

one *girl*

THE SNAPSHOT OF

**GIRLS**

IN CENTRAL OHIO



The Women's Fund .....  
of Central Ohio .....

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# The Women's Fund of Central Ohio

investing in the potential  
of women and girls

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The Women's Fund of Central Ohio was founded in 2001 to transform the lives of women and girls by mobilizing the collective power and passion of all women working together. The Women's Fund promotes social change through growing philanthropy and making grants to programs that expand opportunities for women and girls. The Fund serves Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Licking, Madison, Pickaway, and Union counties, giving voice and visibility to the over 800,000 women and girls in Central Ohio.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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# INTRODUCTION

The Women's Fund strategic grantmaking initiative is seeking to understand the experience of girls and to develop and implement comprehensive interventions that will ultimately help girls reach their full potential. In 2009, The Women's Fund of Central Ohio commissioned a report entitled 'The Status of Girls in Central Ohio', which describes 213,845 girls living in central Ohio. This report provided a partial statistical portrait of girls overall and gave insight into the types of challenges that are facing girls in our community.

In an effort to deepen our understanding of the lived realities of girls in central Ohio, we wanted to learn from girls themselves. We wanted girls to be able to share personally with us about the issues and challenges they are facing and to provide us with feedback on what they need, want, and hope for.

With funding from Cardinal Health Foundation, The Columbus Foundation, and Nationwide Insurance Foundation, The Women's Fund of Central Ohio charged the One Girl Collaborative Partners (Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland, The Mentoring Center of Central Ohio, The Interprofessional Commission of Ohio, Ruling Our eXperiences, and YWCA Columbus) with researching and developing the One Girl Collaborative Framework. This initial data collection and analysis provided the opportunity to hear first hand from a large sample of girls throughout central Ohio on the issues that they believe they are facing in their daily lives.

The Women's Fund of Central Ohio is pleased to share the voices and experiences of nearly 3,000 girls with you in this Snapshot Report.....

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## WE WANTED TO TRULY UNDERSTAND WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE LIVES OF GIRLS IN CENTRAL OHIO.....

So we asked them.

Over the past few years we have learned a great deal about the status of girls in central Ohio and the social, educational, health, safety, and interpersonal issues that are facing girls in our community. Yet, while this information sheds light on girls, it does not tell us what they are *really* thinking and feeling.

What are the daily issues that adolescent girls face and what are they most concerned about? What are the things girls struggle with and who do they want to talk to about their struggles?

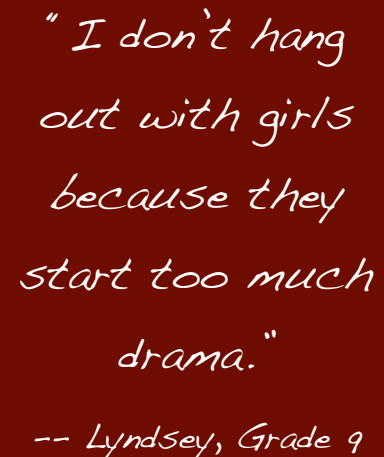
Through collecting surveys from a diverse sample of over 2,000 girls throughout the seven central Ohio counties via the One Girl Collaborative, and by compiling interview and focus group themes from over 900 girls via the Ruling Our eXperiences (ROX) empowerment program for girls, we have gotten a pulse on what girls are really thinking and feeling.

Here's what we've learned...

A girl in central Ohio faces many opportunities and many challenges. She believes that her life is hard and does not think that the adults in her life understand what she is going through. Despite the fact that all of the adults in her life have experienced puberty, she feels alone and confused as to what is happening to her body and her emotions. From as early as fourth grade she is gaining weight, developing breasts and hips (not to mention acne!), and she is starting to menstruate. She is beginning to receive sexual attention from boys and even older guys. She has lots of questions, but she is not sure who she can talk to, or how she should feel about what is happening. She may talk to her same-age peers, but she is less likely to seek accurate information from an older girl or an adult woman.

She has some difficulty forming healthy and supportive relationships with other girls her age and may make statements such as, "Girls are phony" or "I don't hang out with girls because they start too much drama." She has likely experienced and/or participated in some type of relationally aggressive behavior --- like gossiping, spreading rumors, or excluding a classmate -- and finds girl bullying to be a top concern during her middle school and early high school years. By 9th grade, nearly 2/3 of her female peers would say that 'drama' and 'girl bullying' are major issues in their lives.

Despite the difficulty she has with relationships with other girls, she believes that friendships are extremely important. If she is in grades 5 through 8, she believes that popularity and fitting in are paramount, and she may go to great lengths to identify with a particular peer group. As she forms a more stable identity throughout high school, she continues to rely on her friendships and maintains their importance, yet her focus shifts from fitting in and being popular to working on effective relationship skills and managing conflicts with other girls.



*"I don't hang out with girls because they start too much drama."  
-- Lyndsey, Grade 9*

She is more likely to want to talk about 'boys' or 'drama' than her academic performance or her plans after high school. In fact, at almost any age from 5th grade through 12th grade, issues with 'boys' and 'drama' top her list of concerns. By 6th grade, over 70% of her peers want to talk about dating, although few may actually be dating.

**By 7th grade, nearly 80% of her girlfriends are concerned with dating --- they also report beginning to experience harassment from boys and pressure to engage in sexual behavior.**

While she may perceive herself to be in competition with other girls for the attention of boys, she does not believe that boys generally treat girls with respect. As she goes through high school she experiences more pressure surrounding sex and may believe that, "Boys make us have sex with them in order for us to stay with them...if we don't they are gonna go with our friends." She might not want to engage in sexual activity, yet may not feel equipped to handle this pressure. She asks, "Usually older guys want to do more stuff - what if you don't want to do something and they're pressuring you?"

*" Usually older  
guys want to do  
more stuff-what  
if you don't want  
to do something  
and they're  
pressuring you?"  
-- Dominique, Grade 8*

By 9th grade, 61% of her peers say that sex is a major issue they are dealing with and by 12th grade, nearly 70% say the same. She reports that issues around sex include pressure, consent, sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy.

**If she is in high school, about 50% of her girl friends are concerned about pregnancy prevention, up from 40% in 8th grade.**

An additional area where she feels pressure is surrounding her appearance. While the changes of puberty may have passed, she continues to feel insecure about her weight and body shape. Nearly 60% of the girls she knows in grades 6 through 10 report pressure to be thin or look a certain way as an issue worth discussing with other girls.

Bombarded with social messages and media images about what she is 'supposed' to look like, she may strive to achieve an unrealistic and unattainable ideal. She may be self-conscious about her appearance and "see other girls in magazines and want to be like them." Despite the pressure she and her friends may be feeling surrounding their looks, fewer than 40% of her friends are interested in discussing healthy eating and exercise, yet about half want to increase their self-esteem and feel better about themselves.

She reports a final area of pressure surrounding alcohol, drugs, and parties -- and these concerns increase as she gets older. By the time she is in high school nearly 1/2 of her friends want to discuss issues related to substance use and abuse and explore the pressure they feel from friends to attend parties or experiment with alcohol or drugs.

With all of the intense issues that she and her friends are facing, it is no surprise that she has somewhat of a lower interest in community service and leadership development.

**Only about 23% of her friends in 9th grade and about 30% of her 12th grade friends want to discuss their involvement in community service projects or leadership development opportunities.**

However, she is interested in planning for high school and college, as well as for a successful career. In 8th grade, 51% of her friends want to discuss college planning, in 10th grade this figure increases to 56%, and by her senior year, 65% of her female peers are interested in making plans for college and their futures.

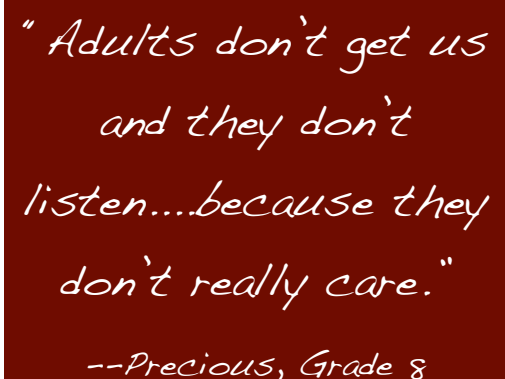
So how do we help her negotiate these developmental, social, and interpersonal challenges and connect with her in relevant and meaningful ways?

