

girls
inc.

of Northern Alberta

GIRLS INC. OF NORTHERN ALBERTA ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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Summary

Aligning with Girls Inc. of Northern Alberta Strategic Plan 2021-2025, our impact in 2023 was three-fold:

1. Strengthened programming quality that are innovative, intentional, research-based, preventative, holistic, context-specific, age-appropriate and transformational for 1,489 girls ages 6-18 through 15 programs across the Wood Buffalo region.
2. Increased inclusive and equitable learning opportunities that are tailored to meet the diverse and emerging needs of the local community, especially during (post-) disaster recovery from wildfire.
3. Sustained organizational capacity to continue serving as an advocate for all girls to have equal rights, respect and barrier free life opportunities, with the organizational revenue maintained around the similar level as the last 3 years.

Due to stagnant economies, the organizational revenue was faced with 3% reduction in over all revenue in 2023.. This in turn led to decreased programming expenses, resulting in a 24% decline in the overall reach of participants from the previous year.

Nevertheless, the organization more than doubled the rural community outreach rate to 52.1% via kit delivery. The figure was maintained at 14.2% through direct programming.

Notably, the STRONG (Healthy and Active Living) programming increased from 26% in 2022 to 38% in 2023, responding to increased needs for addressing holistic wellbeing of girls (including menstrual education). Increased self-esteem, enhanced connection to culture, and strengthened social awareness have been observed across participants.

Dismantling stigma and systemic inequalities, heightened in emergencies, was another priority that the organization worked on this year. The organization also witnessed an increasing need for addressing and preventing gender-based violence, including online aggressions. Accelerated efforts will be made in this area going forward.

These achievements demonstrate the organization's efforts and commitments to equipping all girls with the skills, knowledge and support needed to reach their full potential. Shout out to all staff, including Sundas Shamshad – Interim Executive Director, Board of Directors, as well as all volunteers, who all ensured that the organization kept on thriving during the leadership transitioning period of August 2022-September 2023.

In 2024, we will further work towards sustainable, resilient and thriving operations, in order tackle thick, tall and messy existing barriers around achieving diversity, equity and inclusion, so that many more girls are inspired to be strong, smart and bold.



Nanase Tonda
Executive Director, Girls Inc. of Northern Alberta

Message From Board President

I am happy to share with you the highlights of another remarkable year at Girls Inc of Northern Alberta. As we reflect on the achievements of 2023, I am honored to serve as President of the Board of Directors for an organization that continues to make a profound impact on the lives of girls in our community.

Throughout the past year, we have remained steadfast in our commitment to inspire the next generation of leaders. With the invaluable leadership of our Executive Director, Nanase Tonda, and her team we have extended our outreach to rural areas, allowing us to reach more girls than ever before. This year, we have had the privilege of serving over 1400 girls and delivering over 800 kits, providing essential resources and support to empower the girls of RMWB on their journey.

One of the highlights of the year was our annual Women of Inspiration Gala, a celebration of the remarkable women who are making a difference in our community. This year, we had the pleasure of honoring five outstanding women joining the previous 87 women of inspiration since 2012. It is a testament to the importance of our work and the positive impact it has.

None of this would be possible without the unwavering support of our incredible community. To our donors, volunteers, and Girls Inc. team members, I extend my deepest gratitude. Your support ensures our programs remain barrier free and your generosity is the backbone of our organization.

As we look ahead to the coming year, I am excited for what the future holds. Together, we will continue to empower girls, to be strong, smart and BOLD!

Sincerely,

Victoria Brown



Who We Are

Girls Inc. of Northern Alberta is the only non-profit organization in the Wood Buffalo region providing 100% cost-free, gender specific programming to girls ages 6-18 with a mission to inspire all girls to be strong, smart, and bold. We envision a world in which all girls value their whole selves, discover their inherent strengths and achieve their goals.

Since 1979, we have been honored to operate on the lands of Treaty 8 territory, the traditional meeting ground, gathering place, traveling route and home of the Cree, Dene and Métis people for thousands of years. We began as Big Sisters Society when there was a suggestion that we merge with Big Brothers Big Sisters. We advocated that girls go through unique experiences and that there is a strong need for us to continue to provide a safe, inclusive and gender-sensitive learning environment.

That is why we became affiliated with Girls Incorporated (Girls Inc.) in 2004 – to empower girls to realize their full potential and become the leaders for the future. Today, we are a part of a strong Girls Inc. in a network spanning more than 1,500 sites in 350 cities across the United States and Canada. Girls Inc. of Northern Alberta remains the **only one in all of Western Canada**.

We are the leading advocate for girls' and women's rights and opportunities. We build the next generation of leaders – or 'game changers' – by working with girls to grow positive relationships, find and use their voice, develop positive self-image/confidence and enhance critical thinking ability.

Every year, Girls Inc. of Northern Alberta equips girls between the ages of 6-18 across the Wood Buffalo region with the knowledge and skills needed to break free from gender stereotypes, create social change, be proud and confident of who they are.

Our Impact & Journey 2023

Our Impact

Girls Inc. provides transformative programs that specifically target the distinctive needs and obstacles faced by girls. These programs are designed to be innovative, intentional, research-driven, preventive, comprehensive, tailored to specific contexts, suitable for different age groups, accessible to all, and capable of bringing about profound changes. Through our efforts, we empower girls to fully realize their potential, cultivate positive connections, express themselves confidently, boost their self-assurance, improve their critical thinking skills, and become advocates for gender equality.

In 2023, there were **1,489 participants in 15 programs held at 4 different communities** across the Wood Buffalo region. While the number of participants has decreased from the previous year, we have **more than doubled rural community outreach rate based on kit delivery to 52.1%**. The figure was maintained at 14.2% through direct programming. These achievements demonstrate the organization's efforts to respond to the wildfire and post-disaster readiness related needs from the rural communities.

Continuing from 2020, our program delivery model remained flexible between virtual, in-person and hybrid, to best meet the needs of the girls while ensuring accessibility and inclusivity.

