2020 Celebration of Today’s Woman

Honors Jane Calvin

Jane Calvin literally travelled the globe pursuing her passion for the environment. From Nepal, to Bangladesh, to New Hampshire and finally Lowell, Jane has devoted 25 years to environmental activism, leadership, community involvement and simply making our planet, our city, a better place to live.

We’re proud to announce Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust Executive Director Jane Calvin as the 2020 Celebration of Today’s Woman honoree. Jane embodies all that we strive to instill in our girls, to be—STRONG, SMART and BOLD—inquisitive, ready for a challenge, willing to fight for what’s right, and working diligently to improve and repair our city, and our planet.

After earning her B.S. in biochemistry at the University of New Hampshire, Jane went on to receive her Masters from the Yale University’s School of the Environment. After graduating from Yale, Jane travelled solo for six months through Nepal, India, and Bangladesh, inspiring her love of community conservation. Soon after, Jane joined the Trust in 1995 as an intern to improve Lowell’s urban forest. Since then, the Trust has blossomed as an organization that has thrived through partnership. One of those keystones partners has been Girls Inc. Jane has shared her love of Lowell’s natural resources with the young women at Girls Inc. through a variety of programs, including STEM-based after-school programming, sharing urban planning tools to inspire career choices, and hosting tours at the historic Spalding House. With after-school environmental education programs now offered in ten of Lowell’s public schools, many more of Lowell’s young women are impacted by Jane’s passion for environmental conservation.

We invite you to join in our celebration and recognition of this remarkable woman by becoming an event sponsor or program advertiser. By doing so, you will provide vital funding that enables Girls Inc. to inspire and educate more girls each year with our intentional programming that includes year-round classes in literacy, STEM, nutrition, job readiness, and civic engagement held at our Worthen Street Center and at 20+ schools in Greater Lowell through our Outreach Program. Your support also helps us instill in our girls the concepts of community, leadership, self-confidence and stress management by focusing on their strengths and abilities—academically, physically, emotionally and creatively.

Please join us on Tuesday, June 9, from 6:00-9:00 p.m. at the UMASS Lowell Inn and Conference Center to honor a champion for the preservation of our city’s natural wonders, and for all she’s done and continues to do as a role model for our girls, and all of the people living in our community.

Photo credit to Luciana Calvin Photography
CONVID-19: Impact on Girls Inc. and future events

We are in uncertain times, and each day brings us to places we’ve never experienced. During these challenges, the staff at Girls Inc. of Greater Lowell is providing **Monday-Friday, full-day** enrichment programming for our members whose parents/guardians need to work, cannot work from home and do not have alternative childcare options. Most often these parents/guardians are first responders and essential personnel who need childcare to report to their jobs while they keep the rest of our community safe. Our current plan is to support these families until we’re directed to do otherwise by the local, state and/or federal government. Be assured we are closely monitoring all information in real time, every day.

To date, we are:

- Providing full-day services to those members currently enrolled in our after-school program. These services include a light breakfast and snacks throughout the day.
- Maintaining a safe environment by requiring members and staff to wash and sanitize their hands upon arrival and throughout the day as well as regularly wiping down frequently surfaces, doorknobs, etc.
- Requiring cleaning staff to disinfect all surfaces daily.
- Temporarily suspending volunteer participation.

You recently received a letter announcing Girls Inc.’s Celebration of Today’s Woman Honoree Jane Calvin. Although we’re hopeful about our June 9th event, **we’re realistic about the possibility of the need to reschedule**. Our foremost goal is to ensure the health and well-being of our community, and we will reschedule or consider holding a virtual “non-event” event **when and if** it becomes necessary.

That said, our need for your support is greater today than ever. You make it possible for Girls Inc. to provide a safe space for girls to learn and grow, momentarily free from the anxiety and isolation they’re experiencing as they face day-to-day uncertainty. As I write this letter, it’s a beautiful sunny day, and our younger girls are outside my window playing, laughing, and just being kids. These moments of play, of study, of entertainment, of being with one another are critical for their well-being, especially now. Our doors are open today because of you. Thank you.

It will be wonderful to see many of you on June 9th at our Celebration of Today’s Woman event. For now, this is something we can all look forward to. As we collectively wait to see how life unfolds, we hope your family stays safe and in good health in the weeks to come.

Warmest regards,

Executive Director, LSWA, MBA

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It has been an exciting year in the After-School Program with the introduction of a new educational framework. The early education curriculum rolled out its first pilot in November with great success and it was followed by the introduction of an elementary education framework in January.

