

The Women's Fund El Dorado  
June 30, 2013

Big Brothers Big Sisters of El Dorado County  
Girls Circle El Dorado  
Final Report



Big Brothers Big Sisters of El Dorado County  
Girls Circle El Dorado Project  
Year-End Report

Executive Summary

Girls Circle El Dorado was a collaborative project between Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) of El Dorado County and Herbert Green and Markham Middle Schools. Girls Circle El Dorado addressed three specific areas of concern considered to be the foundation of girls' health: self efficacy, perceived body image, and perceived social support and relationships with parents, peers, partners, and community.

Participants were either self selected (20%) or chosen by school (80%). Girls were given a parent permission slip that had to be returned in order to participate. A meeting was set up with school principals to identify best time, room assignment, and other logistics.

The girls met weekly throughout the school year with a BBBS facilitator to discuss specific topics and themes within a structured curriculum. At the start, each girl signed a "contract" stating guidelines they developed. The guidelines helped the girls understand boundaries and taught them to respect each other's thoughts and feelings. They also decided on "learned consequences" (instead of discipline) if someone broke the guidelines. Each weekly session included skill-building activities and discussions that allowed the girls to express themselves, learn more about each other, and gain skills to communicate feelings and thoughts in non-violent ways. The girls decided which topics to focus on. Several topics were extended due to the girls wanting more information and practice. Girls were given the opportunity to co-facilitate the sessions taking on more of a leadership role.

Girls completed surveys and bully questionnaire before lessons began and at the end of the program. Verbal and written testimonials were gathered from participants, classmates, teachers, and school admin.

Topics included:

Types of bullying, bystanders, approaches to stopping, bystander approach  
Feelings  
Perception/assumptions  
Communication skills  
Healthy relationships vs. unhealthy relationships; support systems, community  
Body image, media  
Who I am; individuality; diversity, self-esteem, helpers  
Girl drama

Healthy snacks were provided for energy as well as contribute to lessons on body image. A "graduation" party was given at the end of the project with resource materials, a "yearbook" page with positive comments written by the participants for each other, and a golf ball (painted purple for BBBS) as gifts. The golf ball is a metaphorical representation of life. The dimples signify life's bumpy road or valleys filled with mistakes, hard times, and loss. With the "dimples" in life come learning, and just like the golf ball that needs the dimples to fly straight, we need the "dimples" or mistakes to help guide us down our own right path. The golf ball is for them to keep for life as a remembrance of all they learned in Girls Circle.

## Measurable Objectives

<b>Proposed Project Design – Major Activities</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>	<b>% accomplished How Measured - Tools</b>	<b>Project Outcomes</b>
BBBS presents and enrolls 6 <sup>th</sup> grade girls at two school sites in a Girls Circle program for two themes lasting entire school year	30-45 girls served at two different school sites	100% of facilitators will be trained and have experience with target group Facilitator training and manual	<b>Facilitator trained in Sonoma County by One Circle; other facilitator already trained</b>  <b>57 girls (4 classes total) were served at two school sites</b>
Facilitators run weekly groups throughout school year	Two themed sessions lasting 8 weeks and 12 weeks at two different school sites	80% of girls will complete both sessions Participants will sign in on roll sheets	<b>96% (54) of girls completed program. Two girls went to another school; One girl moved to another state</b>
Girls share thoughts and feelings and participate in interactive activities to increase self-esteem; change perception of body image; increase connections with peers and adults	Girls participate in at least one activity per weekly group during each session Girls participate in at least one school-wide activity	70% of girls will have an increase in self esteem; have more knowledge and skills about their bodies; have at least 3 caring relationships with peers and adults Facilitator notes; Post surveys, testimonials, Strength of Relationship questionnaire	<b>93% of girls had significant increase in self-esteem and body image rating</b> <b>Each girl reported at least three caring people in their lives they felt they could talk to when needing help; 77% were able to name four or more</b>

### Outcomes Narrative

A total of 57 girls (4 classes, two at each school) completed 30 sessions/weeks each throughout the 2012/2013 school years at both Markham Middle School and Herbert Green Middle School. Both classes at Herbert Green were 6<sup>th</sup> grade girls. At Markham, the first class consisted of 6<sup>th</sup> graders and the second class was 7<sup>th</sup> graders who were our pilot class the previous school year. Sessions were tailored differently to meet their specific needs.