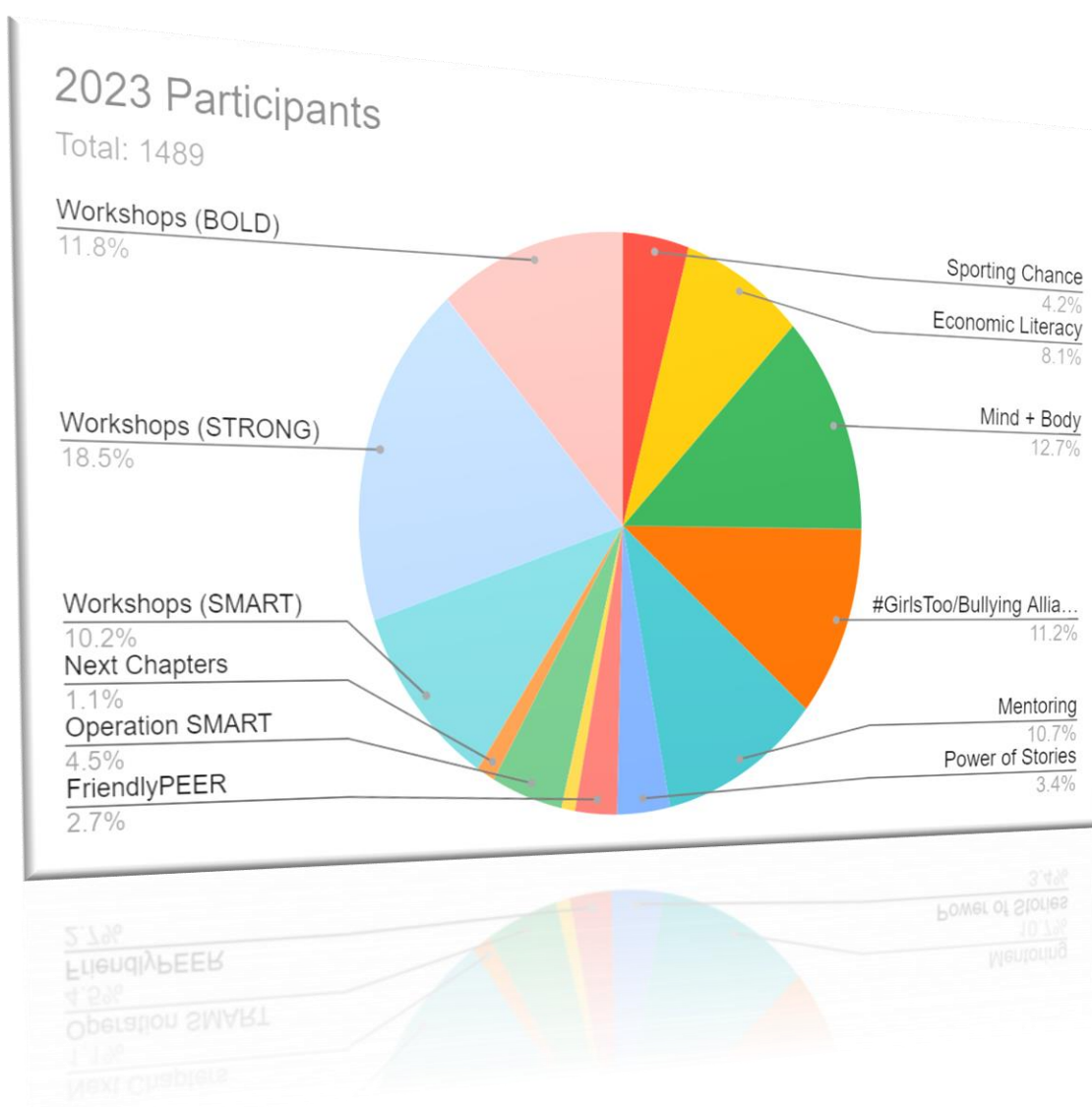
We kept in touch with our partner organizations or rather **pro-girl allies**, including school boards, youth centers, corporate partners and Indigenous elders and knowledge keepers.

As an organization, we continued to listen to and work with the community's needs in order to bring programming to girls in a safe, inclusive and fun environment. See below for some of the highlights from participants in 2023.

