

Girls' Grantmaking



Project Report

Introduction

In 2012, the Women's Fund for the Fox Valley Region, Inc. hosted its first Girls' Grantmaking Project (GGP) sessions. The program invites girls from local high schools who have been recommended by faculty and staff to two days of leadership training, community education and grantmaking. Through facilitated discussion, the girls decide what issues in the community are most important to them and their peers, which then guides their decision on grant allocation.

Each year, four organizations, on average, are awarded grant money. The girls have \$10,000 to allocate to the programs that they feel best meet the needs that they deemed most important, based on grant applications and interviews. Youth Go, Harbor House, Best Friends of Neenah-Menasha, Boys and Girls Brigade, Girls on the Run, and Boys and Girls Club of the Fox Valley have all received grant funding from the Girls' Grantmaking Project more than once.

The Women's Fund distributed a survey to all past participants of the GGP in order to evaluate the program from their side. Of the 86 girls who were in the program, **39 (45%) responded** to the survey. Summaries of their responses are shown below. The articles included in this report show in more detail the impact that the Girls' Grantmaking Project has had for one of the participants and for two grantee organizations.

Survey Results



Quick Facts

33 of 39 girls went to or plan to attend a 4-year college or university.

4 of 39 went to a two-year college or technical college.

1 plans to serve in the military.

1 entered the workforce.

3 from Class of 2013

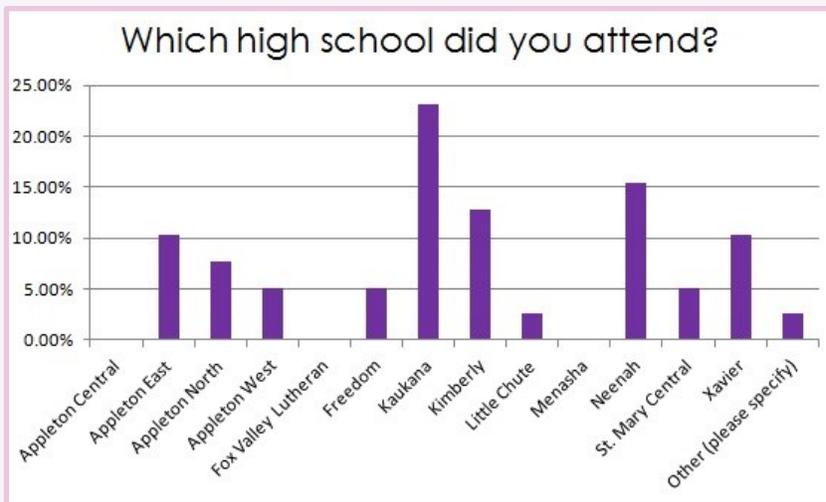
4 from Class of 2014

4 from Class of 2015

13 from Class of 2016

5 from Class of 2017

10 still in high school



The range of academic interests of the survey respondents is wide.

The girls aspire to be doctors, lawyers, nurses and more.

- Health sciences**
- Nursing**
- Biology/biochemistry**
- Business administration**
- Communications**
- Education**
- English**
- Math**
- Spanish**

MOST COMMON



“The Girls’ Grantmaking Project had a great influence on my choosing to go into the human service field.” —Grace, 2013 GGP participant



Survey Results

WOMEN'S fund
for the fox valley region, inc.

Quick Facts

0 of 39 are married or have kids.

23 of 39 still live in the Fox Valley.

5 girls attend University of Wisconsin–Madison, while

7 go to other University of Wisconsin System schools.

10 attended or plan to attend universities outside of Wisconsin, including in:

California

Minnesota

Illinois

Pennsylvania

Florida

“ My experience inspired me to actually change my future college major from social sciences to a double major in public relations and political science. ”
—2017 GGP participant

A number of **community issues** are important to the survey respondents, ranging from poverty to animal abuse to ecological issues. The most common are

- POVERTY**
- HOMELESSNESS**
- HEALTHCARE**
- ACCESS TO EDUCATION**
- RACE EQUALITY**
- GENDER EQUALITY & WOMEN'S RIGHTS**
- ACCESS TO BASIC RIGHTS**
- DOMESTIC ABUSE**
- DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE**
- GUN VIOLENCE**
- BULLYING**
- HUMAN TRAFFICKING**
- MENTAL HEALTH**

74%

of 39 reported volunteering, whether through school clubs, church, or a sorority.

These results indicate that most survey respondents are aware, educated, and productive young women in our society.

“ I was inspired by my GGP experience to be generous, not only monetarily, but also with my time. ”

“ It made me want to do more for my community. ”

Impact



Despite being a two-day program, the learning experiences from the GGP are long lasting for the girls involved. Many of our survey respondents described similar experiences during the program.