## FIRST, WE LISTEN TO WHAT SHE CARES ABOUT AND ALLOW HER TO BE THE EXPERT ON HER OWN LIFE.

She tells us that she wants to talk to girls her own age, and even girls who are older than she is, about these important issues, but she is not particularly interested in talking to adult women. She believes that, "Adults don't get us and they don't listen....because they don't really care." She may have the sense that her parents, or other significant adults in her life, "don't want to talk to me."

While this may be untrue, her perception is her reality. The way that she experiences relationships with adults in her life reinforces her sense that they cannot understand her current life situation, feelings, or experiences. She tells us that parents are, "old and more mature, so they don't know what you are talking about." She is tired of hearing, "it is for your own good," and she wants desperately to be understood and validated.

She feels embarrassed to bring up sensitive topics with her parents, but she has so many unanswered questions. She is afraid that if she asks questions about dating, or tells them that she has a crush, her parents will "assume that I'm fooling around".



*"Adults don't get us  
and they don't  
listen....because they  
don't really care."  
--Precious, Grade 8*

**She wants to be important, listened to, and valued.**

NEXT, WE PROVIDE HER WITH INFORMATION AND OPPORTUNITIES TO DEVELOP NEW SKILLS AND BEHAVIORS THAT WILL HELP HER TO NEGOTIATE HER WORLD DIFFERENTLY.

She may struggle to identify her own strengths and competencies. In fact, by 12th grade nearly 60% of her friends are concerned with self-esteem and feeling good about themselves. She understands the messages she is receiving from society on how she is 'supposed' to look, think, behave, or dress --- and on what she is 'supposed' to study, pursue, or earn. She also knows that stepping outside of these expectations can be difficult.

She needs to develop new ways of interacting with her environment and new skills that will assist her in negotiating the challenges she will invariably face throughout her middle and high school years. She needs accurate information, positive role models, and a safe space where she can explore.

**She needs to first find value within herself if we expect her to add value to the world.**

FINALLY, WE SUPPORT HER BY WORKING TO CREATE A COMMUNITY CULTURE THAT UNDERSTANDS -- AND ATTENDS TO -- THE CRITICAL ISSUES THAT IMPACT HER LIFE.

She has so many questions and faces so many unknowns. There is no one person, program, agency, or organization that can adequately address the complex problems she will face. She needs the collective expertise of a community dedicated to enhancing her opportunities and enriching her life -- so that while she is becoming a smarter, stronger, more competent girl, we are creating for her a safe, equitable, and more accessible world.

# HOW DID WE LEARN ALL OF THIS?

We worked together.

The collaborative team -- The Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland, The Interprofessional Commission of Ohio, The Mentoring Center of Central Ohio, Ruling Our eXperiences, and YWCA Columbus -- are local organizations that work with hundreds of girls throughout central Ohio. Utilizing our extensive programming and outreach network we found ways to connect with girls throughout our community. We worked with school counselors, teachers, and administrators, Girl Scout troops, and mentoring and after-school programs in order to access the thoughts and opinions of thousands of local girls.

This collaborative process provided us with the opportunity to share the findings from the 2,001 One Girl surveys while also including the qualitative data from focus groups and individual interviews with 914 fifth through tenth grade girls who have participated in ROX programming.

While our sampling method is clearly a convenience sample rather than a true representative sample, we made efforts to ensure that the demographic make-up was as diverse as possible and could be considered a snapshot of our community. Utilizing this convenience sample limits our ability to generalize our findings, but does provide us with new and relevant information that can inform our work -- and provides a glimpse into the lives and thoughts of adolescent girls.

As we continue our focus on understanding the lived experience of girls in central Ohio, we will make a concerted effort to increase the size and diversity of our data set by seeking opportunities to engage with groups of girls who may be underrepresented in our current sample.

We are seeking to understand the commonalities among girls and the major issues that they identify as impacting their lives. Our large sample size allows us to tabulate frequencies from the completed surveys as well as to identify emergent themes from open-ended questions.

In an attempt to ensure the largest sample possible, a one-page survey was developed that was designed to be brief and concise while providing a glimpse into the critical issues that are impacting girls as identified by the girls themselves. The surveys were specifically structured to initially elicit open-ended responses to the question, "What are some of the big things girls your age are dealing with?". This was followed by a forced choice section that asked girls, "If you could create a group that was just for girls, what do you think girls would want to talk about?" This section allowed girls to check up to 25 topic areas of interest or concern to them, as well as indicate an 'Other', if desired.

The topic areas that were included on the survey were constructed based on the current research literature and the expertise and feedback from the respective collaborative partners. Initial pilots of the survey undertaken with a small group of girls revealed the necessity to make further additions to the questionnaire. Two versions of the survey were developed: A 5th-7th grade version, and an 8th-12th grade version. While almost identical, the 8th-12th grade version included 'sex', 'pregnancy prevention' and 'sexually transmitted diseases' and the 5th-7th grade version included 'having fun/meaningful stuff to do outside of school'. See the surveys on the following two pages.



SURVEY ADMINISTERED TO 8TH-12TH GRADE GIRLS

# WHAT'S UP WITH OHIO GIRLS?

Hi Girls! We'd like you to take a minute and share your thoughts with us! Please DON'T put your name on this paper -- just be open and honest about what is going on for you and the girls you know!

How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_

What grade are you in? 8th      9th      10th      11th      12th

What is your race/ethnicity? \_\_\_\_\_

What school do you go to? \_\_\_\_\_

What county do you live in? (circle one)

Delaware      Fairfield      Franklin      Licking  
 Madison      Pickaway      Union

What are some of the big things girls your age are dealing with?

Do you think girls your age would like: (circle your responses)

|   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| An older girl to talk to about important stuff:               | YES | NO |
| An adult woman to talk to about important stuff:              | YES | NO |
| Other girls of the same age to talk to about important stuff: | YES | NO |

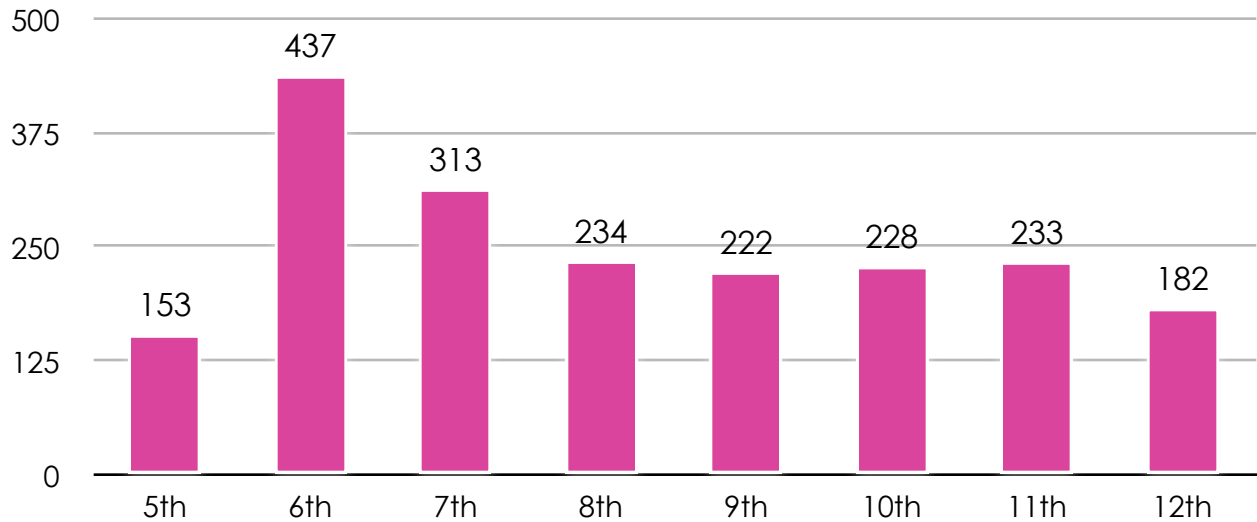
**If you could make a group that was JUST FOR GIRLS what do you think girls would want to talk about??? (Put an X next to all the interesting topics)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| _____ Academics & School                             | _____ Pregnancy Prevention  |
| _____ Planning for High School                       | _____ Health  |
| _____ Planning for College and My Future             | _____ Healthy Eating & Exercise                                       |
| _____ Planning for Success: Jobs & Careers for Women | _____ Weight & Body Shape<br>(Pressure to be thin/look a certain way) |
| _____ Dating   | _____ Self-Esteem/Feeling Good About Myself                           |
| _____ Sex  | _____ Being Different than My Peers                                   |
| _____ Sexual Harassment                              | _____ Alcohol and Drugs   |
| _____ Friendships                                    | _____ Getting Along with My Family/Parents                            |
| _____ Bullying & Girl Drama                          | _____ Managing Stress/Bad Moods                                       |
| _____ Cyberspace (Texting, Facebook, MySpace)        | _____ Learning How to Be A Leader                                     |
| _____ Peer Pressure                                  | _____ Community Service/Helping Others                                |
| _____ Sexually Transmitted Diseases                  | _____ Other _____   |