Lessons consisted of an educational component and then activities, games, or crafts to further the learning. All learning modalities were utilized so that we reached all girls and their learning styles.

Attendance records showed that 96% of girls attended completed sessions. Surveys showed that 93% of girls had a significant increase in self-esteem or self - confidence and body image, 85% felt they could trust their peers more and knew who to go to for help at home, school and community, 78% felt their relationships with adults had improved by using communication skills learned, 82% could name 3 out of the 5 healthy coping tools learned, and 65% said they already used at least one coping tool to help when they were feeling depressed. Each girl was able to name 3 “helpers” they could go to in time of need and 77% of the girls could name four people.

Testimonials showed that 75% of girls favored Girls Garbage as one of their favorite activities. They also enjoyed feeling charades, and the body image activities.

Overall, school personnel reported much less “girl drama” and bullying on campus as well as a calmer campus. There was a 60% reduction in 6<sup>th</sup> grade girls getting in trouble, which also included the general school population.

### **Unanticipated Outcomes**

- At both Markham and Herbert Green Middle Schools, there were so many girls that wanted to be in the group, we opened up two sessions at each school for a total of four
- Girls took newly learned skills and taught to peers, both male and female, throughout their daily interactions
- Teachers and other personnel spoke of a calmer school culture
- 60% decrease in disciplinary problems school-wide
- At Markham School, 50% of 6<sup>th</sup> grade girls discussed their sexual assaults; a couple of which we had to make child abuse reports on
- One student at Herbert green reported (during post survey and testimonials) that she was contemplating suicide at the beginning of school because of her home life, but Girls Circle gave her a new look at how and where she could get help and coping skills when life is difficult.

### **Challenges**

- Having too many girls that wanted to be in program
- School principal at one of participating schools not very supportive especially when it came time to make child abuse reports – result: school personnel will receive mandated reporter training in Fall so they understand their roles and responsibilities
- School personnel not knowledgeable about child sexual assault; didn’t know how to support girls. Result: school staff will receive training as part of above.
- Girls wanted to do Girls Garbage so much, it was sometimes hard to get through lessons

## Conclusion

It is evident that girls need this program – a place where they can express themselves, be who and what they want, without judgment, talk about nonacademic subjects, and feel empowered to be a girl!

I'd like to thank the Women's Fund El Dorado and the El Dorado Community Foundation for their support throughout our program. You have allowed the girls to voice their experiences, gain skills to help themselves in everyday relationships and situations, and to pursue meaningful goals at school and beyond. It was truly a life-changing experience for all!

## Attachments

Girls Circle Comments page

Danika McGeever's speech (participant in Herbert Green's Girl Circle)

## Budget

See page 6

Respectively Submitted,

Judy Knapp  
Executive Director

**\$5500**

<b>Expense</b>	<b>Grant Amount</b>	<b>Total Costs</b>
<u>Girls Circle Facilitator</u> Amount covered workman's comp costs for Melissa Lingo	\$800	\$800
<u>Equipment</u> projector	\$650	\$650 \$647 + shipping = \$683
<u>Supplies/Materials</u>  Journals – (60 x \$5) Crafts Games Beach Balls/Balloons Paper – all types Poster Board Golf balls	\$1325	\$1325  \$300 \$300 \$475 \$75 \$150 \$40 <u>\$25</u> \$1365
<u>Printing</u> Ink cartridges (\$99 ea.) Printer rental for 8 months (\$64/mo.)	\$1000	\$1000  \$64/mo. x 8 = \$512 \$99/ea. x 5 = <u>\$495</u> Total \$1007
<u>Travel</u> To and from schools Meetings at school and office Training - Sonoma	\$890	\$890 2 facilitators = \$750 2 facilitators = \$100 Training = <u>\$60</u> Total = \$910
<u>Training</u> Girls Circle Facilitator training and manual	\$435	\$435
<u>Healthy Snacks</u> For sessions (30 x 4 classes = 120 sessions) End of year party (\$25x4 classes)	\$400	\$400  Sessions = \$300 EOY party = \$100
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$5,500	\$5,500  Actual = \$5,600