



## **Girls Incorporated of the Central Coast**

We are an affiliate of Girls Incorporated, the nation's leading expert on girls. We are part of a network of girl-serving organizations committed to excellence and positive social change.

We provide high quality, research-based informal after-school education programs.

### **Our Vision**

Empowered girls participating in an equitable world.

### **Our Mission**

To inspire all girls to be strong, smart and bold, to respect themselves and the world around them.

Our programs focus on leadership development, higher education, healthy relationships and pregnancy prevention, are designed for girls from elementary school through high school.

Programs are conducted at school sites in six cities: Salinas, Seaside, Monterey, Gonzales, Soledad and Greenfield. We work with 500 to 600 girls a year.

### **Girls Inc.® Girls' Bill of Rights**

Girls have the right to be themselves and to resist gender stereotypes.

Girls have the right to express themselves with originality and enthusiasm.

Girls have the right to take risk, strive freely, and take pride in success.

Girls have the right to accept and appreciate their bodies

Girls have the right to have confidence in themselves and to be safe in the world.

Girls have the right to prepare for interesting work and financial independence.

## **Girls Incorporated of the Central Coast programs**

**ECHO:** (Education, Careers, Health, Opportunities) is a yearlong-leadership program, that works with high-risk teenagers, 16 to 18. The program is designed to encourage girls to avoid pregnancy, pursue post-secondary education and plan for future careers. Activities include daylong retreats, college visits, guest speakers, field trips and individual projects.

**Teen Leaders:** ECHO graduates can continue their leadership development by working in other GICC programs (see below) offered to girls in high school and middle school. These activities provide a way for teen leaders to learn and practice program planning, public speaking, conflict resolution and mentoring.

**Smart Choices** is a weeklong summer program for girls just completing middle school and offered in collaboration with California State University, Monterey Bay. The program allows girls to explore their leadership potential, examine myths about cultural and

sexual stereotypes, examine the influence of the media in their lives, study women's health issues and learn the difference between healthy and damaging relationships. The program also helps participants make decisions about their high school coursework and plan classes that will enable them to pursue a college education. These girls may apply to ECHO when they become high school sophomores.

**Will Power/Won't Power<sup>SM</sup>** is a series of communication workshops for girls 12 to 14 focusing on values and healthy relationships. The program helps girls identify and avoid risky situations, provides information on female health and the reproductive system, and encourages girls to value and support each other. Will Power/Won't Power is part of Girls Inc.'s Preventing Adolescent Pregnancy. GICC is the first in the country to offer this program entirely facilitated by high school juniors and seniors.

**Friendly PEERsuasion** is a substance-abuse prevention program for middle school girls, 11 to 14. This program approaches drug-abuse prevention as a peer issue, using the positive influence of young people modeling healthy behaviors. Participants are trained to serve as role models and program facilitators for younger girls entering the program.

**Growing Together<sup>TM</sup>** is designed to increase positive communication between mothers (or other significant adults) and their 10- to 12-year-old daughters, to help them discuss questions about sexual behavior and puberty.

A series of five workshops are held with key topics addressed, such as changes during puberty, anatomy, physiology, health care and hygiene; adolescent sexual development and feelings. In addition, the workshop cover values and expectations for teenage sexual behavior and HIV/AIDS and other STDs.

## **History**

Girls Incorporated of the Central Coast began in 1999 with one program, ECHO, in one Salinas high school, serving 12 girls. In 2001, the ACTION Council of Monterey County adopted ECHO as its major project with the intention of expanding programs, and eventually spinning GICC off as an independent nonprofit organization. In 2003, GICC became a provisional affiliate of the national Girls Inc., and set a goal for independent nonprofit status by June 2007. In the past five years, GICC has grown to serve more than 500 girls a year in Monterey County.