



GirlsQuest
Going Outside. Growing Inside.

GIRLS QUEST ANNUAL REPORT

2004-2005



**OUR MISSION:
TO NURTURE GIRLS
FROM LOW-INCOME
FAMILIES IN NEW
YORK TO HELP THEM
ACHIEVE THEIR FULL
POTENTIAL AND
BECOME ACTIVE
MEMBERS OF THEIR
COMMUNITIES BY
BUILDING ACADEMIC
AND SOCIAL
COMPETENCE**

LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Fiscal year 2005 was full of exciting changes for Girls Quest. As always, we are grateful for the continued support you have provided us, without which we would not be able to continue our important programs for our girls.

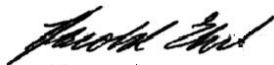
2005 provided us with many opportunities to enhance our programs:

- We worked on building our infrastructure, including updating our financial and technological systems to better communicate and engage with our girls, parents, alumnae, volunteers, donors, and funders.
- We launched a new temporary website, rolled out a new database, and began planning to move into new, larger office space to accommodate the growth of our organization.
- Our new Executive Director, Susan Hall, did a great job in her first fiscal year, working with the entire Girls Quest community to maintain the organization's momentum and to build upon it.
- Our annual benefit was its most successful ever, raising over \$100,000 for the first time.
- We began more focused outreach to our large base of alumnae. We look forward to developing more of our alumnae and volunteer resources to provide our girls with a wider array of quality experiences.

All of these developments laid a solid foundation for future success.

Thank you for being such an important contributor to our work. Your support of Girls Quest allows us to continue to make a significant difference in our girls' lives. If you have any questions about this report or our programs, please call us. We would be pleased to speak with you.

Sincerely,



Harold Elish
Board President



Susan Hall
Executive Director

OUR PROGRAMS

SUMMER EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (SEED)



During the summer of 2005, a total of 318 girls participated in SEED over the course of three two-week sessions of academic and social skills enrichment. These girls came from all five boroughs of New York City, as well as a number from Long Island, Westchester, and the Catskills region. They were racially diverse: 65% were African American, 17% were Latina, 9% were Caucasian, and 1% were Asian American. Some 61% of the girls we served live at or below the Federal poverty standard; 80% of the girls we served live in one-parent households; another 8%

live with grandparents. Almost one half were returning participants. Half were “twens” (ages 10-12), and over a quarter were in early adolescence (13-14).

Our teachers continued to use and develop experiential methods to help children learn literacy and communications concepts by doing, not just by sitting behind a desk. This is a critical part of SEED’s success: In addition to reading and writing in classes and in free time, we take literacy out of the schoolroom and the library and show our girls how the building blocks of strong literacy (vocabulary, diction and grammar, narrative structure, logic, reader empathy, communicative clarity, cultural comparison, perseverance, risk-taking) are relevant and useful, if not critical, to life outside.

In addition to our literacy program, girls participated in other activities, including swimming, hiking, ropes courses, and outdoor education. In line with our non-competitive philosophy, our program seeks to build self-esteem, promote acceptance of others, and encourage teamwork.

TEEN LEADERSHIP PROGRAM



The first year of the redesigned Teen Leadership Program was a success, with 6 girls participating for the entire six weeks of the SEED Program in summer 2005, assisting SEED staff as well as learning for themselves. For the first time, a teacher was hired to provide specialized literacy (both reading and writing) instruction to the Teen Leaders (TLs). As part of their team-building and confidence-enhancing activities, the TLs also had increased time in the

High Ropes and Low Ropes Program. This was part of the restructuring of the Teen Leadership Program, which in 2005 became a formal three-year program, with the new first year in 2005 focusing on personal growth and development of fundamental leadership skills. Girls learned about following leadership, teaching others, positive risk-taking, going beyond comfort zones, and when and how to ask for help.

The Teen Leadership Program is crucial to ongoing plans to develop a stronger, more developed continuum of engagement for our girls. Over 2005, signs of this potential were evident early as the three programs we run were able to support each other: Girls in our Mentor Program, for example, are developing more quickly the maturity and competency needed to join our Teen Leadership Program. As the growth in mentees helps over time to grow the Teen Leadership Program, this will increase opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and growth, and deepen the mutual connections of both sets of girls to each other, to girls at SEED, and to our organization as a whole.