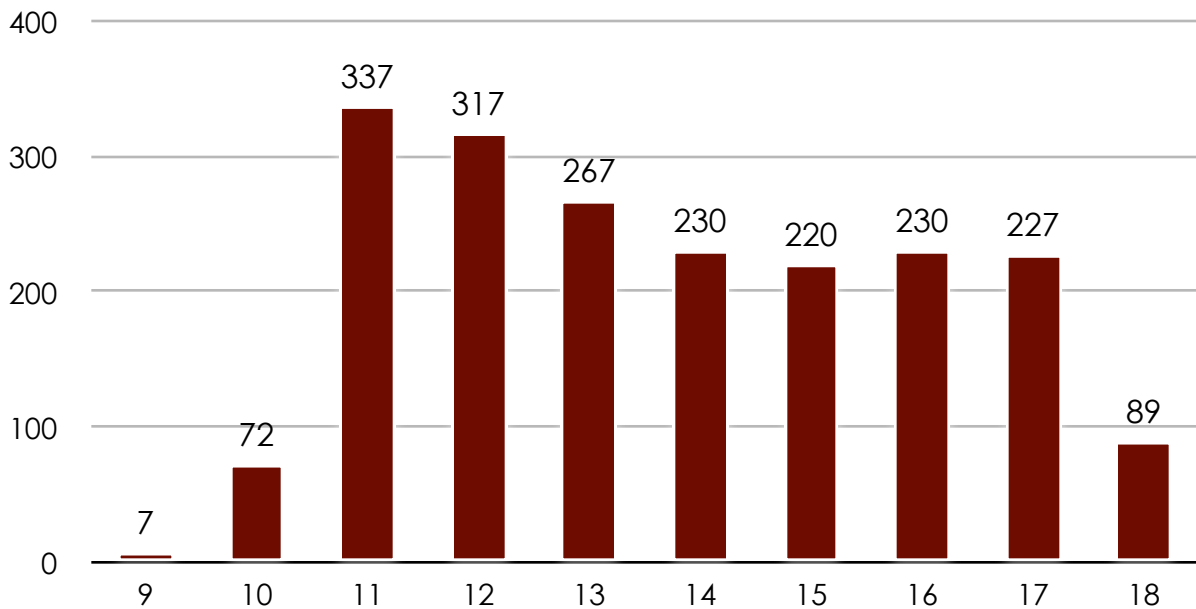
# DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Total Surveys Collected: 2,001

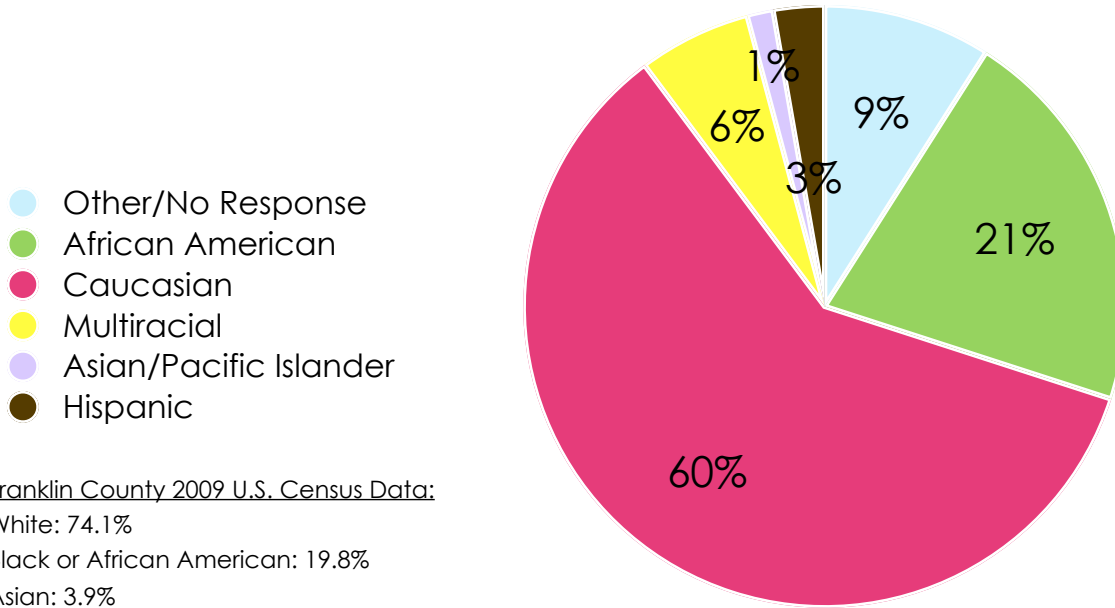
## NUMBER OF GIRLS IN EACH GRADE



## AGE OF GIRLS



# RACE/ETHNICITY OF RESPONDENTS



Franklin County 2009 U.S. Census Data:

White: 74.1%

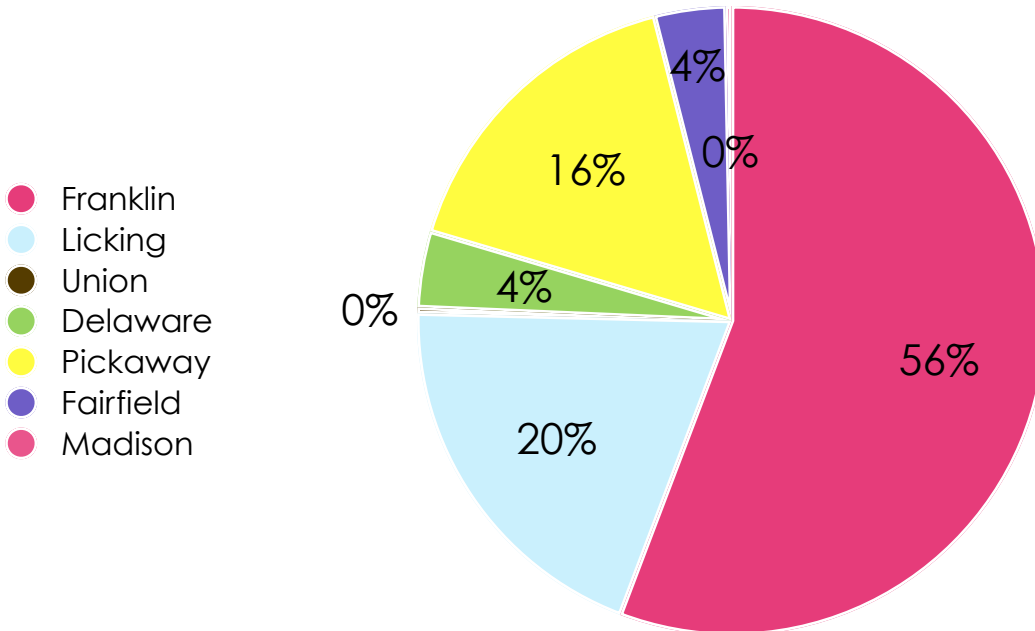
Black or African American: 19.8%

Asian: 3.9%

Hispanic or Latino: 4.5%

Two or more races: 1.8%

# COUNTY OF RESIDENCE



# WE ASKED GIRLS....

“WHAT ARE THE BIG THINGS GIRLS YOUR AGE ARE DEALING WITH?”

