

Through their 1,500 program sites nationwide and in Canada, Girls Incorporated offers programs that support parents in sparking their daughters' learning, encouraging their self-esteem and building their communications skills. The results are brighter futures for young women, whose families have helped them become "strong, smart and bold" in pursuit of their dreams. "We strengthen girls' family relationships and help instill the confidence they will need if they choose to become parents one day," says Girls Incorporated President and CEO Joyce M. Roché. "Every girl offers the promise of two generations of stronger families—their own and the next."



GIRLS INCORPORATED OF CARPINTERIA, CALIFORNIA

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Award-winning Program: Operation SMART
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CHILDREN DO WELL WHEN THEIR FAMILIES
DO WELL, AND FAMILIES DO BETTER WHEN
THEY LIVE IN SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

2006 FAMILY STRENGTHENING AWARDS

ACHIEVING DREAMS TOGETHER

In the fields and vineyards of Santa Barbara County, Hispanic parents work hard to give their children a brighter future. For their daughters, however, dreams of college and a career sometimes clash with family traditions and financial realities. Girls Incorporated of Carpinteria developed programs, based on the Girls Inc. Operation SMART® approach, to help these dreams become shared realities by teaching math, science and computer skills to all interested family members.

“When parents come in with their daughters, meet the teachers, see the facility and take the classes, it really unlocks something in them,” Executive Director Ruthie Tremmel explains. “Many of these parents never completed high school. But once they discover how much fun learning can be, they become more determined to support their daughters’ aspirations and pursue their own.”

Three programs—SMART Nights, Math & Science Connections (MASC) and Computer Literacy—expose more than 200 girls and family members to academic and career opportunities they typically have not considered. Through classes, field trips, guest speakers and special events, families develop the tools and confidence to set and achieve higher goals at school, at work and in life.



WE KNEW WE HAD TO EMPOWER THE PARENTS AS WELL AS THE DAUGHTERS TO WIN THE FAMILIES’ SUPPORT. BUT WHAT WE’RE ACTUALLY BUILDING ARE PROGRAMS THAT SERVE THE EXTENDED FAMILY: SIBLINGS, AUNTS, UNCLES, COUSINS, GRANDPARENTS AND NEIGHBORS.

—Ruthie Tremmel, Executive Director, Girls Incorporated of Carpinteria

SUPPORTING LIFELONG LEARNING

“If girls connect with math and science at an early age, they see these subjects in a whole new light,” says Pam Knitowski, Director of Development. “These programs keep building on that enthusiasm as the girls get older. And with family members, relatives and neighbors learning alongside them, it creates a network of support that motivates and challenges all of them to excel in life.”

SMART Nights promote learning along with fun for families with girls in kindergarten through sixth grade. Each Night has a theme and related games and activities that encourage family teamwork, such as “Science Magic” or “Math Jeopardy.”

Middle- and high-school girls and their parents can join in the MASC program, which takes them on several field trips during the school year. Career options in the life sciences, math and technology come alive as girls and their parents meet a female marine biologist at Sea World or visit a former Girls Incorporated member at UC Santa Barbara who is the first in her family to attend college. At the annual “Adelante Mujer Latina” conference, families learn about college, financial aid and career opportunities.

The third program, Computer Literacy, empowers adults to more effectively help their computer-savvy children on homework and other projects by offering free classes in Spanish twice a week. Parents also put their new learning to work themselves: “One parent told us the classes he took here revolutionized his landscaping business,” says Knitowski. “He’s typing better and now uses Excel for invoices. That’s not only saving him hours of work, it’s freeing up more time to spend with his family.”

FAMILIES COUNT FAMILY STRENGTHENING AWARDS

Through a joint venture of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and Girls Incorporated, the FAMILIES COUNT Family Strengthening Awards recognize Girls Incorporated affiliates with outstanding strategies that work to give children what they need most—strong, capable and economically successful families. Responding to the varied needs of the families they serve, these organizations improve the economic prospects of working men and women and create the services and networks of support that all families need to realize their aspirations for themselves and their children.