HAVING A VOICE

“I had a hard time voicing my opinion before GGP. However everyone was so nice and welcoming, I felt comfort[able] to say what I felt. **That I will carry with me as a lifelong skill.**”
—2015 participant

“It was a very unique experience as a young person to ‘have the power’ to make a decision that would so positively influence a local charity with a large sum of money.”
—Kathryn, GGP 2012

“I learned that my ideas are important and valid and **it gave me confidence** to voice those ideas in other spaces where I might have been scared to otherwise. —Clare, GGP 2015”

COMMUNITY

“It made me want to get more invested in philanthropic organizations so I could better help the community.”
—Jenny, GGP 2013

“My participation in the GGP has **inspired me to take bolder steps.** It has made me realize that I can do more in my community.”
—Justice, GGP 2017

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

“What I remember most about my experience in the Girls' Grantmaking Project is the feeling of making a difference.” —Grace, GGP 2013

“It made me feel that I could **make an impact on my community** at such a young age.” —2014 participant

“It made me believe that I could do more even though I'm not an adult.”
—Megan, GGP 2016

“I felt like I was truly **making a difference in my community** because I had input on what was important to me. —Bailey, GGP 2014”

INSPIRATION

“My GGP experience has made me realize **how incredible our community is** and how much it really has to offer.” —2014 participant

It has inspired me to continue helping my community in every way that I can.”
—Cassidy, GGP 2016

“Through my GGP experience, I was pleasantly surprised at the amount of ‘do good-ers’ in our community. It was **truly inspiring** as a young girl!”
—Halle, GGP 2014

Impact



TEAMWORK

“What stood out to me in my GGP experience was **the positive impact** that a group of, at one point, strangers can have if they all come together with a common goal. In many groups that I have been involved with since my GGP experience, I have worked with this same idea in mind.”
—Halle, GGP 2014

“I learned that it is important to collaborate and be open to other perspectives.” —Kathryn, GGP 2012

“What I've applied from the GGP is how to respect everyone and their opinions and ideas as well as **how to take on and help resolve a problem** or task.” —2015 participant

“I learned how other girls, no matter how different they seemed, could find common ground. **It taught me so much** about working in a team and coming to an agreement.”
—Rachel, GGP 2012

“I have learned that being a teammate and morphing into the role of a leader, support system, or creative mind, whatever it is the group might need, **it is all worth it** for the big picture.” —Grace, GGP 2013

“I learned about how to make decisions with many others, particularly in an activist space.”
—Clare, GGP 2015

“The experience was **truly rewarding.**”
—2015 participant

“I learned how important it is to give back to organizations that have made you who you are.”
—Jenny, GGP 2013

“It made me realize that I could have a future with philanthropy.”
—Justice, GGP 2017

“I now want to work for a nonprofit to impact people's lives.”
—2013 participant

“I often think of my GGP experience and those we were able to impact.”
—Halle, GGP 2014



While the survey responses look encouraging, it's even more powerful to hear a direct case of how a GGP experience has influenced one girl's life, even after high school.

Path to Politics Jumpstarted by GGP

"I hope to run for a seat on the City Council so that I may begin my political career," Rachel Baldwin says. "I want to be in the Capitol discussing Wisconsin policy that impacts our most vulnerable populations." Wisconsin State Legislature is the end goal, but the Girls' Grantmaking Project was a starting point.

Rachel participated in the Girls' Grantmaking Project during its first cycle in 2012. "GGP was my first exposure to the process of writing and approving grants," she says. "I found the process very interesting, especially since I knew I wanted to work in nonprofits."

Like other participants, Rachel found the GGP discussion eye-opening and informative about philanthropy. "It made me realize that all organizations start small, and that any amount of money makes a difference," she says. "It made me feel more empowered as someone donating time or money." Rachel connected with girls she never would have met if not for the GGP and learned a lot about teamwork during the two GGP sessions.

After these first exposures to grant writing and women's issues in the community, she went on to explore more on these topics at University of Wisconsin-Madison. Rachel became more familiar with grants as a director on the Wisconsin Alumni Student Board. She also spent time studying one particular issue facing women. "For six months, I researched sex trafficking for the Status of Women Project," she explains. "I focused on sex trafficking in Native communities in Wisconsin." This work eventually led her to Spain and Morocco, researching sex trafficking on a global scale with UW Professor Araceli Alonso.

Rachel graduated from UW-Madison in 2017 with a degree in gender and women's studies. She now works as the program associate for Preventative Cardiovascular Nurses Association (PCNA). She says, "My role is to help our director of clinical education, communications specialist, membership coordinator, and grant writer run the organization."