MENTOR PROGRAM



In 2005, the Mentor Program reached its goal of 40 matches. Matches are required to commit to at least one year, and many extend

beyond, to two or more years. All 40 girls in the Mentor Program met with their mentors at least 6-8 hours per month. The pairs went on a wide variety of excursions that were educational, enriching, and fun. As a result of this contact, over the past year our Mentor Program has successfully helped our young women develop:

- Increased communication skills utilizing e-mail, phone, and surface mail, as well as one-on-one in person, to communicate with their mentors.
- Increased sense of self-worth with the ongoing encouragement of their trained mentors.
- A greater sense of empathy and caring for others by evidencing greater trust, better relationships with family and community, and a greater sense of their responsibility for the world around them.
- Leadership skills that will encourage extracurricular activities, planning, and decision-making and a sense of personal power over choices in their lives.

The Mentor Program has had a great impact on Girls Quest, and we expect those effects to continue and grow as we build on the program’s success and also use that success to strengthen our other programs.



IMPACT OF OUR PROGRAMS—THANK YOU LETTER FROM A PARENT



4 August 2005

Girls Vacation Fund, Inc.
370 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY 10017

Dear Camp Staff,

This is a note to express my gratitude. Both of my daughters had such a wonderful experience. They felt safe and well cared about. Both, Julia and Tatiana trusted their Camp Counselors, made friends, and had the best time ever.

In fact, Julia and Tatiana took pictures and I can not express the joy our family and friends had looking at each photo. One could see the comfort of each child. Each had smiles and free-style poses. One could easily see the dedication of your camp staff. They were cheerful and ever so attentive (Special "Thanks" to whom ever did Tatiana's hair).

At a time when I really needed someone really new and trusting in our lives, I met the Girls Quest Organization. I am so happy we have met. I will never forget the experience shared and the impact of an astounded memory for the Holland Family.

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Sincerely,

Juanita Holland
(Julia Holland and Tatiana Holland's - Mommy)

THANK YOU to all of our friends and supporters. We are most grateful for your support of Girls Quest and for your belief in our work and in the young girls who are part of our organization.

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FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FY 2004-2005

Support and Revenue	FY 2005	FY 2004
Contributions from Individuals	\$124,846	\$129,931
Grants from Foundations and Corporations	\$254,189	\$1,086,167*
Client Fees	\$34,590	\$33,241
Government Support	\$21,985	\$19,524
Special Events Net Income	\$103,560	\$82,412
Investment Income**	<u>\$461,256</u>	<u>\$199,603</u>
Total Receipts	\$1,001,226	\$1,550,878
Expenses	FY 2005	FY 2004
Program Services		
Summer Experiential Education & Development Program (SEED)	\$592,353	\$511,711
Teen Leadership Program	\$27,896	\$29,972
Mentor Program	\$89,277	\$92,021
Total Program Services	\$709,526	\$633,704
Supporting Services		
Management and General	\$90,490	\$76,606
Fundraising	\$65,295	\$34,834
Total Supporting Services	<u>\$155,785</u>	<u>\$111,440</u>
Total Expenditures	\$865,311	\$745,144
Excess Revenue/(Expenses)	\$135,915	\$805,734

*In the fiscal year 2003-2004 Girls Quest received a bequest from the Estate of David Cooke in the amount of \$630,000. The bequest was transferred into our Endowment Fund to support the long term development of our facilities and programs.

**Investments are presented at fair market value. Prior to 2005, Girls Quest recorded the value of investments at cost.



GirlsQuest

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"I had a great time at [SEED]. It was a great experience for me... I loved it. Meeting people was a lot of fun. Making new friends was the best. The counselors treated me well and I felt safe. I played a lot of activities and I also learned new things. Writing class was a lot of fun and I loved making the newsletter. Making s'mores with Ms. Connie was a great experience. I had never made s'mores ... Thank you for giving me the opportunity to come to camp."

~ Jasmine, 13



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