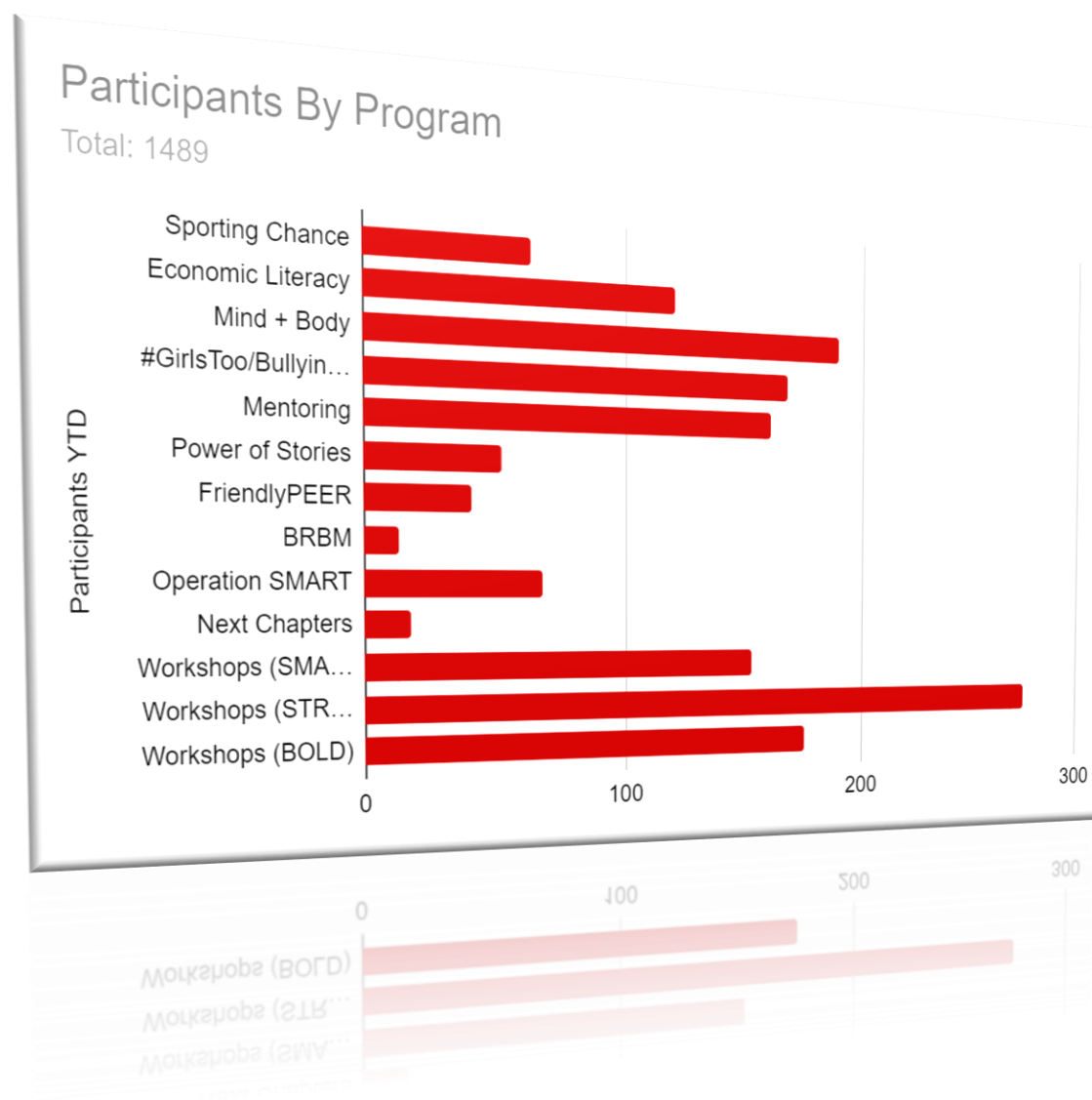
Five Year Growth at a Glance	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
# of girls impacted	1489	1961	1566	1575	700
% outreach to remote/underserved communities	51.2% (kit delivery); 14.2% (program)	24%	24.2%	31.3%	15.1%
Annual Revenue	\$595,908	\$636,118	\$572,671	\$540,676	\$493,585
STRONG: SMART: BOLD	38% 24% 38%	26% 25% 49%	34% 22% 44%	31 % 18 % 51 %	37% 8% 55%

Girls Served

In 2023 Girls Inc. of NAB served a total of 1489 girls in the Wood Buffalo Region. We have done so through in -school, after-school and workshops programming (both in-person and virtual) to allow girls from all over the RMWB to gain the Girls Inc. experience.

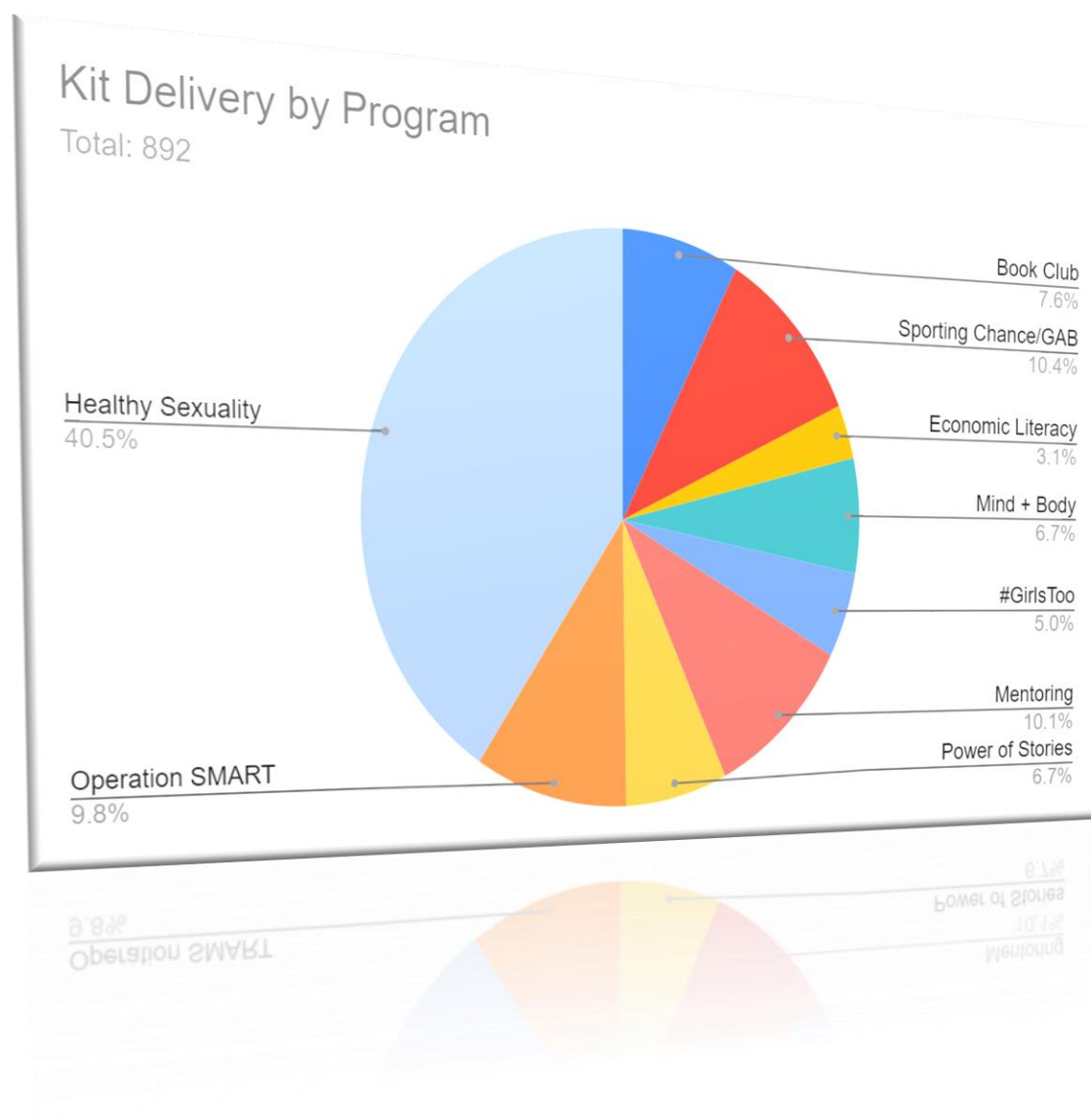


Echoing our mandate, our programs encompass Healthy-Active Living (STRONG), Knowledge Enrichment (SMART) and Informed Life Skills (BOLD), facilitated in a gender-sensitive learning environment, in both in-/after-school settings. Overall, the STRONG portion increased from 26% in 2022 to 38% in 2023, the SMART programming was maintained at 24% compared to 25 % in 2023), and the BOLD component decreased from 49% in 2022 to 38% in 2023.