Her GGP experience was essential to her understanding of grant writing. "During the GGP, I was exposed to many different grants and I was able to see the different



Path to Politics continued...

objectives, details, and styles of writing that other organizations used," she says.

"The GGP showed me the importance of writing a strong initial grant proposal because some funding opportunities will filter weak proposals out right away."

Since grant writing is now in her job description, the GGP remains in the back of her mind. "It is something I think about every day when I write grant proposals for PCNA!" she says.

The Girls' Grantmaking Project was an invaluable stepping stone in Rachel's path to employment, and potentially to a career as a politician. The GGP sessions may have lasted just two days, but what she was exposed to during that time will remain with her for years to come. ■■■■



The organizations that receive grant funding from the Girls' Grantmaking Project come from all over the Fox Valley region, and they all offer programs with different aims and outcomes. Out of its six cycles, six organizations have received funding more than once. Youth Go and Harbor House are two such organizations.

GGP Hat-trick: Youth Go's S.E.E.D. Program

Youth Go is an organization based in Neenah that offers a supportive community for youth, especially youth considered "at-risk" or "underserved," by providing opportunities for growth and learning through tutoring programs, speakers, creative arts activities, community services and more. A few years ago, Youth Go set out to address a problem that was corroborated by the LIFE study and by the Women's Fund's own GGP grant priorities: students were graduating, but not with the job skills or preparedness necessary to be successful in their next steps. Because of this finding, the S.E.E.D. program was born.

S.E.E.D. (See, Explore, Educate and Dream) is a summer program that focuses on providing teenage girls with the means to explore and educate themselves about the many career options available to them. S.E.E.D. began in 2014, and after its first cycle, Youth Go received GGP funding for FLOW (Females Leading Our Workforce), which was a program that continued the focus of S.E.E.D. into the school year. S.E.E.D. was granted funding by the GGP in the two subsequent years, making Youth Go one of only two organizations to receive GGP funding three times.

With 6–12 participants in the program, S.E.E.D. takes the girls on site visits each summer to learn about career options. Alternatively, for some sessions, citizens come to Youth Go to talk with the girls about what they do. "We really focused on looking at the job market and jobs that were growing or in need of workers, and also looked at education that was obtainable locally," explains Kelly Hicks, executive director of Youth Go.

Since this program was funded more than once, the GGP girls clearly saw the value in it. "I think it was something they could see themselves participating in and benefitting from," says Hicks. "It's something that I think is a need."

Hicks was interviewed by the GGP group when S.E.E.D. applied for funding. She remembers the positive, unique experience, having felt much more relaxed than normal in front of the diverse group of girls. She says, "I'm used to talking to teenagers. Usually I go in to a grant interview with this feeling of intimidation, but I was really excited to talk to a population that I talk to all the time."



GGP Hat-trick continued...

In her roles as both Youth Go executive director and community member, Hicks values the GGP and its emphasis on community and philanthropy. "I just think it's such an incredible opportunity for these women. I think that everybody has the ability to make a difference, and I think the program shows them how easy it is to make a difference," she says.

With the support of the Women's Fund and the Girls' Grantmaking Project, the S.E.E.D. program flourished! The program has become quite important for the youth involved, and it accomplishes its mission in important ways.

"It builds confidence. I think about a number of the girls that make this program a priority and make sure that they're here every week. Seeing these young girls graduate and be able to take on what's next, I think that's the biggest thing that S.E.E.D. has done," Hicks says. ■ ■ ■ ■



Harbor House Girls' Empowerment Group

"They were clearly so proud of what they accomplished," says Jenny Krikava, the development and marketing manager at Harbor House, regarding the 2017 Girls' Empowerment Group graduation ceremony. "It was a beautiful thing to witness."

Harbor House, established in 1984, is an agency committed to the awareness and prevention of domestic abuse. It is a 55-bed shelter facility that offers programs and services to both residents and non-residents. Equipped with various advocacy services, intervention and prevention programming and more, Harbor House helps individuals live a fulfilling life after surviving domestic abuse.

The Girls' Empowerment Group has been a prevention program at Harbor House since 2015, started by Laurie Fannin of Harbor House and Danielle Wickesberg of, at the time, the Boys and Girls Club. The program is designed to empower girls in middle school "with tools to inspire their sense of self-worth, help them recognize healthy versus unhealthy relationships and increase their confidence by building coping and resiliency skills," according to Harbor House.

In 2015, the GGP granted Harbor House the funds to jumpstart the program. "A very, very good thing was begun by the Girl's Grantmaking Project," Harbor House said in their final report of the Girls' Empowerment Group.