## 5th-7th Grade Girls

We asked 5th, 6th, and 7th grade girls to list some of the big things girls their age are dealing with. This open-ended question elicited a wide array of responses, from dealing with depression and divorce to dealing with gossip and fighting. We took all of these responses and tabulated the frequencies in which they appeared. While it is not practical to list all of the responses, there were several themes that emerged from the girls' responses. The top five responses to the question, “What are some of the big things girls your age are dealing with?” were as follows (in order of frequency):

### *Boys....*

Issues with boys topped the list for 5th- 7th grade girls. Girls reported issues around dating, relationships, and sex, as well as feeling pressure and harassment from boys.

### *Friends....*

Second only to boys, girls indicated they are dealing with issues around friendships -- predominately friendships with other girls. Fitting in and being popular are of primary concern to girls in these grades.

### *Drama....*

The word of the day is “drama!” and was used by nearly 1/3 of the girls to describe what they believe they are dealing with. Drama between and among girls, as well as rumor spreading, gossip, and competition were pervasive themes articulated by girls.

### *Puberty....*

Girls in 5th-7th grade are experiencing many body changes as they go through puberty and many indicated issues around these changes including appearance, body weight, acne, and periods.

## *School....*

Girls indicated school as a big thing they are dealing with, largely due to the social elements addressed above. Fewer girls identified academics, studying, or school work as the big issue, rather the school issues appear to be connected to the environment where the other issues are present.

These responses were listed, in total, approximately 804 times among the 903 5th- 7th grade respondents.

## 8th-12th Grade Girls

We also asked 8th-12th grade girls to list some of the big things girls their age are dealing with and tabulated their responses for frequencies. The responses ranged from body image, sexting, violence, sports, academic performance, and dating. The top responses to the question, "What are some of the big things girls your age are dealing with?" were as follows (in order of frequency):

## *Boys/Guys....*

Issues with males topped the list for 8th-12th grade girls as well. Girls reported concerns around dating and relationships, as well as challenges in relationships with boyfriends.

## *Sex....*

A large percentage of girls reported that sex, pressure to have sex, and issues around sex are among the top issues of concern in their lives.

## *Drama....*

Drama was identified as an issue among many girls in grades 8-12, regarding both relationships with boys and relationships with other girls. "Guy drama", "girl drama", and "girls being fake" were responses provided.

## *Drugs/Alcohol....*

Using drugs and alcohol and pressure to use substances were highly indicated as concerns among this group of respondents.

### *Pressure....*

Pressure was brought up by this group of girls, specifically pressure in several areas including: alcohol, drugs, sex, and school work. Girls reported feeling pressure predominately from peers and parents.

### *Friends....*

Issues with friends were again present for girls in grades 8-12, however, there is less focus on fitting in and being popular as compared to the 5th-7th grade girls. Of greater concern was working on friendships and conflicts with other girls.

### *Pregnancy....*

Many girls shared concerns around pregnancy, pregnancy prevention, and STD prevention. Included in these comments were "pregnancy scares", "safe sex", and "having babies".

## WE ASKED GIRLS....

“IF YOU COULD MAKE A GROUP THAT WAS JUST FOR GIRLS WHAT DO YOU THINK GIRLS WOULD WANT TO TALK ABOUT?”

While the open ended questions provided insight into some of the top issues facing girls, a systematic understanding of what girls would be interested in talking about with others was also warranted. Thus, a forced choice section augmented our understanding.

Research and literature informed a list of over 20 categories for girls to review. The survey asked girls to indicate the subjects/topics they thought girls would want to talk about if they created a group that was just for girls. Girls were permitted to check any and all boxes they desired and could also add anything additional in an ‘Other’ category.

While there is much diversity among the respondents’ answers, it is interesting to note the presence of ‘Friendships’ was positively indicated as among the top five topics among all grade levels, followed by ‘Dating’ which was present among all grades except 5th. A clear developmental pattern has emerged with specific issues becoming more prominent as students mature. For example ‘Sex’ is a top five topic among 9th-12th graders and Cyberspace is of primary importance for 6th and 7th graders.

The following details a grade specific report of priority areas for girls in each grade and the percentage of respondents who indicated “Yes” to each corresponding topic area.

## 5TH GRADE GIRLS SUMMARY

| TOPIC   | % RESPONDING YES |
|---|------------------|
| Friendships   | 76.5             |
| Planning for High School  | 57.5             |
| Planning for College and My Future                              | 55.6             |
| Planning for Success: Jobs and Careers for Women                | 55.6             |
| Having Fun/Meaningful Stuff to do Outside of School             | 54.2             |
| Being Different Than My Peers                                   | 50.3             |
| Dating  | 50.3             |
| Self-Esteem/Feeling Good About Myself                           | 49.7             |
| Cyberspace (Texting, Facebook, MySpace)                         | 48.4             |
| Weight & Body Shape<br>(Pressure to be thin/look a certain way) | 47.1             |
| Bullying & Girl Drama   | 45.1             |
| Community Service/Helping Others                                | 44.4             |
| Learning How to Be A Leader                                     | 44.4             |
| Healthy Eating & Exercise                                       | 43.8             |
| Managing Stress/Bad Moods                                       | 40.5             |
| Health  | 39.9             |
| Peer Pressure   | 27.5             |
| Academics & School  | 26.1             |
| Alcohol and Drugs   | 24.2             |
| Getting Along with My Family                                    | 20.3             |
| Sexual Harassment   | 20.3             |

## 6TH GRADE GIRLS SUMMARY

| TOPIC   | % RESPONDING YES |
|---|------------------|
| Friendships   | 85.1             |
| Dating  | 70.8             |
| Bullying & Girl Drama   | 62.2             |
| Cyberspace (Texting, Facebook, MySpace)                         | 61.4             |
| Weight & Body Shape<br>(Pressure to be thin/look a certain way) | 51.6             |
| Self-Esteem/Feeling Good About Myself                           | 50.3             |
| Planning for College and My Future                              | 47.8             |
| Managing Stress/Bad Moods                                       | 46.8             |
| Planning for High School  | 46.5             |
| Being Different Than My Peers                                   | 45.7             |
| Planning for Success: Jobs and Careers for Women                | 44.3             |
| Peer Pressure   | 39.2             |
| Learning How to Be A Leader                                     | 38.9             |
| Healthy Eating & Exercise                                       | 38.4             |
| Health  | 37.8             |
| Community Service/Helping Others                                | 33.8             |
| Getting Along with My Family                                    | 32.2             |
| Having Fun/Meaningful Stuff to do Outside of School             | 30.1             |
| Alcohol and Drugs   | 28.6             |
| Academics & School  | 25.7             |
| Sexual Harassment   | 23.5             |

## 7TH GRADE GIRLS SUMMARY

| TOPIC   | % RESPONDING YES |
|---|------------------|
| Friendships   | 82.5             |
| Dating  | 78.4             |
| Cyberspace (Texting, Facebook, MySpace)                         | 56.5             |
| Bullying & Girl Drama   | 54.8             |
| Weight & Body Shape<br>(Pressure to be thin/look a certain way) | 54.5             |
| Managing Stress/Bad Moods                                       | 50.0             |
| Planning for College and My Future                              | 45.5             |
| Being Different Than My Peers                                   | 45.2             |
| Self-Esteem/Feeling Good About Myself                           | 45.2             |
| Planning for High School  | 39.7             |
| Having Fun/Meaningful Stuff to do Outside of School             | 38.5             |
| Healthy Eating & Exercise                                       | 37.7             |
| Peer Pressure   | 37.3             |
| Planning for Success: Jobs and Careers for Women                | 35.6             |
| Health  | 30.8             |
| Getting Along with My Family                                    | 30.1             |
| Academics & School  | 28.8             |
| Learning How to Be A Leader                                     | 27.1             |
| Alcohol and Drugs   | 27.1             |
| Community Service/Helping Others                                | 26.7             |
| Sexual Harassment   | 22.6             |