The elementary education program was developed to support members in grades 2-4. It covers three major content areas: Literacy Skills, Social Emotional Learning, and STEM education. Program staff worked together to develop a new schedule that would work comprehensively with the needs of Girls Inc. members and complement the new educational outcomes.

Once the new schedule was determined the first pilot of the program was underway and it rolled out four entirely new classes: Creative Minds, Journey Journals, Lab Ladies, and Vocab Vixens. Each class supported a specific content area and each individual lesson plan was aligned with Massachusetts Common Core Standards. The pilot programs ran for eight weeks, successfully, with each member receiving 90 minutes of educational instruction, in each class, per week.

*Creative Minds* began by introducing basic geometry, with a unit on shapes. Members worked through the unit learning about the properties of quadrilaterals, parallelograms, and polygons. Members created artwork, such as tessellations, and used manipulatives, spatial reasoning, and sensory skills, to render a variety of shapes in three dimensions. After mastering shapes members deepened their studies with a unit that introduced perimeter and area. Members used a variety of read-out-louds with mathematical themes, such as, *Spaghetti and Meatballs for All!* and *If You Were a Quadrilateral*, to understand these concepts. They completed a series of activities, including planning a seating chart for a dinner party, scaled drawings of “monster pens,” and the creation of their own “shape monsters”, to apply their new skills in a fun and engaging manner. *Creative Minds* is currently in its second pilot round with members working on the Geomitrocity Unit, where they will use their skills to build a small scaled city.

*Journey Journals* supported two content areas fusing literacy practices with social emotional processing skills. Members get to be creative when doing fictional free writes at the beginning of each class, using just a story starter to begin the writing process. Following the free write, members participate in a variety of journaling activities, such as, doodling, bullet journals, drawing and labelling exercises, and goal planning. Each activity emphasizes a social emotional skill, like communication, empathy, conflict resolution, decision making and problem solving. At the end of the eight-week course members had collected a portfolio of work to help them navigate their lives. *Journey Journals* will run its second pilot in the Fall of 2020, and members are currently enrolled in *Debating Divas*, a class that introduces debate team and builds upon the skills learned in *Journey Journals*. 
**CENTER AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM (continued)**

*Lab Ladies* is a new STEM program tailored specifically to members in elementary school. Members studied basic chemical and biological principles during the pilot. They learned the properties of chemical interactions and the different types of interactions. They also extensively studied germ theory, learning about transmission and the structure and differences between bacteria and viruses. *Lab Ladies* is currently in its second pilot and members are learning environmental sciences and will then study outer space.

This first round of the elementary framework rounded off its content areas with the class *Vocab Vixens*. The eight-week pilot of this program focused on phonics and parts of speech. Members played a variety of games, such as, Scrabble Tag, to learn letter sounds and combinations. They then studied prefixes and suffixes and created their own non-sense dictionary of words. They also studied the different type of vowel sounds and made vowel airplanes that helped them travel the world and learn what a long vowel is versus a short vowel. The final unit introduced parts of speech, in preparation for their next literacy class, *Bookworms*, where they will be using their decoding and phonics skills to do in-depth author studies and make their own children’s book.

The pilot of this elementary framework has been highly successful, supporting members academically, socially, and emotionally and the hard work of Girls Inc. classroom instructors who have facilitated the programs has paid off. Members have shown improvement in their reading and writing skills (as evidenced in DIBELs assessments), their ability to retain and integrate information, and most importantly, their foundational social emotional skills have increased. Members are more able to independently resolve conflict with their peers, they feel more confidence in their problem-solving skills, and they can easily identify their own emotions, use coping tools appropriately, and practice empathy with their peers.

While the program is in the second round of the elementary framework pilot, staff and administrators are looking to the future of the program and working collaboratively to develop a tween framework that will bring the same dynamic programming and impactful outcomes to members in grades 5-7. We plan to roll out this new framework, completing the update in programming, during the Fall of 2020.

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**Congratulations and thank you,**

Wanda Royte, one of this year’s recipients of a Lowell Women’s Week “Because of Her” Award.

Wanda has been a Girls Inc. volunteer for more than ten years and provides one-to-one tutoring and support in Girls Inc. classes. She regularly goes above and beyond the expectations of regular volunteers and provides emotional and social support and is a consistent and steady presence at Girls Inc.

She brings with her a warmth, affection and thoughtfulness that makes the center a more welcoming place for everybody.

Thank you Wanda for your compassion and dedication!
This year, Girls Inc. has continued to evolve the Little Learners program into a fully independent Early Education Program. As we move into the spring, members are showing the progress they have been working towards all year. Members have grown in big ways, while having fun, and many are preparing to move into the Juniors program in the Fall with all these new skills in tow.