The program curriculum addresses a variety of issues facing young girls, including friendship, expressing individuality, body image, relationships, diversity, wellness and more. One hundred percent of the girls reported increased self-esteem after participating in the 2015 program.

What these middle school girls gained from the program is priceless. "By the end, [Fannin] had created this incredible support network of these fifth and sixth grade girls," says Krikava, who helped with grant writing for the program.

The Girls' Empowerment Group continued in 2016. In 2017 it was offered at Shiocton Elementary School. "There's just such a desire for this type of programming in rural communities. There isn't a lot out there available for these schools," explains Krikava.

Like with Youth Go, two GGP groups found Harbor House's program to be valuable to the community. Krikava says, "I think it aligned with a lot of their priorities that each group had set."



Harbor House continued...

Harbor House programs have aligned with Women's Fund priorities before; they received an economic security grant within the last year. The GGP is different, though, because the girls involved identify the priorities, giving them a voice they may not normally have. "It's so important to give young people a voice. I think we see overall... the importance of women's voices in philanthropy, in driving social change," says Krikava.

Krikava heard their voices, in a literal sense, when she did the Girls' Empowerment Group interview with the GGP. She was struck by the girls' consideration. "The questions they asked were so thoughtful, and there was a depth," she says. "It was beyond the superficial details of the program."

As seen from the survey results, having a voice was one of the most impactful aspects of the GGP for the girls. Like the middle schoolers who find a community and a voice in the Girls' Empowerment Group, the Girls' Grantmaking Project empowers its high school participants to have a voice and make a difference. "This project is so important," Krikava says, "and we are fortunate in our community to have it." ■■■■

Conclusion



Our 39 survey respondents indicate that the Girls' Grantmaking Project evokes feelings of having a voice, making a difference, community, inspiration and teamwork. For some, the program inspired them to pursue a particular career path. For others, it gave them confidence they did not have before. Taking all of these sentiments together, the Girls' Grantmaking Group, in short,

EMPOWERS

the high school girls who participate.

Educating this generation in such a way leads to a class of young people who are

INFORMED

about

philanthropy

community issues

volunteerism

The GGP was also a first exposure to philanthropy and community programming for some of the girls. Continuing education such as this is important for the future of our community; these girls are our next leaders. If they value philanthropy, the community will value philanthropy.

The program also benefits the community in more straightforward ways when the \$10,000 goes out to worthy causes and organizations, like Youth Go and Harbor House. The GGP enables these organizations to do important work to ensure the success of women and girls in the area.

The Women's Fund invests in women and girls through programs like the Girls' Grantmaking Project because results like these, that we get from our survey and from speaking with grantee organizations, are invaluable to our community for a promising future.

WOMEN'S fund

for the fox valley region, inc.

GGP Grant History

Year	Amount	Program	Organization
2012	\$ 900	School Age Parent Speaker Series	Appleton Central High School
	\$ 2,000	Site-Based Mentoring Program	Best Friends of Neenah-Menasha
	\$ 1,250	Character Development and Leadership Training: 8th Grade Girls Program	Boys and Girls Brigade
	\$ 850	Girls Vibrancy Program	Boys and Girls Club of the Fox Valley
	\$ 5,000	Girls2BeGirls Program	Kimberly High School and New London High School
2013	\$ 2,500	I'MPACT	Best Friends of Neenah-Menasha
	\$ 2,500	Healthy Minds, Healthy Bodies	Boys and Girls Brigade
	\$ 4,000	Girls on the Run	Girls on the Run
	\$ 2,500	Artful Expression	NAMI Fox Valley
	\$ 3,000	Girls on the Run	Girls on the Run
2014	\$ 2,000	FLOW (Females Leading Our Workforce) Program	Youth Go
	\$ 2,000	Educational Support Services	Best Friends of Neenah-Menasha
	\$ 1,000	Date SMART	Boys and Girls Club of the Fox Valley
	\$ 2,000	Hope Lives: Suicide Prevention & Intervention	CHAPS Academy
	\$ 1,600	Girls on Track	Wilson Middle School
2015	\$ 3,900	S.E.E.D.	Youth Go
	\$ 4,500	Girls' Empowerment Group	Harbor House
2016	\$ 6,000	Coming Together to Prevent Teen Suicide: Connected Community Wellness Screen	Samaritan Counseling Center
	\$ 4,000	S.E.E.D. Program 3.0	Youth Go
	\$ 2,500	Youth Advocacy and Prevention	Christine Ann
2017	\$ 2,000	Young Parent Conference	Family Services Parent Connection
	\$ 2,500	Girls' Empowerment Project	Harbor House
	\$ 3,000	Financial Futures	Reach Counseling Services