## 8TH GRADE GIRLS SUMMARY

| TOPIC   | % RESPONDING YES |
|---|------------------|
| Dating  | 76.0             |
| Friendships   | 73.8             |
| Weight & Body Shape<br>(Pressure to be thin/look a certain way) | 57.4             |
| Bullying & Girl Drama   | 56.5             |
| Planning for College and My Future                              | 51.4             |
| Managing Stress/Bad Moods                                       | 51.4             |
| Self-Esteem/Feeling Good About Myself                           | 50.8             |
| Cyberspace (Texting, Facebook, MySpace)                         | 47.5             |
| Getting Along with My Family                                    | 45.9             |
| Sex   | 45.4             |
| Planning for High School  | 42.1             |
| Pregnancy Prevention  | 41.5             |
| Planning for Success: Jobs and Careers for<br>Women             | 41.0             |
| Peer Pressure   | 39.9             |
| Alcohol and Drugs   | 39.3             |
| Healthy Eating & Exercise                                       | 37.7             |
| Health  | 35.0             |
| Learning How to Be A Leader                                     | 34.4             |
| Being Different Than My Peers                                   | 33.9             |
| Sexually Transmitted Diseases                                   | 31.7             |
| Sexual Harassment   | 31.1             |
| Community Service/Helping Others                                | 26.2             |
| Academics & School  | 25.7             |

## 9TH GRADE GIRLS SUMMARY

| TOPIC  | % RESPONDING YES |
|--|------------------|
| Friendships  | 75.7             |
| Dating   | 73.4             |
| Bullying & Girl Drama  | 66.2             |
| Sex  | 60.8             |
| Weight & Body Shape (Pressure to be thin/look a certain way) | 58.1             |
| Managing Stress/Bad Moods                                    | 57.2             |
| Pregnancy Prevention   | 53.6             |
| Self-Esteem/Feeling Good About Myself                        | 53.2             |
| Peer Pressure  | 53.2             |
| Getting Along with My Family                                 | 51.4             |
| Alcohol and Drugs  | 50.5             |
| Planning for College and My Future                           | 48.2             |
| Cyberspace (Texting, Facebook, MySpace)                      | 46.8             |
| Healthy Eating & Exercise                                    | 42.8             |
| Sexual Harassment  | 42.3             |
| Planning for Success: Jobs and Careers for Women             | 36.0             |
| Being Different Than My Peers                                | 35.6             |
| Health   | 35.1             |
| Sexually Transmitted Diseases                                | 32.4             |
| Learning How to Be A Leader                                  | 24.3             |
| Academics & School   | 23.9             |
| Community Service/Helping Others                             | 23.0             |
| Planning for High School                                     | 18.9             |

## 10TH GRADE GIRLS SUMMARY

| TOPIC  | % RESPONDING YES |
|--|------------------|
| Dating   | 72.8             |
| Sex  | 65.8             |
| Friendships  | 63.2             |
| Weight & Body Shape (Pressure to be thin/look a certain way) | 58.3             |
| Planning for College and My Future                           | 56.1             |
| Managing Stress/Bad Moods                                    | 56.1             |
| Bullying & Girl Drama  | 54.8             |
| Pregnancy Prevention   | 53.5             |
| Self-Esteem/Feeling Good About Myself                        | 51.8             |
| Alcohol and Drugs  | 51.8             |
| Getting Along with My Family                                 | 45.6             |
| Peer Pressure  | 45.2             |
| Healthy Eating & Exercise                                    | 43.9             |
| Planning for Success: Jobs and Careers for Women             | 41.7             |
| Sexual Harassment  | 39.9             |
| Sexually Transmitted Diseases                                | 39.5             |
| Cyberspace (Texting, Facebook, MySpace)                      | 39.0             |
| Being Different Than My Peers                                | 33.8             |
| Health   | 32.9             |
| Academics & School   | 31.6             |
| Community Service/Helping Others                             | 25.0             |
| Learning How to Be A Leader                                  | 24.6             |
| Planning for High School                                     | 20.6             |

## 11TH GRADE GIRLS SUMMARY

| TOPIC   | % RESPONDING YES |
|---|------------------|
| Dating  | 76.0             |
| Friendships   | 68.2             |
| Sex   | 64.4             |
| Planning for College and My Future                              | 57.1             |
| Bullying & Girl Drama   | 56.7             |
| Managing Stress/Bad Moods                                       | 54.5             |
| Weight & Body Shape<br>(Pressure to be thin/look a certain way) | 54.1             |
| Pregnancy Prevention  | 52.4             |
| Self-Esteem/Feeling Good About Myself                           | 51.1             |
| Alcohol and Drugs   | 48.5             |
| Getting Along with My Family                                    | 38.6             |
| Planning for Success: Jobs and Careers for Women                | 38.6             |
| Healthy Eating & Exercise                                       | 37.8             |
| Peer Pressure   | 36.9             |
| Sexually Transmitted Diseases                                   | 33.0             |
| Cyberspace (Texting, Facebook, MySpace)                         | 30.9             |
| Sexual Harassment   | 30.0             |
| Being Different Than My Peers                                   | 26.6             |
| Learning How to Be A Leader                                     | 26.2             |
| Academics & School  | 26.2             |
| Health  | 23.2             |
| Community Service/Helping Others                                | 20.6             |
| Planning for High School  | 10.3             |

## 12TH GRADE GIRLS SUMMARY

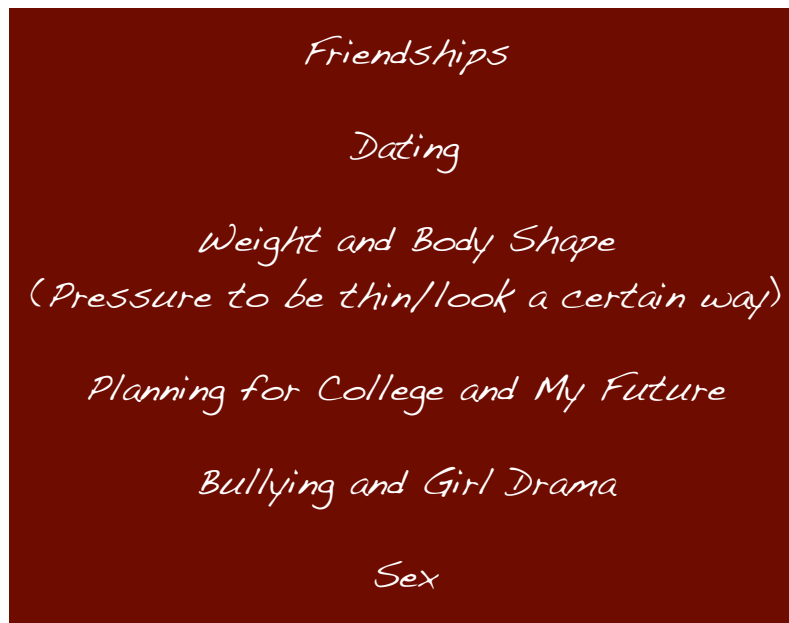
| TOPIC   | % RESPONDING YES |
|---|------------------|
| Dating  | 78.6             |
| Sex   | 68.7             |
| Planning for College and My Future                              | 65.4             |
| Friendships   | 64.3             |
| Managing Stress/Bad Moods                                       | 63.2             |
| Weight & Body Shape<br>(Pressure to be thin/look a certain way) | 58.8             |
| Self-Esteem/Feeling Good About Myself                           | 58.2             |
| Bullying & Girl Drama   | 54.9             |
| Alcohol and Drugs   | 53.8             |
| Pregnancy Prevention  | 53.8             |
| Getting Along with My Family                                    | 48.9             |
| Planning for Success: Jobs and Careers for Women                | 46.7             |
| Peer Pressure   | 45.1             |
| Healthy Eating & Exercise                                       | 42.9             |
| Sexually Transmitted Diseases                                   | 37.9             |
| Cyberspace (Texting, Facebook, MySpace)                         | 36.3             |
| Sexual Harassment   | 35.7             |
| Being Different Than My Peers                                   | 34.6             |
| Health  | 34.1             |
| Academics & School  | 33.0             |
| Community Service/Helping Others                                | 31.3             |
| Learning How to Be A Leader                                     | 29.7             |
| Planning for High School  | 15.9             |

# SURVEY SUMMARY FINDINGS

While there are clear developmental trends evident between and among the respondents, there is an overall level of consistency among several topics that can lay the ground work for the basis of collaborative programming for girls.

