

# Girls Inc. Project BOLD®

## Why This Program?

Girls Incorporated believes that girls have the right to have confidence in themselves and be safe in the world. Girls are entitled to *feel* safe as they go through life, and they are entitled to *be* safe in their homes, schools, and communities. Yet violence enters the lives of girls and young women on a daily basis, giving many the message that violence is normal and acceptable. Girls especially experience gender-based violence, including physical and sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and partner or dating violence.

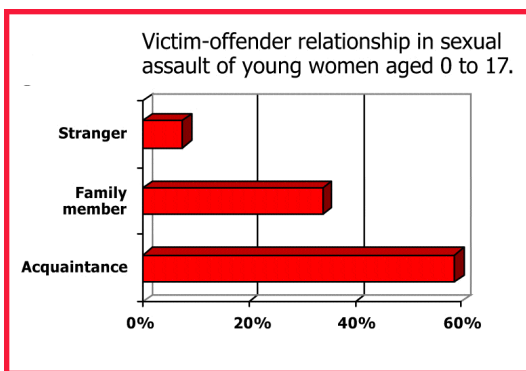
Girls get mixed messages about how to respond to violence—“depend on others to protect you,” “get tough because you can count only on yourself,” “give in because your world can never be safe.” Girls and young women deserve program opportunities that equip them to increase their personal safety. More specifically, program opportunities need to engage girls in analyzing the causes and effects of violence and expand their individual skills and strategies for protecting themselves.

In addition to stronger personal skills, girls deserve communities and a world that treat everyone with respect and that take responsibility for providing a safe environment. Programs also need to engage girls and young women as important agents of change—developing their collective strategies and skills to help their communities live up to expectations for better treatment. Girls can both *feel* safer and *be* safer, we believe, through programs that address both self-protection and community change.

## About the Program

**Girls Inc. Project BOLD** provides a continuum of age-appropriate and gender-specific violence prevention programming to give girls and young women the skills, strategies, and support for personal safety and safety in their communities and beyond:

- **Be Bold!**<sup>SM</sup> (for girls ages 6 to 8) is under development. It will strengthen girls’ sense of themselves as valuable and valued young people, empower them with the skills and personal information critical to avoiding hurtful or dangerous situations, and assist them in identifying and acknowledging people and resources that contribute to their safety.
- **Action for Safety**<sup>SM</sup> (for girls ages 9 to 11) builds negotiation, assertiveness, and self-defense skills. It facilitates open and honest discussions about interpersonal violence—including teasing and bullying, sexual harassment, dating violence, and physical and sexual



**“I learned how to defend myself and to think about how to stay safe.”**

— Kayla, 11, Action for Safety Participant  
Girls Inc. of New York City

abuse—to increase girls’ understanding about these issues as well as encourage, support, and lessen the fear and isolation of girls who are being hurt.

- **Living Safe & Strong**<sup>SM</sup> (for girls ages 12 to 14) reinforces and provides additional safety strategies and self-defense skills for girls, introduces them to community resources, and supports them in taking action on violence issues in partnership with their communities.

## Results

Participants in Action for Safety at Girls Inc. of Greater Lowell (Massachusetts) met or exceeded all program goals. They could explain whether a situation was merely irritating or potentially dangerous, and had practiced appropriate verbal and physical self-defense skills. They showed confidence in their own abilities and in the knowledge that they could seek help from others.

## Partners

Action for Safety was developed in cooperation with Annie Ellman and her Center for Anti-Violence Education (CAE). CAE worked extensively with Girls Incorporated to refine the underlying philosophy and approach of Project BOLD.

## Funders

The following grant makers are among the many generous contributors who have supported the Girls Inc. Project BOLD program and related initiatives:

Moriah Fund; The New York Community Trust; The Rockefeller Foundation; Tambrands, Inc.; Tupperware Corporation

## Girls Incorporated

Girls Incorporated® is a nonprofit organization that inspires all girls to be strong, smart, and bold<sup>SM</sup>. With local roots dating to 1864 and national status since 1945, Girls Inc. has responded to the changing needs of girls through research-based programs and public education efforts that empower girls to understand, value, and assert their rights. In 2004, Girls Inc. reached nearly 800,000 girls through Girls Inc. affiliates, our website, and educational publications.

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