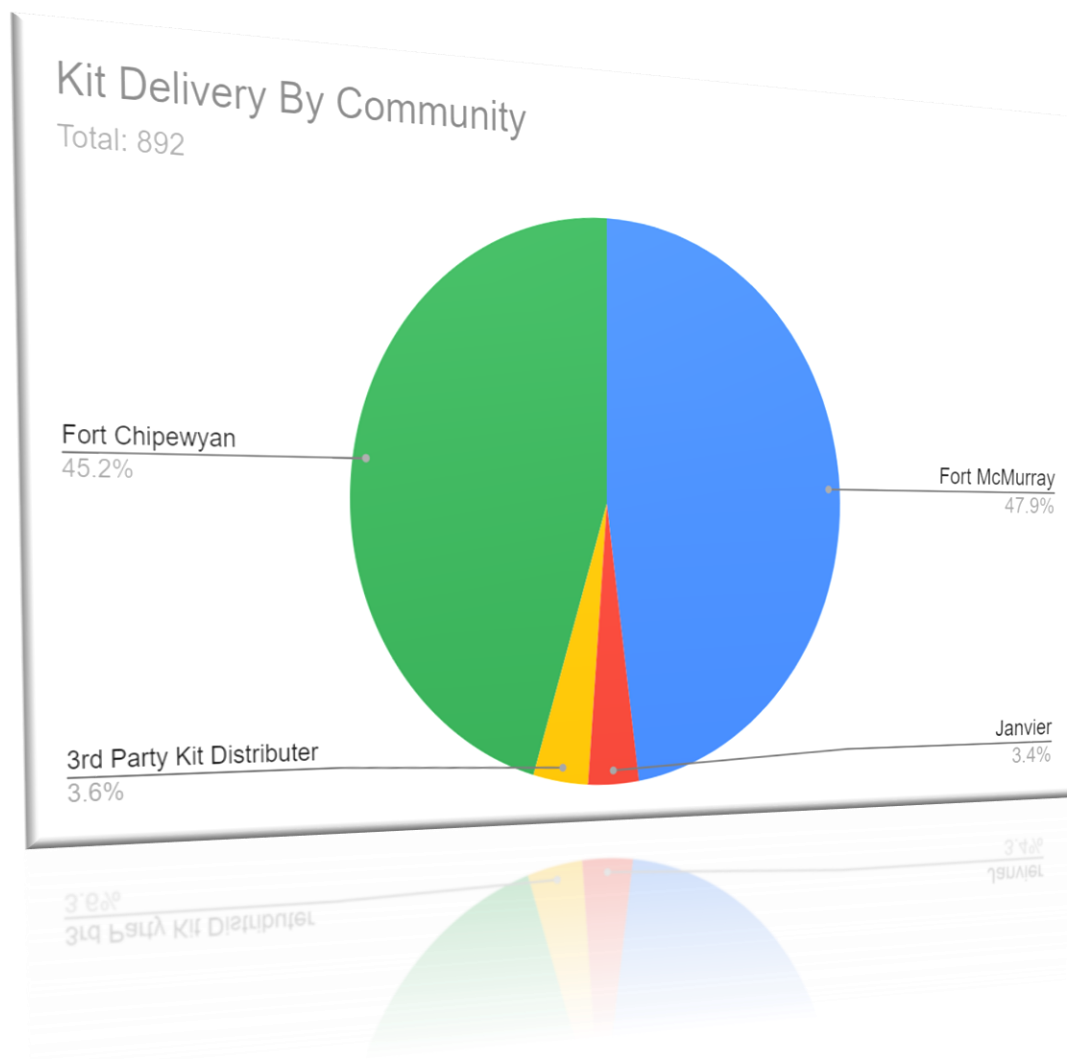


In 2023, our commitment to inclusivity and innovation **continued to improve the quality of our programs**, effectively addressing the evolving needs and challenges faced by the girls we serve.

Consistent with previous years, we found that workshops remained a powerful and impactful method that strongly resonated with both girls and their parents/caregivers. This was particularly evident when introducing Girls Inc. programming for the first time or extending outreach to Indigenous communities. In addition to returning girls, **welcomed numerous new girls in 2023, along with consistent engagement from youth volunteers**. We are dedicated to continuous learning to identify and apply approaches that yield positive outcomes.



Looking at the kit delivery breakdown by program, it is evident that most kits were Healthy Sexuality (Period Kits). This indicates the increased demand and need for addressing equity around period education, stigma surrounded with it as well as structural inequality around menstrual products.



In 2023, a total of 892 kits were distributed to 4 different communities across the RMWB. 52% of these kits were delivered to rural communities and via Indigenous community partners.

"I just want to say THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU! The packages that you sent were way more than I could have ever asked for. I am actually going to alter my programming around the packages so the girls can be going home with these items each time we meet. Our first time meeting last week, we had 7 girls show up ages 9,10,11, and 12. We talked about laying and giving tobacco, we made talking sticks and then played Marco Polo in the dark. I gave them the mindful kits to take home this time and they loved it." – Carlee, Athabasca Tribal Council

Programs: STRONG, SMART & BOLD

STRONG

Friendly PEERsuasion (Ages 9-12 & 13-15)

Girls develop skills to resist pressure to use harmful substances, such as drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and household chemicals.

- Dr. K.A Clark Elementary School
- Northlands Online School

A total of 61 participants completed the FriendlyPEER program with 40 of those participants identifying as girls. The program focused on age-appropriate topics, such as communication and refusal skills, along with the standard curriculum. Peer-to-peer mentoring relationships were formed as a result.