In all grades (5th-12th), friendships were indicated as one of the top five issues that girls would want to talk about in a group. This was followed by dating (which was in the top five among girls in all grades with the exception of 5th).

Overall the frequency with which the following topics are present among the girls in all grades are as follows (in order of frequency):



The following page has a complete list of the five topic areas that girls in each grade endorsed. The findings of this survey data make a compelling case for a developmental curriculum that recognizes and addresses the variance between and among girls while concurrently respecting the results of the data collection.

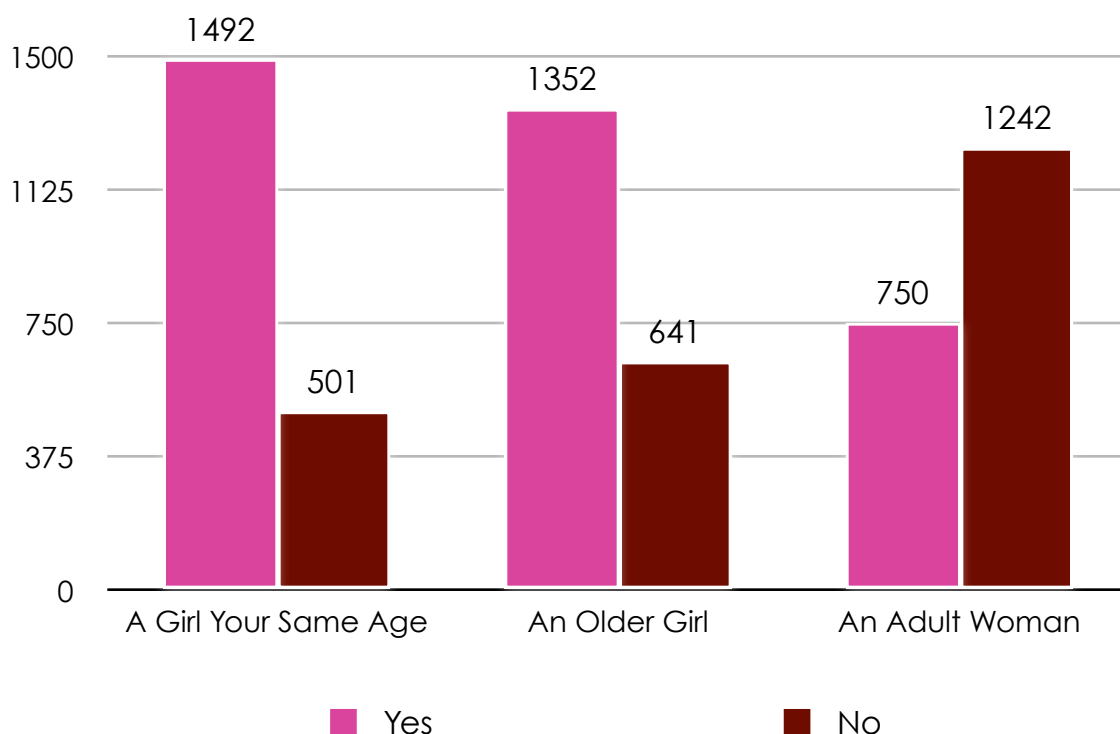
## SUMMARY 'TOP 5 TOPICS' BY GRADE

| GRADE | TOP ISSUES IDENTIFIED   |
|-------|---|
| 5th   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Friendships</li> <li>2. Planning for High School</li> <li>3. Planning for College and My Future</li> <li>4. Planning for Success: Jobs &amp; Careers for Women</li> <li>5. Having Fun/Meaningful Stuff to Do Outside of School</li> </ol>   |
| 6th   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Friendships</li> <li>2. Dating</li> <li>3. Bullying and Girl Drama</li> <li>4. Cyberspace (Texting, Facebook, MySpace)</li> <li>5. Weight and Body Shape (Pressure to be thin/look a certain way)</li> </ol>                                |
| 7th   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Friendships</li> <li>2. Dating</li> <li>3. Cyberspace (Texting, Facebook, MySpace)</li> <li>4. Bullying and Girl Drama</li> <li>5. Weight and Body Shape (Pressure to be thin/look a certain way)</li> </ol>                                |
| 8th   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dating</li> <li>2. Friendships</li> <li>3. Weight and Body Shape (Pressure to be thin/look a certain way)</li> <li>4. Bullying and Girl Drama</li> <li>5. Planning for College and My Future TIED WITH Managing Stress/Bad Moods</li> </ol> |
| 9th   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Friendships</li> <li>2. Dating</li> <li>3. Bullying and Girl Drama</li> <li>4. Sex</li> <li>5. Weight and Body Shape (Pressure to be thin/look a certain way)</li> </ol>  |
| 10th  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dating</li> <li>2. Sex</li> <li>3. Friendships</li> <li>4. Weight and Body Shape (Pressure to be thin/look a certain way)</li> <li>5. Planning for College and My Future TIED WITH Managing Stress/Bad Moods</li> </ol>                     |
| 11th  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dating</li> <li>2. Friendships</li> <li>3. Sex</li> <li>4. Planning for College and My Future</li> <li>5. Bullying and Girl Drama</li> </ol>  |
| 12th  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dating</li> <li>2. Sex</li> <li>3. Planning for College and My Future</li> <li>4. Friendships</li> <li>5. Managing Stress/Bad Moods</li> </ol>  |

# OVERALL, WHO DO GIRLS GRADES 5-12 WANT TO TALK TO ABOUT THESE ISSUES ?

The developmental trends are evident among the issues that the girls identified as well as in their strong preferences around who they would like to work with/talk to about these critical issues. Specifically, girls were asked who they thought girls their age would like to talk to as it relates to discussing important issues and were asked to respond Yes or No to the following:

Do you think girls your age would like:  
An older girl to talk to about important stuff?  
An adult woman to talk to about important stuff?  
Other girls of the same age to talk to about important stuff?



Overall, all girls report the desire to talk with girls their own age, followed by girls who are older than them. Of lowest endorsement is talking with an adult woman about important issues.

**While girls can certainly benefit from interactions with adult women, this data suggests they are less likely to be initially attracted to that option.**

Overwhelmingly 5th-7th grade girls indicated that they would first prefer girls their same age (72.1%), and secondly prefer an older girl to talk to (62.4%). An adult woman was not desired by over 2/3 of the respondents (64.7%). In general 8th-12th grade girls indicated that they would first prefer girls their same age (81.8%), and secondly prefer an older girl to talk to (73.0%). An adult woman was not desired by over 2/3 of the respondents (65.0%).

There is some variance among the girls' endorsement of their desires for other females to talk to about these critical issues. Due to the fact that girls could select any or all options, many may have selected more than one choice. Nearly half of 5th graders reported wanting an adult woman to talk to, but this dramatically declined in 6th-9th grades. Endorsement of adults rebounded in the 12th grade with nearly 45% of girls endorsing this option. To be clear, among all girls, the endorsement of a girl of the same age was the most frequently selected option, followed by the selection of an older girl. See table below.

