

From the Chair of the Board



Girls Inc. 2009
annual report

It has been my honor to serve as a volunteer leader of this wonderful organization for many years. Over the course of that time, I have often had to answer the question “Why Girls Inc.? Why do girls still need special attention?”



As a woman who has worked her way up in corporate America and as the mother of two girls, I think the answer is obvious. But of course, what is most obvious to you and me is exactly the thing we need to take the most care explaining to others.

Girls continue to grow up in a world that fails to recognize their full value and potential. Even in the United States and Canada, where we have made much progress toward gender equity, girls and women continue to struggle to transcend the limitations society places on us.

What I think is brilliant about Girls Inc.—and why I believe its work is of critical importance—is the organization’s focus on helping girls to not internalize society’s negative messages about their innate worth. That, ultimately, is how we will achieve our vision of empowered girls and an equitable society—one girl at a time, each knowing in her bones that she is strong, smart, and bold and that she has something valuable to contribute to making the world a better place.

What has kept me engaged with Girls Inc. over all these years is

the fact that the organization’s ideals are firmly grounded in thoughtful, strategic business practices. Disciplined planning and execution are the primary focus of the talented, dynamic staff of Girls Inc. The commitment to quality and success, evident throughout the Girls Inc. network, is an expression of the organization’s unstinting dedication to girls.

A striking example from the past year is the Affiliate Fundraising Project. Conceived and implemented with support from The Edna McConnell Clark Foundations, this effort anticipated the need of local Girls Inc. organizations to strengthen their fundraising capacity and to diversify their funding sources. Through hands-on training, distance-learning tools, and on-demand support, board members and staff at Girls Inc. affiliates developed new skills, honed their strategies, and expanded their fundraising efforts.

The project was a resounding success. Participating organizations saw greater donor engagement, increased visibility, and rising budgets. As the effects

of the economic recession began to spread through the social-service sector, these organizations were well positioned to weather the downturn and maintain essential services to girls.

It is this kind of foresight and innovation that inspires such deep devotion for Girls Inc. among its friends and supporters. In this time of financial turmoil, it has been particularly gratifying to see so many step forward to offer help and encouragement.

For all of us in the Girls Inc. family, this is a labor of love. We are deeply grateful to all of you for joining us.

The girls whose lives we touch today are on their way to transforming the world. Let’s give them all the support we can.

Thank you,

Bridgette P. Heller