Both in-person and virtual delivery of the program allowed participants to have group discussions, work together in small groups (breakout rooms), and also discuss sensitive topics such as drugs and alcohol as a group. It was observed that the majority of participants were interested in the topics surrounding stress and stress management.

Greater interest and engagement were observed surrounding the topics of marijuana and vaping. Post surveys conducted at Dr. Clark noted an increase from 61.5% to 66.3% of participants strongly agreeing with the statement: *"I feel confident that I can handle my stress well"*.

Sporting Chance (Ages 6-18)

- Vista Ridge Ski Hill
- St. Martha's Baseball Diamond

- MacDonald Island Park
- Virtual Challenge

Girls increase self-esteem, enhance physical-psychological well-being, and promote a healthy lifestyle to the wider public.

In March of 2023, we facilitated our second year of family fun day at the Vista Ridge tubing hill. This event was opened to girls and their families. In total, 69 girls and their families participated in 2 hours of tubing, resulting in over 100 participants in attendance.

A **Learn to Skate** event was also held for newcomers and refugees at MacDonald Island Park Skating Rink in early January. During this event, a total of 25 participants and their families spent two hours learning how to skate. Participants were able to **increase their sense of belonging while stepping out of their comfort zone.**

In 2023, we introduced a new Sporting Chance Workshop called **Move it Fridays**. Taking advantage of the many no-school Fridays throughout the year, participants ages 6-8 and 9-14 were invited to attend these workshops to learn about and engage in different types of sports and activities like basketball, dodgeball, soccer, hockey, and more. Results included **increased sense of confidence and enhanced physical literacy skills amongst 66 girls.**

"Maryam just finished the Move it Friday program and she loved it. I really appreciate your help. We see changes in her since she started having classes with Girls Inc events and programs. This means so much for us as she was really struggling with anxiety and being active and getting involved is helping her mental health so much."
– Qudsia Karimi, Parent

Finally, our yearly **Stay Active Challenge** recurred in July-August 2023. This challenge aimed at encouraging girls in the community to stay active over the summer months. **Over 350 entries** were completed by participants who logged their daily wellness activities including sports, walking, swimming, and more.



Top L: Girls ages 9+ group during the November Move it Friday Session

Top R: Group photo: Age 6-8 group during the November Move it Friday Session

Bottom L: Participants with Kids Sport during our Spring Move it Friday Session

Bottom R: Group photo taken during the 'Learn to Skate' workshop.

Girls at Bat (Ages 6-8 and 9-12) - in partnership with Jays Care Foundation

Girls increase their sense of connection, courage, leadership, and love of sport with activities designed to build vital self-esteem, team-building and personal health. Participants gain far more than baseball skills.

- St. Martha's School baseball field
- MacDonald Island, Nexen Field House

Through a four-day camp in July and August, 63 girls aged 6-8 and 9+ learned the basic skills of baseball, developed their physical literacy skills, and built confidence while forming friendships with their peers.

Girls at Bat has become a program that participants ask about and look forward to each summer, with the majority of girls returning from previous years. Along with observations of increased engagement, and overall enjoyment of the program, many parents have expressed how satisfied they are with the program and positive impacts it has made on their children.

"They have enjoyed the Girls at Bat: Week 1 and we do appreciate these programs your organization offers to the girls in our community. YOU ARE THE BEST!" – Ederlyn Mcguigan, Parent



Top L: Girls ages 6-8 gather for a group proudly displaying their certificates during the July GAB Program

Top R: Girls ages 9+ gather for a group proudly displaying their certificates during the July GAB Program

Bottom L: Girls give a final cheer after a session in August.

Bottom R: Girls ages 6-8 play one of their favorite icebreaker games: 'Mountains & Peaks'

Mind + Body (Ages 6-8 & 9+)

Girls approach wellbeing holistically, particularly in the areas of physical activity, body image, nutrition and stress management. Girls are equipped with appropriate resources, information, tools, skills, and knowledge to complement.

- Walter & Gladys Hill
- St. Martha's
- Our Lady of the Rivers
- Dr. K.A Clark Public
- Father Beauregard
- Good Shepherd
- Unifor Hall
- Markaz Ul Islam
- Ecole St. Paul

Throughout 2023, 232 girls completed the Mind + Body program for girls ages 6-8 and 9+. A total of 9 Mind + Body in-school programs were facilitated in 2023, impacting 167 girls. A total of 4 workshops were facilitated with 41 girls. Mind + Body Summer camp alone engaged 24 girls.

As seen above through the total number of in-school programs, the **Mind + Body program continues to be in high demand within schools, together with positive feedback from teachers, counselors and participants.** 2023 has also brought more requests for specific topics. For example, counselors have communicated a need for **targeted topics such as stress management, body image, and online safety.**



Left: Participants of the 6-8 age group enjoying a healthy snack (made by themselves!).

Right: Participants of the 9+ age group during the Mind + Body 'skills week' discussing stress management.

Healthy Sexuality (Ages 9+)

Healthy Sexuality assists girls in understanding and embracing sexuality with a positive, empowered approach that is built on a foundation of accurate information, cultural sensitivity, and values of inclusiveness and respect. The program approaches 4 topics that are tailored to the appropriate age level: Healthy Relationships, Sexuality Thumbprint, Sexual Health and Reproduction, and Sex, Media, and Technology.