### PERCENT OF GIRLS WHO WANT TO TALK TO AN OLDER GIRL, AN ADULT WOMAN, AND/OR A GIRL OF THE SAME AGE

| GRADE | A GIRL YOUR SAME AGE | AN OLDER GIRL | AN ADULT WOMAN |
|-------|----------------------|---------------|----------------|
| 5th   | 64.5                 | 53.9          | 48.7           |
| 6th   | 74.5                 | 62.7          | 35.5           |
| 7th   | 76.7                 | 71.4          | 26.2           |
| 8th   | 74.1                 | 70.4          | 27.8           |
| 9th   | 78.8                 | 71.0          | 28.0           |
| 10th  | 84.6                 | 75.4          | 33.3           |
| 11th  | 82.0                 | 68.7          | 38.2           |
| 12th  | 85.7                 | 79.1          | 44.5           |

# DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF GIRLS THROUGH INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

The findings from the One Girl survey reveal important information on central Ohio girls, and provide us with a summary of the issues they find important. However, the opportunity to examine, in even greater depth, the lived experiences of adolescent girls was provided through the Ruling Our eXperiences program, which The Women's Fund of Central Ohio has financially supported since 2006. We have included the qualitative data analysis from over 900 individual interview and focus group participants in the ROX program. (Author's note: Dr. Melissa Ockerman of DePaul University and Dr. Michelle Bruno of Indiana University of Pennsylvania contributed to this extensive data analysis and interpretation.)

Over the past 5 years, girls who were members of a central Ohio Ruling Our eXperiences program cohort participated in either an individual interview or a focus group consisting of questions that were developed to increase our understanding of: 1.) Girls' views of themselves; 2.) The big issues girls are dealing with; 3.) Girls' thoughts about the adults/parents/caregivers in their lives, and; 4.) Girls' views of dating and peer group relationships. While the following is not an exhaustive list, we have included some of the relevant questions that were posed to 5th-10th grade girls, including:

- What do you like about being a girl?
- What are some of the things that girls your age are dealing with that adults don't really understand?
- Lots of girls tell us that they are dealing with pressure. Do you agree with that? What are some of the things that girls feel pressure around?
- Do you think girls feel pressure to look/dress a certain way? What are some of the messages you hear around how girls should look or dress?
- If there was one thing that you would want an adult to know about what it is like to be you, what would you want to tell them?
- How can adults (parents, teachers, school counselors, etc.) better support or help you in your life?

## FOCUS GROUP THEMES

While much of the perceived pressure that girls experience can be considered developmental in nature, there are factors that impact the experience of girls that go beyond their biological development and play a role in how girls experience themselves, their bodies, their relationships, and their accomplishments. Discerning social cues, learning how to fit in, and learning what is considered appropriate or inappropriate behavior are key developmental tasks of adolescence, and we found clear patterns in the content of girls conversations. The following details the core research themes that are related to the initial One Girl findings:

### PARENTS JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND

Results indicated that girls wanted a balance of ground rules and “freedom” from feeling overprotected. They also want open communication and advice from their parents/caregivers around difficult topics they were confronting, including sexual relationships, violence, and racism -- but they often expressed feeling that parents were disconnected from their world. This resulted in communication barriers and feelings of being misunderstood and thus not valued, as elucidated by the following sentiments:

*"You can't tell your parents anything. We are overprotected or they are all up in your business or disrespectful to you. They go through text messages. They don't understand we need our privacy." -- Jasmine, 7th grade*

*"We want to be with our friends and sometimes my parents don't trust me; trust is a big thing." -- Amanda, 6th grade*

*"I'm 11 now, but I'm still being treated like I'm 3."  
-- De'Nine, 6th grade*

Issues around sexual relationships with boys and discussion sexual activity with parents seemed to be particular sources of contention, as displayed by the following comments:

*" We are more advanced than parents think, when it comes to sex and stuff. This is the 2000's it's not the same as when they were younger." --Desiree, 8th grade*

*" My Mom doesn't go in my room because she knows I have stuff in there I'm not supposed to have. As a child you're not supposed to have condoms in your room but you got it in there. She doesn't understand where I come from." --Krista, 8th grade*

*" Your parents tell you to have safe sex, but they get mad at you for having them [condoms]. You just want to be safe in case something happens." --Monique, 10th grade*

## GOT DRAMA?

Consistent with the One Girl survey findings, friendships and 'girl drama' pervade the lives of girls in all grades. While girls are seeking approval, friendship, and belonging from their female peers, many report ongoing difficulties in these relationships.

Girls report using more social tactics to express anger and report difficulty expressing their real feelings. This results in relationally aggressive or bullying behaviors, as indicated above, rather than healthy or assertive communication.

*" I think sometimes, more often, it's verbal. People will say stuff about how you look, what clothes you wear, or where you come from." -- Rachel, 6th grade*

*" I think in the girl world, most fights revolve around boys." -- Ciara, 10th grade*

*" Mostly gossip and rumors. Girls don't like another girl and start rumors about her." --Dysheena, 8th grade*

Girls also report seeking close friendships with males rather than females due to the strain on their female-female relationships.

*" I don't even like girls, I used to just hang out with dudes cause girls are drama." -- Becca, 10th grade*

*" My best friend is a boy, because I trust him more." --Krissy, 8th grade*

## BOYS AND SEX

While some girls are seeking connection and intimacy from dating relationships or friendships with boys, girls have a general awareness of the difficulties that they experience in relationships with boys. The lack of perceived communication and guidance from parents/caregivers is especially troublesome given that the girls may benefit from a positive adult role model when relating to boys their age and older men. Overwhelmingly, girls viewed their relationships with males as having a disparaging or belittling effect in their lives as indicated below:

*"...boys smack your butts and don't treat us with respect." -- Sammie, 6th grade*

*"The only time boys talk to me is to make fun of me."  
-- Eliza, 7th grade*

*"Most guys like me because I have a big chest."  
-- Mikalya, 7th grade*

In almost all of the focus groups, members commented on the violent nature and mistrust that characterized their perceptions of men and boys:

*"We are going to worry about if we are going to get beat or cheated on." -- Rashayn, 7th grade*

*"Guys might hit you and if that happens you need to get away."  
-- MacKenzie, 7th grade*

*"There was a boy that got with a girl and he said he was going to 'hit it and quit it.' [I think] that he is just using her and that's not right." -- Lisa, 6th grade*

## I WANT TO BE PRETTY

Girls generally have positive notions about being a girl, but traditional gender role stereotypes were very evident in girls responses to the question, "What do you like about being a girl?" Statements such as, "Girls can wear different kinds of clothes,"

and, "Shopping," are illustrative of this point. Additionally, similar to their perceptions of how they believe males view them, their expressions of what they liked about being their gender centered overwhelmingly around beauty, physical attributes, and outward appearance, rather than inherit personality, relationships, or intellectual capabilities. Many girls discussed that they liked being a girl because of their clothes and their ability to get their nails, make-up, and hair done:

*" We have attractive body parts, my face is pretty, I get to shop more than boys..." -- Nikki, 8th grade*

*" I like the way we dress, clothes, hair, lip gloss, nails, make-up, earrings, belly rings, cheerleading, our bodies..."  
-- Ramona, 7th grade*

These type of responses remained as girls got older, but by high school, girls responses also included more positive and sophisticated thinking concerning their gender. Girls more readily identified the emotional connections that they can have with other girls and the positive aspects of girl's and women's relationships.

*" I like everything. We can do anything we want. If something is wrong with you, you can just go and talk to a group of ladies and they'll listen, boys don't." -- Kiersten, 9th grade*

*" Girls are more supportive than boys. If you tell a boy something, they just say ok. Girls discuss how you are feeling and how you can fix it." -- Molly, 10th grade*

## LOOK OUT WORLD....HERE I COME!

Girls are excited and hopeful. While they report overall frustration with parents and adults, they want adults to trust them and to believe in them. Girls see themselves as successful and going places and have dreams of high school graduation, college, and careers.

*"I think girls can have it all. We can do anything as good as boys...and some things we can do better...except maybe some sports." --Taylor, 5th grade*

*"I am excited for high school because I hear that things get better in high school. You get to make different friends and be part of a different group." --Di'Ana, 7th grade*

*"My mom is going to school now and I see how hard it is for her to work all day and go to school at night. I want to go to college as soon as I graduate from high school." --Kiersten, 9th grade*

# DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK

Taking the various sources of information and aligning the findings and themes allows us to summarize the concept and topic areas of importance for girls in central Ohio. The issues that are facing girls are interrelated and relate to girls perceptions of themselves, their relationships, and their futures. A comprehensive look at the findings of this research, and an understanding of the critical issues impacting girls, provide us with a preliminary conceptual framework for approaching work with girls.

