘nurturing’ role in the lives of girls in our community. I appreciate the opportunity to serve as president of the board and want to thank all of the members of the board and staff for your dedication, hard work and support in this nurturing effort. With your help, Girls Inc. can only grow better at nurturing girls to become Strong, Smart and Bold and enabling them to meet the challenges of their futures.
Literacy!

Reading has never been cooler than this summer! Our staff has made it their mission, with the help of BOSTNet, to prevent dreaded summer learning loss and have been incorporating literacy into everything they teach. We have been reading, writing, telling stories, and playing a variety of games that challenge the girls in spelling and vocabulary in a fun and engaging way. We are also having a reading challenge to see which girl reads the most books and if we can meet our group challenge of reading a total of 1,000 books this summer. Marcia, our fabulous reading coach, has been helping us to make our field trips more intentional and literacy based. We have been working to prepare a fantastic family literacy afternoon so parents can see what we are doing at Girls Inc. and can participate in fun literacy based challenges and activities with their daughter(s). We have also been fortunate enough to have received new books from both United Way and from a retired teacher in our community. Susan Adams has been working her creative magic to make the library more inviting and kid friendly. The girls now have cozy reading circles, bright new wall decorations, and the books are organized by reading levels and themes to make the library a great place to have structured study time or to relax and take a break with a good book.

We also are participating in a new literacy initiative this year with Girls Inc. National and we have been awarded the opportunity to send our Program Coordinator for training in Indianapolis to get an inside look at this project’s development. We are excited to learn what new resources and opportunities they have in store for us.

Check out our Facebook page to get the inside scoop about all of the great literacy programs and projects we

SMITH FAMILY FOUNDATION

Girls Inc. is very proud to announce that we are the recipient of a $31,465 capital grant from the Smith Family Foundation for the purpose of furnishing our new teen center and helping to complete our Teen Operation project. These funds will enable us to purchase appliances, tables, chairs, carpeting, wall decorations, and computer stations to make a comfortable and user-friendly “home away from home” for current and future teen members.

Many thanks to:
Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation
Richard and Susan Smith
John, Amy S., James and Elizabeth Berylson
Jonathon Block and Jennifer Berylson Block
Robert and Dana Smith
Debra S., Jessica and Andrew Knez
Girls Inc. Member Spotlight!

Claudayzia Brown is a born leader and true Renaissance woman. She is a very talented artist, athlete, poet, and dancer. Her artwork has been in multiple exhibits, was chosen for auctions, and her work has been recognized by Girls Inc. National. She has also won multiple statewide dance competitions and has received exceptional reviews from her Taekwondo masters. Claudayzia has also recently discovered her skills in acting with her participation in *A Christmas Carol* at Girls Inc.

This is Claudayzia’s first time receiving the member of the year award and we are all very proud of her achievements and excited to see her bloom through our teen program.

Claudayzia Brown ~ Member of the Year!

Mary Sampas Literacy Award Winner ~ Amber Maker

Amber Maker is a master at expressing herself with originality and enthusiasm. She is known within the Girls Inc. community as one of our skilled resident authors and illustrators. Amber’s passion has been shared with the girls and staff in many ways including a one-act play that she wrote, helped direct, and perform during our April vacation week. Her creative writing is a witty combination of science fiction, horror, drama, and comedy. Some of the staff’s favorite stories include *How Zombies Sneeze* and *Romeo and Canary*. We look forward to finding her books on the shelves of Barnes and Noble in the future!