

Girls in Action ^{GIA}

“Ready for the World, Ready to Compete.”

Final Report 2006-2007

I. Original Goals and Objectives

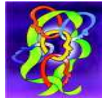
To increase the academic engagement of female students while decreasing violent and disruptive behavior at North, Edison and Roosevelt High Schools through a structured process that includes four core components: Personal Power, Leadership Development, Service-Learning and Career Building. The project objectives are to: Increase academic engagement (on-task with class work, homework completion, and positive in-class academic participation), increase consistent school attendance, decrease disruptive behavior, increase positive publicity for school, decrease truancy and increase graduation rates.

II. Progress Made Toward Accomplishing Original Goals and Objectives

- Total Initial Number of Girls in Project = 300 Girls
- Total Number of Girls Completing Project = 271 Girls
- **Overall Retention Rate of Girls in Project = 90%**

The Project Goals for 2006-2007	Progress Made Toward Goals –for 2006-2007
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Decrease disruptive and violent behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Over 50% decrease in fights ▪ School’s Principal and several staff members reported overall positive change in participants and school climate – Less violence and more academic success in the classroom
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Decrease truancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 63% decrease in suspensions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase academic engagement (on-task with class work, homework completion, positive in-class participation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 67% of girls improved grades ▪ Teachers reported that girls are more interested in class and more focused ▪ Teachers reported that girls have less aggressive attitudes and behaviors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase consistent school attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 63% of the participants improved attendance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase overall graduation rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 95% of Girls in Action participants successfully graduated on-time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase positive publicity for school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Over 250 Women Leaders Involved ▪ 29 Northside Community Organizations Involved ▪ Generated new partnerships with local corporations (i.e. General Mills and Best Buy) and higher education institutions (i.e. College of St. Catherine’s and University of Minnesota) ▪ Media Appearances in the Minneapolis Star Tribune Newspaper, and on Fox 9, Kare 11 and KSTP 5 ▪ The founder of Girls in Action was awarded the Ann Bancroft Award for her leadership to girls

III. Achievement toward Outcomes and Goals



Girls in Action™

“Ready for the World, Ready to Compete.”

In Academic Achievement:

Participants demonstrated growing academic and leadership skills through consistent attendance, on-time homework completion, in-class participation, and engagement in career explorations. Participants demonstrated at least a 50% decrease in unexcused absences, suspension rates and tardies, a long-term increase in academic Grade Point Average by 50% and an increase in graduation rates for participants in the project for 2 years or more.

In the Community:

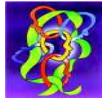
Girls learned how to assume leadership roles in school and the local community. Participants designed and implemented service-learning projects during the service-learning component where participants chose what community organization to partner with in developing their Service-Learning projects.

In Life and the Future:

Girls in Action™ participants were found to be twice as likely to attend college compared with girls that were not involved in the project. By connecting the girls with supportive and professional women leaders, they made more positive decisions in school and in life, and learned how to develop healthy friendships while avoiding negative relationships.

IV. Activities Which Lead to Meeting the Original Goals and Objectives

- a. *Girls in Action™* promotes academic engagement through a research-based, interactive, structured curriculum that is delivered by a cross-cultural group of women leaders from the community who serve as mentors who offer a broad range of knowledge, skills, and experiences. Last year, the project provided the girls with an abundance of opportunities to participate in activities that promote academic engagement and positive leadership.
 - Career explorations to:
 1. The College of St. Catherine
 2. The University of Minnesota
 3. The Minneapolis Downtown Public Library
 4. Best Buy Corporation
 5. The play, “Kumbayah...A Juneteenth Story”
- b. For the Leadership component 30 women leaders from around the community came to share their leadership stories with the girls. As a result many of the girls developed a more positive outlook of who they are and who they can be in the future.
- c. The Service-Learning component provided the opportunity for the girls to partner with local community organizations to develop a community-based service-learning project of their choice.

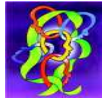


Girls in Action™

“Ready for the World, Ready to Compete.”

Service-Learning also helped them expand and demonstrate leadership abilities, team building, communication, written, oral and cognitive skills. This learning process provided an avenue for the girls to address challenges in their community such as teenage pregnancy, gun violence and HIV-AIDS. Last year, *Girls in Action*™ participants collaborated with 29 community organizations which resulted in the development of 26 different Service-Learning projects.