- Online / virtual
- Markaz Ul Islam

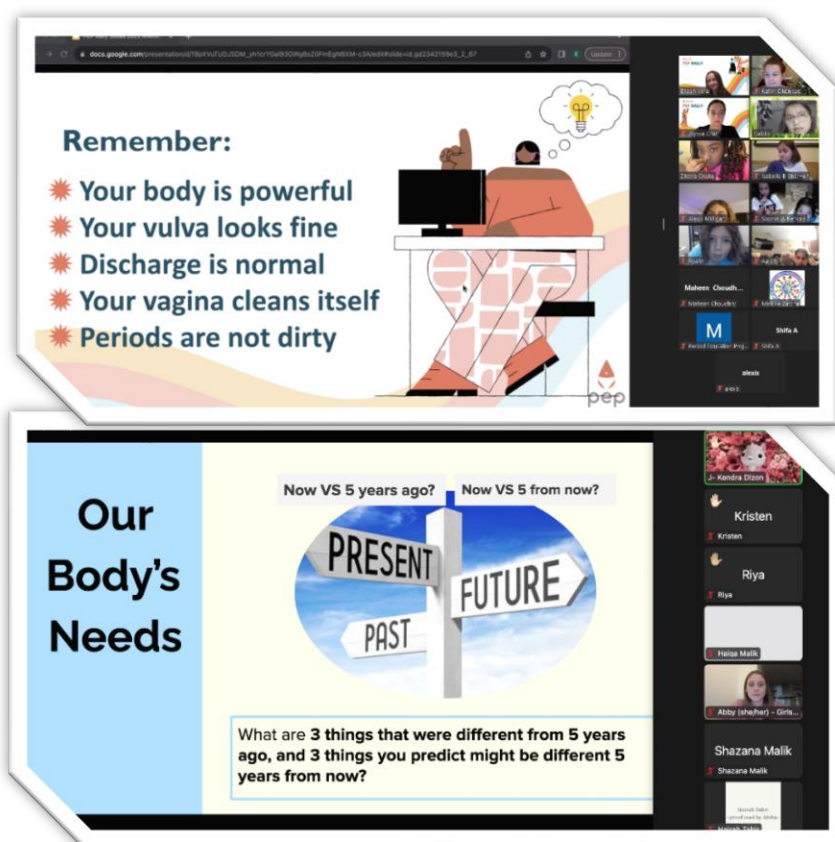
In 2023, a total of 6 Healthy Sexuality workshops (5 online + 1 in-person) were implemented reaching 78 girls. In 2023, we partnered with *The Period Education Project* who delivered a 1.5 hour Introduction to Periods workshops. This workshop was led by female doctors where they answered

questions from the girls. It was encouraged for parents to attend along with their children, developing the sense of intergenerational support and empowerment.

“I just wanted to say, last night’s presentation was incredible. The two presenters did an amazing job and the content was on point. Everything was absolutely perfect”. – Christine, Parent

At an in-person workshop held at the Markaz Ul Islam, we worked closely with the partner to ensure that the program contents were culturally relevant and fit for the girls ages 12 and up.

Along with workshops, a total of 361 period kits were delivered to girls in Fort McMurray, Fort Chipewyan and through third party partners, especially in response to (post-) wildfire recovery.



Top: A screenshot from the virtual Healthy Sexuality workshop in Winter of 2023.

Bottom: A screenshot from the virtual PEP RALLY workshop in partnership with the Period Education Project.

SMART

Economic Literacy (Ages 6-8, 9+)

Economic Literacy seeks to empower girls to recognize early on that they can exercise control over their financial future, to promote with girls a sense of economic justice, and to develop skills that girls need to make informed decisions.

- Walter & Gladys Hill Public School
- Dr. K.A Clark Public School

In total, 70 girls participated in Economic Literacy in 2023. 4 in school Economic Literacy programs were implemented with 88 students (36 girls). Outside of In-school programming, we implemented a 'Money Matters' summer camp for 13 girls ages and 21 girls ages 9+.

Beyond personal finances, participants learned about how the economy works on an individual, local, and global scale at an age-appropriate level with intertwined mental math practice to enhance cross-curricular learning.

Participants gained understanding of the fluidity of our economic systems and the social, economic, political, and demographic impacts to people across the world. We discussed the influence of the global health crisis on Canadians, specifically women and girls, and the importance of economic empowerment in times of intensifying barriers to financial freedom.

With the growing needs and popularity of the Economic Literacy program in schools, positive engagement and enthusiasm were observed amongst participants throughout the programming.

"Money Matters, she liked so much that she has explained at home how debit, credit and other financial tools work. She even had us open a bank account so that she can continue to use her learnings going forward." – Parent of a 9 years old girl



Top L: Girls ages 9+ work together to discuss the difference between needs and wants during Money Matters Week.

Top R: Participants personalize their Piggy Banks after learning about savings and goal setting.

Bottom: girls ages 6-8 gather to show their work during the Money Matters week in summer 2023.

Operation SMART (Ages 9+) – in partnership with BrainSTEM Alliance

Through hands-on activities, girls explore, ask questions, persist, and solve problems relating to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Girls develop enthusiasm, skills, and interest in STEM. By interacting with women role models in STEM, girls come to develop interest in STEM and view these careers as exciting and attainable options for themselves.

- Walter & Gladys Hill Public School
- Unifor Hall

A total of 26 girls ages 6-8 & 9+ participated in our week-long 'STEM Week' summer camp. During the camp, participants of both age groups did experiments covering the topics of human biology, mechanical engineering, and chemistry. They extracted DNA from bananas, built towers, boats, and rockets, and did the elephant toothpaste experiment. The girls absolutely loved the different activities. Favorites included the rockets, elephant toothpaste and the DNA extraction.

A total of 22 girls participated in the Operation SMART fall 2023 program that took place over 8 sessions at Walter and Gladys School. Participants looked at different fields of engineering while testing their abilities to think critically, work together and incorporate STEM into their everyday lives. Continuing from past years, we partnered with Brainstem Alliance whose 3 female engineer volunteers helped facilitate the program. Additionally, there were 3 youth volunteers who helped participants as a peer-to-peer support.



Top L: Participant of the fall 2023 shows off her handmade chocolate icecream

Top R: Working together, participants of Operation SMART work to create a design for the egg drop.

Bottom L: Participants work together to make elephant toothpaste during STEM week.

Bottom R: During STEM Week participants extract DNA from a Banana.

NEW: Operation SMART: Space Science (Ages 6-8) – in partnership with STEM the Gap Academy

STEM the Gap Academy Space Science program is designed to provide students with an exciting and interactive learning experience about the wonders of space science. The program will explore topics such as the solar system, galaxies, rockets, exoplanets, and stars through a combination of lectures, creative activities, and guest speakers. Additionally, students will be introduced to various careers in space science and learn about inspiring women who have made significant contributions to the field.

➤ Online

During the Spring 2023 season, Girls Inc. implemented a 6 session virtual program for girls ages 6-8 to discuss various topics related to space exploration. In total 19 girls participated in the program. Each week girls learned about different topics such as the solar system and Aliens while hearing from different women who work in STEM / the space industry.

