



Inspiring all girls to be **Strong, Smart, and Bold**

girls inc.

of Greater Houston



SEPTEMBER 2017

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LETTER FROM THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It has been a trying time for Houstonians in the wake of Hurricane Harvey.

These last three weeks have been very difficult for many of our Girls Inc. friends and family who have lost their cars, homes and many personal items. Yet, it has been a time of great compassion with a show of helping hands to neighbors as well as people we've never met before. Our Girls Inc. staff has been out volunteering in the community and have launched our "Help Houston Heal" campaign to donate feminine hygiene and school items to the girls in our programs.

A sign of Houston healing is the fact that school is finally restarting.

We are excited about getting back in the schools to share our message of resiliency and courage to overcome adversity. Our message and our programs are still the same, but we are focusing on a new program strategy with a new team. This year we will be focusing on a feeder pattern strategy as part of the Girls Inc. Experience. Being present in an elementary school, as well as the middle and high school into which they feed, provides girls with sustained exposure to Girls Inc. programming, which over time, increases positive outcomes and reduces negative outcomes. We have brought on a few new partners to begin implementing this strategy, and we have many of our long-term school partners returning.

We are continuing our partnership with ProUnitas, increasing our presence from four schools to seven.

In the Kashmere area, Girls Inc. will provide programs now to four elementary schools, each of which feed into Key Middle School, which feeds into Kashmere High School. This will give us an opportunity to work with girls from second through twelfth grades.

We are working on a grant with CASE for Kids to develop a feeder program in Aldine ISD.

In addition to the current school partners in Aldine ISD, Bethune Academy and Houston Academy, we will be adding Harris Academy and Drew Academy to inspire girls from second through eighth grades. Eventually, we hope to add the high school into which they feed, so again, we could empower and mentor girls from second grade through high school. This grant will be awarded by City Councilman Jerry Davis from District B and will be awarded in early October. If you know Jerry and want to send a note to him to put in a good word for Girls Inc., we would appreciate it!

Finally, we are delighted to announce four new staff members to our programming team.

They are all strong, smart, and bold and will be great mentors, facilitators, and inspirations to the girls we serve. Please read below to find out more about our new staff and how you can be part of our "Reach for the Stars Family Gala" at Minute Maid Park on Saturday, November 11.

Warm Regards, Louise Symmes, *Interim Executive Director*



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Please donate today!

Your support is making a difference! With your help, we equip girls to navigate gender, economic, and social barriers and grow up healthy, educated, and independent. Girls build confidence and embrace positive decision-making to take charge of their health and wellbeing, and achieve academic, personal, and career goals.



Reach for the Stars Family Gala

Save the date! Join us on Saturday, November 11 at Minute Maid Park, 6-9 p.m. This is a family-friendly event, open to adults and children of all ages. Guests will participate in interactive Girls Inc. program activities and other games; bid on a hand-crafted outdoor playhouse, trips, jewelry and other fine auction items; and enjoy great food, dancing, and photo ops with Orbit and Newton the Dragon in and around the Diamond Club and home plate. Proceeds will directly benefit Girls Inc. of Greater Houston. For sponsorship opportunities and tickets visit http://www.girlsinc-houston.org/news_special.html or contact Arlene at 713-802-2260, or arlene@girlsinc-houston.org.

Our New Programming Team



Jolea Payne joined Girls Inc. of Greater Houston as Program Director on July 31st. She comes to Girls Inc. with more than 10 years of professional experience working in the nonprofit and public sectors, primarily in education and workforce development. Prior to Girls Inc., Jolea was the Director of the Gulf Coast Adult Education Consortium, which provided literacy and training for approximately 25,000 adults each year in the 13-county region. She was a member of the 2016 Rice University Leadership Institute for Nonprofit Executives (LINE) class, and has been an active member of the Board of Literacy Advance of Houston since 2012. When she is not working or serving in the community, she enjoys reading, dancing, and taking naps with her adopted dog, Eva.

Juno Okoro (left) is a Nigerian American born in Houston Texas. She graduated with a Bachelors of Science in Community Health from the University Of Texas At San Antonio. Hoping to continue serving underserved communities on a larger scale, she has been involved with many service organizations, volunteering with special needs

children and tutoring youth in inner city schools. She is very excited to start her journey with Girls Inc. as a Program Facilitator and encourage girls to be strong, smart, and bold!

Michelle Martinez (middle) is a Mexican American born in Houston, TX. She received her Bachelor's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies from the University of Houston-Downtown. Her undergraduate experience was focused on Early Childhood Education. She has worked for educational organizations such as iEducate and Little Heroes. She is passionate about helping children and looks forward to working as a program facilitator for Girls Inc. of greater Houston.

Ashley Young (right) was born in Birmingham, Alabama, but raised in Houston, Texas. She graduated from Sam Houston State University with a Bachelor of Public Health; where she was active in volunteer services and community health development. After graduation Ashley worked as a preschool teacher in The Woodlands. During this time, she realized her talents could be more effective as a youth educator, which led her to Girls Inc. Ashley is currently pursuing her Master of Science in Health at Sam Houston

State University. Although she has only been a part of this organization for a short time, she is ready to take on the position as a Program Facilitator and looks forward to all of the friendships and impact she will make in each girls' life.



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