- d. The Career Development component of the project provided the girls with opportunities to participate in small career coaching groups lead by woman leaders from the local and/or business community. *Girls in Action*™ was committed to graduating every participant from high school on time and providing her with the coaching necessary to successfully attend a higher education institution. Last year, 60 women leaders participated as career coaches and worked on completing the “My Life Plan” with every girl.
 - e. Based on the evaluation process, participants in *Girls in Action*™ have continued to express the need for more time to develop life skills; however, due to time restrictions during the school day, schools have been unable to fulfill these demands. In 2006, *Girls in Action*™ responded by creating a smaller-scale after-school leadership program called **Rights to Passage**™ which empowers, motivates, informs and instructs girls (ages 14 – 18) from around the world to explore the RIGHTS women have to power, leadership, education, service and career success in their local community, country and world. **Rights to Passage**™ was highlighted at the 2007 National Service Learning Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico where the girls successfully performed a dramatization of their lessons learned to an audience of 3000.
 - f. *Girls in Action*™ participants were congratulated for successfully completing the program at an annual TEALIT (Tea+ Literary) event. TEALIT offered delicious teas and foods served alongside reflective dialogue that included literary, visual, performing and environmental arts. *Girls in Action*™ participants joined over 40 women leaders at the Global Market Exchange engaging in critical conversations about lessons learned in the project while demonstrating the social graces and traditions associated with attending a formal "tea".
1. Surveys were conducted with the girls at North, Edison and Roosevelt High Schools.
 - 96% of girls reported that the project has a positive impact on them personally and on their school.
 - Teachers reported that the project had a positive effect on the students who were involved in *Girls in Action*™, stating that math grades had increased and that they had noticed a positive change in the participants’ behavior.



Girls in Action™

“Ready for the World, Ready to Compete.”

V. Impact *Girls in Action*™ has had on Decreasing Violence in Minneapolis

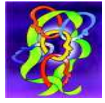
Funding for *Girls in Action*™ has provided the project with the opportunity to directly address violence among girls at North, Edison and Roosevelt High Schools and the surrounding areas. The in-school impact of the project clearly points to the fact that violence and indicators of violence, such as attendance and lower grades, have significantly decreased in school participants. According to the principals of all three schools, the project has helped to create a non-violent environment among the girls. Compared to the previous school year, all of these variables such as fighting, suspensions, and behavior referrals have decreased in the school. During this time, the girls also partnered with local community organizations on their efforts to address and create solutions to decreasing violence in their communities.

For example, last year, girls from North High School partnered with **Highways of Hope**, an organization committed to decreasing violence. As a result of their partnership, the girls developed and implemented a plan addressing ways to reduce violence in the Northside. Another group from Edison High School partnered with the **Minneapolis Park Board, Logan Park**, to develop a community Kick-off event focused on reopening the gym which was closed due to violent behavior at the park during the previous summer.

Other participants identified violence as a growing detriment to their community and decided to address this issue. The girls teamed up with **Juxtaposition Arts** who engage artistically inclined urban youth in high quality creative experiences relevant to their life situation. In an attempt to decrease violence in the Northside, the girls created “nonviolence banners” and strategically placed them around the community. The girls provided a presentation to the entire *Girls in Action*™ Project about their lessons learned from this service-learning project. After seeing the issue of violence from a broader perspective, girls became more vocal about its impact on the community.

VI. Unanticipated Results

- The “self-image” and confidence of the girls have noticeably increased. (i.e. how they dress, talk to each other, share their ideas with others, interact with women leaders)
- The girls have increased their overall communication and presentation skills
- The girls have elected to continue working with specific organizations as volunteers for the summer
- Non-solicited support from corporations and higher education
- The project has resulted in the girls finding summer employment through Achieve!Minneapolis Step-Up Program and other community organizations
- The project has become a network and reference for girls entering college



Girls in Action™

“Ready for the World, Ready to Compete.”

- The teaching staff at all three high schools want to be more involved in the program
- Many of the school staff have increased their positive perceptions about the girls
- The communities around the schools enthusiastically welcomed the girls into their organizations
- The project has been requested by local and national high schools
- The project has resulted in increased cross cultural race relations
- Service-Learning and career explorations have resulted in participants discovering and exploring career interests and applying for colleges and scholarships
- Last year the project was more diverse than ever with an increase in Somali and Latina participants

VII. Expanding and Increasing the Capacity of *Girls in Action*™

- Provide continued funding and resources to projects that create structure for youth to be involved in the process
- Provide additional funding to build collaborations and facilitate structured strategic communication between community organizations and leaders as a way to increase the number of service-learning opportunities for participants
- Provide assistance and funding to implement “**Boys of Hope**” for selected Northside middle schools
- Provide additional expertise to girls such as offering after-school curriculum which would include four workshops and the **Rights to Passage**™ Program
- Research funding sources to expand *Girls in Action*™ nationally
- Provide funds to support the creation and implementation of a formal *Girls in Action*™ evaluation plan
- Provide research funding sources to create a *Girls in Action*™ Best Practices Guide for school teachers who want to teach more effectively