Thus a visual representation of a preliminary and simple framework may include the following:

| THEMES THAT IMPACT ALL TOPICS   |  |                              |
|---|--|------------------------------|
| <i>Self-Esteem/Feeling Good About Myself and My Decisions</i><br><i>Dealing With Pressure</i><br><i>Desire to Talk with Girls of the Same Age or Slightly Older</i> |  |                              |
| CATEGORIES & TOPICS OF DESIRED PROGRAMMING  |  |                              |
| <i>My Future</i>  | <i>My Relationships</i>                          | <i>My Body</i>               |
| School Success  | Friendships                                      | Puberty/Body Changes         |
| Planning for High School  | Girl Drama/Bullying/<br>Relational Aggression    | Weight/Body Image            |
| Planning for College  | Dating Relationships/<br>Relationships with Boys | Pregnancy Prevention         |
| Academic Planning   | Cyberspace                                       | Managing Stress/Bad<br>Moods |
| Career Development  | Sex/Sexual Decision<br>Making                    | Drugs & Alcohol              |

# IMPLICATIONS

Ensuring that our approach to building relationships and providing programming to girls is informed by what girls actually care about provides us an opportunity to transform services and interventions targeted to girls. We have an increased ability to engage girls in relevant ways and to demonstrate to girls that we understand and care about their experiences and their challenges.

I'm a *business person* .

Businesses and corporations who invest in community agencies, schools, or programs that focus on girls should ensure they are making **targeted investments in evidence-based programs and interventions**. Millions of dollars have been invested in agencies, programs, and organizations that are well-intentioned, yet may be lacking in empirical outcome data. How can you know that your dollars are having the greatest impact? **Fund innovative concepts and ideas that incorporate a rigorous evaluation protocol**. It is wise to expect a program to allocate a percentage of their budget to program evaluation, and funders would be well-served to require thorough evaluation metrics in their requests for funding. Effective evaluation supports program improvement and integrity.

I'm a *girl-serving organization* .

If you are involved with a girl-serving program or organization it is important to ensure that your programs incorporate **targeted marketing and relevant recruitment** of girls. Girls have told us that they are intensely concerned with friendships, relationships, and dating. If our efforts to engage girls do not initially demonstrate an understanding of their lives, we may miss the opportunity to pique their interest.

Aligning desired program outcomes to program interventions is critical to effective programming. Simply put, **program inputs must match the program outputs**. If your desired outcome is to improve girls' self-concept, your program must include evidence-based interventions that have demonstrated success in improving self-concept.

Finally, organizations must also be concerned with, and willing to pay for, **rigorous evaluation** that measures the efficacy of their programs. Evaluation allows you to be able to demonstrate to funders and constituents the ways in which the girls are different by having participated in your program or intervention.

## I'm a philanthropist.

If you are a philanthropist or are otherwise concerned with the funding of organizations and programs that provide services to girls, you should be asking yourself the following: **“Do the voices and experiences of girls inform the programs that I support?”** Knowing that girls have a say in the program design and implementation means that the girls are being listened to and valued.

Another question to consider is: **“Do the programs that I support actually make a difference in the lives of the participants?”** Take care to ensure that your investment is making an impact in the way that you would hope.

## I'm an educator.

As schools seek to provide effective education to girls, there are several issues that must be taken into consideration. First, an acknowledgment that **there are non-academic barriers that impact girls lives and can have a substantial impact on academic performance.** Girls told us that the issues they face at school have less to do with academics and much more to do with school climate and interpersonal relationships. We must take a holistic approach to educating girls and work to **create an environment where girls can learn and thrive.**

## I'm a parent.

Parents and other adults who have girls in their lives can improve their relationships by **making a conscious effort to connect with them in authentic and developmentally appropriate ways.** Adults often approach their conversations with teens from a place of superiority or expertise. While adults have the benefit of wisdom and experience -- they must recognize that a girl's only experience is her current situation. When she goes through a difficult relationship, she does not want you to tell her that, “There are other fish in the sea” or “I know how you feel”. Rather, **she wants you to validate her intense emotions and realize that her feelings and experiences are all new to her.** She wants to be listened to, trusted, supported, and encouraged.

## NEXT STEPS FOR THE COLLABORATIVE

A comprehensive look at the findings of the research, coupled with an examination of the current research literature on the critical issues impacting girls, provides a framework for a model of intervention.

Through the identification of the evidenced-based interventions that positively impact girls' development and skill acquisition, combined with the findings from the surveys and focus groups, we are able to incorporate the desired and research-supported components into the One Girl framework and begin to address these issues in a comprehensive and systemic manner.

The Women's Fund of Central Ohio has committed to this strategic grantmaking initiative by supporting the work of the core collaborative partners in the research, development, and implementation of this innovative model of intervention. Stay tuned to follow our progress!

## THE COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS



Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland serves 35,000 girls and 10,000 adult volunteers in a thirty-county jurisdiction of central, south central, and southeastern Ohio. Girl Scouts is the one collaborative partner and girl-serving organization with existing programming and reach in each of the seven targeted counties. Building off of this infrastructure provides a solid and substantial base for the development and maintenance of partnerships and collaborative efforts. The organization currently provides extensive services to 21,670 girls and 6,575 adults within the seven-county central Ohio region.

Girl Scouts has existing relationships, partnerships, and collaborations with many of the potential ancillary partners represented across all seven counties. Girl Scouts is the premier leadership development program for girls and brings leadership development knowledge, skills, and resources to the collaborative.



The Interprofessional Commission of Ohio at The Ohio State University ICO has a 38 year history of bringing professionals together to address complex social problems through interprofessional collaboration. The Commission has partnered with many community organizations and University academic units to provide interprofessional planning and evaluation; training and education for communities, institutions, and agencies; asset and needs assessments for communities and agencies; community collaboration; and staff development. The ICO, housed within the College of Education and Human Ecology at The Ohio State University provides expertise in the areas of collaboration, research and evaluation, interprofessional education

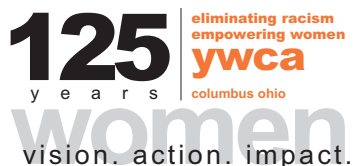


The Mentoring Center is a capacity-building hub of services for mentors and over 40 mentoring programs in central Ohio, together serving over 7,000 of the area's most vulnerable children. Since its founding in 2000, it has trained over 20,000 mentors. The Mentoring Center provides research-based training and guidance in program design and background checks and trainings (for mentors and professionals). The Center specializes in adult-to-child mentoring as well as cross-age mentoring, and provides training to One Girl program and college student facilitators in mentoring concepts and skills. Through a Stimulus grant, the Center is providing services to an added 60 programs in northern Ohio. With Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio, it has also recently received an OJJDP (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention) grant to support its all-Ohio outreach and training during the next three years and to translate its eight major trainings to online platforms to increase mentoring skills statewide. The Mentoring Center is an independently operated and independently funded division of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio, third largest chapter in the United States, and is a member of MENTOR/ National Mentoring Partnership, premier advocate for quality mentoring practices.



Ruling Our eXperiences (ROX) is an evidence based empowerment program for girls that focuses on self-esteem, self-concept, body image, healthy assertiveness, healthy relationships, leadership, career development, and sexual violence prevention. Based on the philosophy that prevention is preferable to intervention, ROX seeks to equip girls with the information and skills

needed to live healthy, independent, productive, and violence free lives. Through teaching girls these important skills, and improving self-esteem at a young age, the goal of ROX is to positively impact the life course of girls and to assist them in becoming empowered and confident women. Developed in 2006, ROX has grown to a multi-state operated program with hundreds of participants in urban, suburban, and rural schools.



YWCA Columbus is the oldest and largest multicultural women's organization in the world, with more than 25 million members in 122 countries, including 2 million members in 300 local associations in the United States. The mission of YWCA's across the globe is to eliminate racism and empower women, a call that drives the work of the YWCA and invites others to join. Since 1886, YWCA Columbus has advocated for and provided critical services to women and their families. As a leader, provider, and convener, the YWCA draws together those who strive to create opportunities for women's growth and leadership in order to attain a common vision of peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all people.