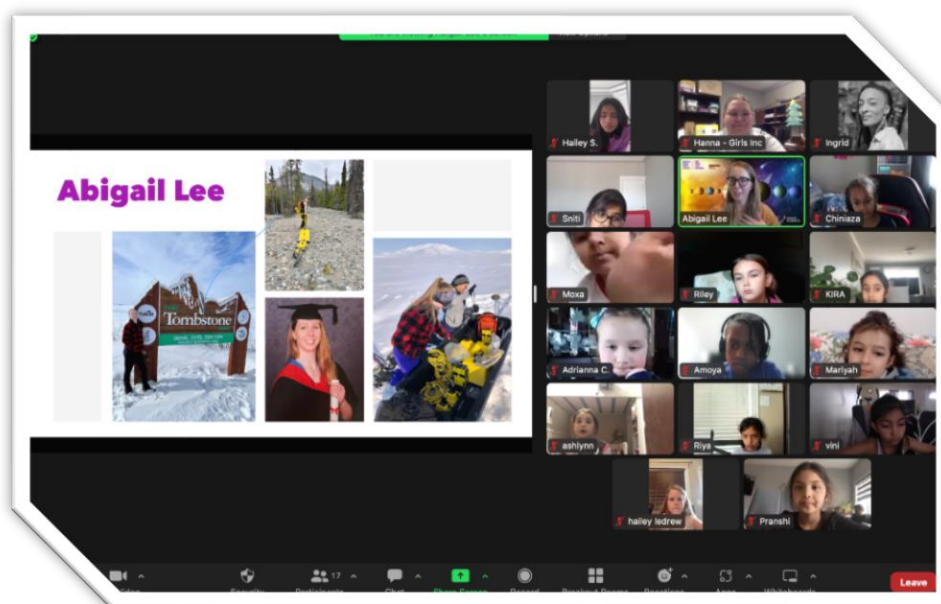


Photo: Participants learn from Abigail and her work within the STEM field in relation to space exploration.

NEW: Operation SMART Workshops

In 2023 Girls Inc. introduced 3 new Operation SMART workshops. Through development of new community partnerships, These workshops responded to the increased demand for more STEM programming.

Lego Build with Cummins (Ages 9+) - In Partnership with Cummins

This workshop took place in May with a total of 23 participants in attendance. During this 6 hour workshop at the Cummins office, participants were engaged with a tour of the facility, held discussions with a diverse group of role models in STEM fields and had the opportunity to build a replica QSK95 Engine LEGO® model.



L: Group photo of girls exploring the Cummins work site.

R: Participant completing her LEGO model build of the QSK95 Engine.

Meet an Archeologist (Ages 6-9) - In Partnership with The Fair Field Foundation

In October, 27 girls ages 6-9 participated in the first ever workshop of its kind with a focus on Archeology. During the two hour workshop, participants had the opportunity to speak directly with an Archeologist who works within our community and discover replicas of bones, tools, and stones found in the area.



Photo: Group Photo with Guest Speaker Erika from The Fair Field Foundation.

Women in Aviation (Ages 12-18) - In Partnership with YMM International Airport

In October, 29 girls ages 12-18 gathered at the YMM International airport to hear from women in the aviation industry. They also participated in a tour of the airport, security areas and first responders. This workshop exposed participants to new career opportunities as well as the chance to speak first hand with women in the field of aviation.



L: Group photo after exploring and listening to the YMM International Airport first responders.

R: Participants listening to YMM International Airport CEO Denean Robinson speak following by a Q+A

Operation SMART (Ages 6-8) – in partnership with Scientists In Schools

These virtual workshops open the wonders of science and engineering to everyone, foster environmental stewardship, and encourage children to discover how science is used in their everyday world. They provide rich, engaging, and investigative experiences with plentiful opportunities for youth to interact with the ‘visiting’ scientist guiding the workshop.

➤ Online

In March of 2023, we once again partnered with Scientists in School to deliver a virtual workshop for girls ages 6-8. In total, 15 participants had the opportunity to become investigators by using observations, deductions and forensic science to solve the mystery of the missing car.

After School Math (ASM+)/ Jump into Math (Ages 6-8)

The program is designed to help girls find math in everyday experiences and create awareness about the importance of math skills for future educational choices and career options. It aims to challenge patriarchal discourse around math.

➤ Unifor Hall

During the winter season of 2023, 14 girls participated in the Built Environment portion of ASM+. During this 6 session program participants worked on community planning while working together to practice their math skills by scaling and measurements.

Increased engagement and enthusiasm for STEM were observed during the program as well as positive feedback through surveys. 73% of participants strongly agreed with the statement “*anyone can be good at math*” at the beginning of the program, whereas 90% of the participants agreed with this statement at the end of the program.



L: Participants work together to create the buildings for their city.

R: Participants of the ASM+ Winter 2023 program displaying their city & buildings built to scale.

Operation SMART: Next Chapters (Ages 15+)

➤ Composite High School

Next Chapters engages high school girls by providing a space to strengthen their confidence as they navigate their post-graduation options. Through an increased understanding of available post-secondary paths that align with their long-term goals, girls gain access to the tools, skills,

support systems, and experiences necessary to navigate their post-graduation journey and develop and use their voice.

A total of 17 girls participated in our third year of Next Chapters programming. This program creates a space for girls to be comfortable exploring post-secondary options while forming meaningful relationships with role models to assist them through the process of exploring the best fit for what, where, and how they will get to the next chapter in their life.

Reaching SMART (Ages 9-13)

Through workshops, girls will increase connection to land and culture and explore career possibilities in STEM fields by approaching inquiry based 'big-questions' through a harmonized lens of Indigenous land-based knowledge and Western understanding of STEM.

- Father Perin School
- Fort McKay Wellness Center

A total of 23 girls participated in the Reaching Smart Workshops. A total of 2 workshops were held in person at Father Perin School and the Fort McKay Wellness Center.

Building on Operation SMART, Reaching SMART was launched in 2020 to facilitate opportunities to leverage Indigenous knowledge and Western approach to STEM through pop-up workshops for girls in remote communities so that they could gain access to STEM-based learning opportunities that they would otherwise be unable to due to various existing barriers.

