



Girls Incorporated® of Durham

Inspiring girls to be Strong, Smart & Bold™

Girls Inc. Literacy & Reading Enrichment Programs

According to the Literacy Network of Durham Region: (www.lindr.on.ca)

- 42% of the population has low literacy performance.
- In Ontario, 30% of the population (15 years or age and older) have less than a high school education.
- Almost 40% of youth (16-25) have low literacy performance.
- Over 65% of those with low literacy are of prime working age (26-55).
- There are 832,000 immigrants in Ontario with low literacy performance in English and French.

Girls Incorporated of Durham Literacy Programs are delivered in local community schools identified with challenges including: academic achievement below the provincial standard; students who do not come to school prepared with the necessary social and or emotional skills; ESL students new to the country; and financial constraints of parents that do not allow for extra curricular involvement of students.

Girls Inc. Literacy programs are carefully developed to increase the academic and social development of girls. Expected outcomes of the programs include:

- Improvement in attitude toward learning and overall improvement in self-esteem and confidence.
- Improved reading ability to provincial standard or higher and increased success in school and in learning.
- Reinforcement of basic social skills, such as cooperation, team building and conflict resolution to help develop workplace competencies.
- The building of effective communication skills, increase opportunities to connect with each other, and the development of positive attitudes.

GirlSTART

Delivered by trained facilitators GIRLStart is a comprehensive literacy and reading enrichment program carefully developed for girls in first and second grade, who are reading below grade level and whose families lack additional resources; GIRLStart addresses both the need to build academic skills, as well as healthy attitudes toward learning is based on Girls Incorporated's commitment to provide a powerful combination of programs, research and advocacy that inspires girls to be strong, smart and bold and to prepare for rewarding careers and confident adulthood. With an appreciation for individual identity and diversity, GirlSTART provides a comprehensive approach to literacy skill building and the development of healthy attitudes toward learning.

GirlSTART's primary target population is girls ages 6 to 8 who are performing below the provincial standard and/or are experiencing difficult family or social challenges, and have been identified by their teachers as in need of academic support.

Girls receive daily individual literacy tutoring and also participate as groups in literacy extension exercises which include using recipes for cooking, playing letter bingo, writing their own songs, and designing their own books. GirlSTART coordinators recruit and train peer coaches, girls from grades 7 and 8 who support literacy learning for the younger girls and adult volunteers who serve as educators and mentors.

Beacon Street Girls

"Beacon Street Girls" Literacy and Reading Enrichment Program aims to increase the academic and social development of girls between the ages of 9 and 11 who are reading below grade level and whose families lack the resources to help.

"Beacon Street Girls" program is based on Beacon Street Girls™, a contemporary and age-appropriate series of sixteen novels. This literacy program provides positive role models and health affirming messages for preteen girls during the tumultuous middle school years and inspires girls to believe in themselves. Girls between the ages of nine and eleven deserve their own world, a place that speaks to them about issues they care about, in their own language; they shouldn't have to make do with teen products that have been scaled-down or tweaked. Teen books deal with topics unsuited to a younger audience; the emotions run high and the language is often inappropriate. The Beacon Street Girls use media in positive ways – to help girls reflect on, understand, and deal with some of the difficult issues of growing up.

"Beacon Street Girls" is delivered by trained professional facilitators and volunteers. Academic, social and recreational activities include reading enrichment activities such as games, puzzles and quizzes; comprehension activities such as phonics instruction, spelling, poetry and letter writing; group challenges, activities, art and craft projects; group reading, journal writing and follow-up activities; "energizer" activities such as human bingo and human knot; and the provision of a nutritious snack.