



Our Mission

Motivate, empower and educate students about the importance of understanding their personal power, achieving academically, actualizing their personal leadership, creating positive social change in their local community, and developing a career plan that includes post-secondary education.

Our Goals

- Empower girls to find and positively use their personal power
- Mentor through meaningful connections to women leaders
- Increase academic engagement while decreasing negative/violent behavior
- Prepare girls to graduate on time and pursue higher education
- Engage girls in advocacy and social change through service-learning
- Engage girls in positive cross-cultural interactions and communication
- Improve mental health and outlook of girls.



Who Are We?

Girls Taking Action™ (Formerly known as Girls in Action) (est. 2005) was founded by an African American female, Dr. Verna Cornelia Price. Dr. Price has committed her life to empowering, mentoring and educating girls, particularly poverty-stricken girls of color in urban public schools to find their personal power and change their life by making good decisions, graduating from high school, and attending college without becoming a teenage mother. **Girls Taking Action™** is a weekly mentoring and empowerment program for female students in grades 6 through 12 that extends throughout the school year and is integrated into the regular school day. Girls learn how to use their personal power to make positive choices in school and life. Girls are taught how to take responsibility for their actions in school and life. Girls also participate in field trips designed to expose them to colleges, corporations and businesses, as well as community organizations.

Our **women mentors and leaders meet with the girls weekly** on-site during school hours at local schools and also afterschool for community-based groups to empower, educate and mentor them in small groups (15-20 girls) on the core curriculum which consists of four components: Personal Power, Leadership Development, Career Coaching and Service-Learning. We currently offer our programs virtually.

We engage our girls in key activities to empower and inspire them to succeed in school and life and to change the trajectory of their lives including: College Visits, Corporate Tours, Community Events, Celebrations, Leadership Seminars, and Career Development. We engage women leaders from across the community and corporations as volunteer mentors.

Girls Taking Action™ thrives on collaboration and partnerships with schools, community organizations and the business community to bring a range of services to our girls and their families including: Mentoring, Empowerment, Career Development, STEM Career Mentors, Financial Education, Parenting Seminars, Internships, College Preparation and Support, Tutoring, Positive Community Engagement through Service-Learning, Cultural Events, Employment Resources, Artistic Expression, Culturally Sensitive Therapy Resources and Health and Wellness.

Who Are Our Girls?

Population and Geographic Area Served:

GTA serves multi-ethnic and multicultural girls: 70% are African American, 12% are Somali, 8% are Latina, 5% are Asian, 2% are Native American, and 3% are Caucasian. Typically, 90% of our girls qualify for free and/or reduced lunch. At least 75% of the girls will be first generation college students. The program serves the entire Twin Cities Metro Area and has now expanded to St. Cloud public Schools. Our community-based programs consist of Latina, East African, Hmong, African American and Asian chapters.

We currently serve 420 girls in the Twin Cities Metro area and St. Cloud across 21 groups of girls which meet weekly. We are also expanding program to offer full summer program for girls.



Why Support Our Girls?

Our girls need mentoring and support. GTA programming and services are deeply rooted in best practices in Mentoring, Service Learning, and Positive Youth Development. According to Psychologist Dr. Joseph White, parents, schools and the community must provide reinforcement for a child's self-image and must assist them in identifying and participating in positive peer relationships and group activities that reinforce a positive sense of self (White & Parham, *The Psychology of Blacks: An African American Perspective* --1999). A healthy and positive image of self is critical to reducing the risk factors associated with teenage pregnancy, sexual health, poor nutrition, eating disorders, chemical dependency and exposure to and involvement in gang-related and other illegal activities. Social media now plays a critical role in the lives of youth, particularly urban youth of color. Many articles and now some research is emerging showing the connection between social media and youth violence, mental health and suicide. In addition, research is showing us that our youth, particularly girls and girls of color are suffering. Researchers found that 46% of 977 parents of teens said their child has shown signs of a new or worsening mental health condition since the start of the pandemic. More parents of teen girls than parents of teen boys reported an increase in anxiety/worry (36% vs. 19%) or depression/sadness (31% vs. 18%).¹ Most of our girls do not have financial resources and/or parental wherewithal to seek out the mental health therapies needed. In response, we have added a health and wellness specialist to our team to address the growing mental health challenges facing both our girls and their parents. We are not a 'cure all' organization but providing some level of mental health mentoring and wellness practices goes a very long way with our girls.

What is our Impact and Outcomes?

- 6000 girls in MN have participated in the program since 2005
- 80% of our girls come from families considered low-socioeconomic status
- 75% become first generation college students
- 75% decrease in school suspensions
- 60% of girls increase their grades
- 98% graduate on time from high school
- 80% attend college
- 100% of girls gain positive race relations skills and experiences
- 100% of girls have access to health and wellness resources

¹ <https://www.webmd.com/lung/news/20210315/pandemic-has-harmed-mental-health-of-teens#1>