The Early Education Program has three major focuses: literacy, STEM, and social-emotional learning (SEL). These focuses allow the program to meet members where they are and build their skills to even the playing field. When this program began, our youngest members struggled to regulate their emotions, read at developmentally appropriate levels, and use critical thinking skills to solve problems. As the first school year of this program quickly approaches its end, members have grown exponentially across all developmental domains through exposure to our new curriculum.

In *The Three R’s*, members work on homework or cycle through math and literacy centers. During this time, staff will often facilitate academic interventions for members that are struggling to grasp academic concepts at their grade level. These interventions help members who speak English as a second language, who are neuro-atypical, and who have learning disabilities to keep up with their peers in a way that is personal, fun, and engaging.

During *Story Explorers*, members completed monthly author studies. Each month focused on a new author and each new author study came with learning new literary concepts. Through interactive and engaging read-a-louds and activities, members explored concepts of text like plot, characters, character traits, setting, and themes. Members also worked on connecting themes and lessons in stories to their own lives. Members worked together to act out and re-tell stories, build character puppets, and sequence plot. Through this program, the reading and writing confidence of all the youngest members of Girls Inc. skyrocketed.

In *Life Science*, members had a blast becoming arctic animal experts through group research projects and crafts. They loved acting out penguin family dynamics and teaching their peers about one arctic animal they studied. Members also dove into topics like weather to become meteorologists and learned about the different ways animals adapt to adjust to colder weather. By working together, members not only learned exciting new STEM concepts, but also built their social-emotional and problem solving skills.

Members in the Early Education Program spend a good part of their day in “free play” time. At the advent of this new program, there was a need for SEL. Members struggled to regulate their emotions in healthy and constructive ways and often had a hard time connecting with their peers. With more free play time, came a large burst in the necessary SEL skills that are the foundation for a successful academic life. Members have grown their social-emotional skills in big ways, which they will take with them into the Juniors program in the Fall. Teaching our youngest members advanced SEL skills so early in their journey through the Girls Inc. experience creates a strong base that will only grow as members themselves grow. Along with these important SEL skills, making sure that members receive academic interventions early in their schooling allows us to ensure that no girls slip through the cracks.

The Early Education Program gives girls the tools they need to not just grow, but thrive! By establishing routines of respect, compassion, and empathy early on, the program fights the “mean girl” stereotype and encourages the evolution of lasting friendships. By ensuring that all girls in the program feel seen and valued, we continue to empower members to be strong, smart, and bold leaders!
The Girls Inc. Outreach Program has been running successfully in 14 schools throughout the 2019-2020 academic year. This year the program fostered community partnerships made in previous years while creating new ones to enhance the Girls Inc. impact. We have also implemented new programming to meet the needs of the youth we serve.

One of the new programs is Economic Engineers at the Leblanc Therapeutic Day School. The members in this program are mostly seniors in high school and are looking to move into real life situations when they graduate. In Economic Engineers, they learn concepts pertaining to finances that they can apply in their real lives while also enhancing their problem solving and critical thinking skills. Through hands on activities, the members have successfully learned topics such as how to start and maintain a business, how to finance a car and how to balance a budget. The members have openly expressed their gratitude in learning these skills that will help them navigate through life. One student stated her true appreciation of being involved in the Girls Inc. program, “because it has given me a sense of support, both skills wise and emotionally, that I don’t receive at home.” We are proud to continue to foster this partnership and are looking to continue in the coming years.

A new partnership created this year is with the Butler Middle School. At the Butler Middle School, Members have had the opportunity to partake in multiple Girls Inc. programs with the most successful being Healthy You and Girls with Goals. In Healthy You the members learned how to take care of their holistic selves in the proper fashion. Through creative and engaging activities the members have demonstrated their knowledge of healthy food choices, self-care, mindfulness and hygiene. While in Girls with Goals, the members learned about goal setting, SMART goals, and options for their futures. They were able to practice their communication skills and demonstrated positive support for one another when reflecting on their goals each week.

The members showed growth throughout the program that was witnessed by both Girls Inc. staff as well as teachers at the school. Staff at the school have expressed their appreciation for Girls Inc. involvement by stating, “The Girls Inc. Outreach program has encouraged students to attend school because they do not want to miss out on the program. This has increased their attendance rates as well as provided a safe space for the youth, reducing at risk behaviors.”

The success of the Outreach program continues to create opportunities for growth and new partnerships in our community.
The Girls Inc. Teen Program has undergone a huge transition these past few months welcoming new Teen Center Coordinator, Sanary Phen, and revamping the curriculum to meet the needs of our current members. We continue to move forward with new and innovative programming to keep our teens engaged and to promote Girls Inc’s mission of encouraging all girls to be strong, smart & bold.

This school year we welcomed back some of our long-time community partners to provide our teens with exceptional programming. With the Center for Hope & Healing, the teens participated in their Youth Leadership Corp/Wild Seed program. This program addresses events and concerns shaping today’s society and the initiatives young people can undertake to make their city a better place for all its citizens. Our teens learned about sexism, racism, colorism, cultural appropriation and other systems of oppression affecting marginalized groups of people. The program helped the teens discover the power of their collective voices and what actions they can take to be the change they want to see in their community.

During this winter, the reigning Miss Massachusetts, Lyndsey Littlefield, who is also a Girls Inc. alumna, visited our Center. Lyndsey was able to share with the teens the obstacles she had to overcome to pay for her college education and how the pageant world was able to help her pay for school and more. Lowell Community Health Center’s Teen Block facilitated Making Proud Choices during February vacation and had in depth discussions with members around sexuality, gender identity, healthy relationships, HIV/STD awareness and prevention. It was a fun and interactive way to approach a sensitive and often difficult subject.

To promote financial literacy and career planning/exploration, we are delivering the Invest in Girls financial literacy program. We aim to provide members with a clear understanding of how to manage their personal finances – earning, saving & investing – as well as provide them with mentorship from business professionals that can guide them on how to pursue a career in finance.

UML Manning Women in Business provided group mentorship for girls interested in pursuing a degree in business while the Lowell Police Department held a Q&A panel with female law enforcement officers. They gave the teens firsthand information about their own experiences and what pursuing a career in law enforcement entails.

Our girls are inspired to step out of their comfort zone and think outside the box when it comes to carving out a career path. We urge girls to break through barriers and overcome obstacles through continuous mentorship from the strong female role models, professionals and educators who are making an impact and a difference right here in their own community.

As we head into spring, we have incorporated multiple areas of academics and psychosocial needs into our program schedule including STEM, literature, art, diversity and inclusion, and basic life skills along with useful tools and resources to maintain social and emotional wellbeing and a positive self-identity. With a mixture of science and art, our “Blowing Off Steam” program has teen members working cooperatively to repair and construct artistic objects one may find around the home. The program emphasizes the science involved in the manufacturing of household items and explores the mechanics and engineering behind how they function.
TEEN CENTER (continued)

We continue to promote ingenuity and imagination with programs like “Dungeons & Dragons” and “Comic Concepts”. Teens are creating characters and storylines for gameplay in a group setting and understanding the importance of teamwork and communication while gaining useful social skills. Members are also looking at possible careers in the typically male-dominated comic book industry and learning about character development, storyboarding and how to build narratives, applying that knowledge with their innate artistic abilities to create a comic book of their own.

Our “Cooking with Culture” program focuses on kitchen safety and food safety standards as well as basic cooking skills while highlighting the importance of diversity and inclusion. Girls Inc. cultivates the natural curiosity we all have about cultures and traditions outside of our own by helping our youth explore different countries around the world, the lifestyles of the people living there and the ethnic food and dishes that help to connect us all.

“Fit Fridays” introduces our teens to a wide range of fitness activities to stay strong and physically. This program looks at health from a physiological model. We combine exercise with tips for healthy eating and tools to maintain mental and emotional health teaching our members about health from a psychophysiological perspective.

As we move into spring, our teens will have the opportunity to participate in a 4-day Ironstone Farm Equine Teen Encounter Leadership Program during a school vacation week to hone their strengths and work on additional skills that will prepare them to be future leaders in the community. And although summer seems quite a distance away, it will be here before we know it and Girls Inc. will begin recruiting for our Counselor in Training Job Readiness program.

With so much going on, we remain focused on building and maintaining a safe, nurturing and supportive environment for all members. We continually research the latest tools/resources available to young girls to guarantee the best outcomes for our members and ensure the aspiring leaders of tomorrow have all the skills they need to function independently and successfully in today’s world. We are proud to be at the forefront advocating for girls not only in our community but around the world.

The Board of Directors of Girls Inc. of Greater Lowell cordially invites you to the Annual Meeting of the Corporation Wednesday, May 13, 2020 at 12:15 pm 220 Worthen Street, Lowell Please R.S.V.P. by May 6, 2020 (978) 458-6529 ext. 102
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TO:

Pinky promise you’ll join us...

SAVE THE DATE

Due to guest request, we are moving our annual auction and cocktail party from January to November. This year’s event will be held on Tuesday, November 10, 2020 at Lenzi’s in Dracut.

Stay tuned for a Save the Date card with more details.