Workshop #1- Indigenous Inventions & Inventors:

In May 2023, 15 participants in Janvier investigated Indigenous Inventions, and what the purpose of the inventions were. Participants explored how Indigenous people have invented different things like; aspirin, sunglasses, spruce gum, and many other things. The workshop explored the Indigenous invention of sunglasses and how they were created to protect people's eyes against snow blindness. Increased connection to culture as well as increase in STEM were observed amongst the participants.

Workshop #2- Indigenous People's usage of Fire:

Over the course of four days in August 2023, 8 participants gathered to learn and discuss Indigenous inventions followed by Indigenous people's usage of fire and in relation to the current forest fires happening in the RMWB region.

Participants were able to gain a better understanding around the traditional practice of cultural burning, mechanisms of forest fires, and how they were traditionally managed through culture burning.

A hands-on activity allowed participants to gain knowledge and understand how fires spread. Lastly, Shelley MacIsaac from the Fort McKay Fire Department, shared knowledge and information about fire safety in their homes.



L: Participants in Fort McKay working on their designs to test during the summer workshop.

R: A Reaching SMART participant showing off customized glasses after discussing the invention of sunglasses by Indigenous inventors.

Book Club (Ages 8-16)- In partnership with The Wood Buffalo Regional Library (WBRL)

As a core part of our SMART programming, girls will increase literacy and analytical skills while developing a love for reading by exploring a chosen book as a group.

A total of 17 girls ages 9-12 participated in our Spring 2023 Book club held at the WBRL. During the workshop, participants discussed the graphic novel assigned to them and answered trivia questions while participating in journal creation activities and enjoying pizza and fruit / veggies.

Book Club continues to grow in popularity and hold a **steady attendance rate of 90% or higher**. Participants have stated they enjoy the workshop style meetings at WBRL.

BOLD

Girls Inc. Girls Against Bullying Alliance (ages 6+)

Girls explore the magnitude of bullying, how it affects people, how to deal with it, how to seek help, and the importance of healthy relationships.

- Ecole St.Paul Catholic School
- Good Shepherd
- Northlands Online School
- Dr. K.A Clark
- Westwood Community High School

In 2023, a total of 112 girls participated in the Girls Against Bullying Alliance program. Participants explored bullying and its impacts across Canada, healthy relationships, being an active bystander, conflict resolution, emotional regulations, and respecting differences.

The Bullying Alliance program continues to grow in popularity and demand within the schools we partner with. Teachers and Counselors have expressed the need for this program and expressed gratitude for the support our organization brings to students during topics that are hard to navigate while maintaining a safe space to discuss, learn and grow.

An example of this can be found in the delivery at Westwood School where the principal reached out with concerns of bullying amongst the grade 7 girls. The program was adjusted to meet their needs and coordinators observed positive engagement and discussion within the participants.

“Thank you so much for everything that Girls Inc. has done for our grade 7 girls. I have heard nothing but positive feedback from them, they have really enjoyed the sessions.” – Bernice, Westwood Community High School Principal

Power of Stories (Ages 6-8 & 9-12)

Power of Stories is an intercultural awareness and violence prevention program. It was developed closely with local Cree, Métis, and Dene land-based knowledge holders as well as Indigenous liaison professionals across the Wood Buffalo region to offer true insight into their local experiences living in the region.

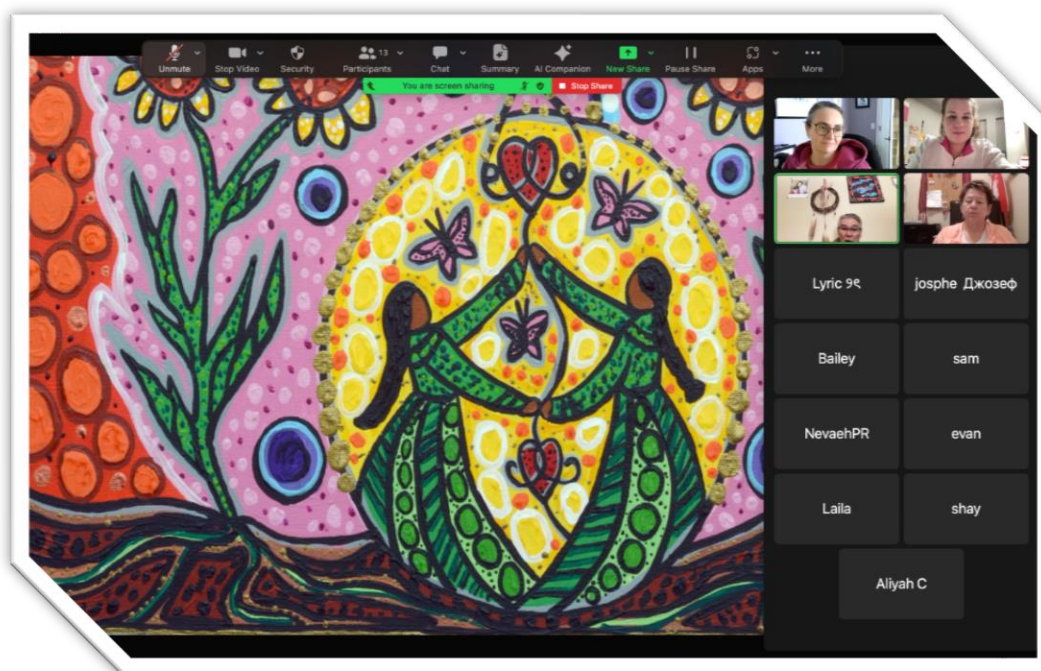
Taught through the seven sacred teachings & storytelling, this program reflects upon the past by examining the legacy of colonialism and residential schools; explores the present and how girls face adversity in their day-to-day lives; and aims to create a future free from gender-based violence through empowerment, education and girls-led voice.

- St. Martha's
- Northland Online School
- Thickwood Heights Public School
- Chez Dube Bed & Breakfast

In 2023, 72 girls participated in the Power of Stories program through in-school programming and after school workshops. One of these workshops involved a new partnership with the organization *Braiding Stories to Live By*, where participants had the opportunity to learn about Indigenous teachings and the significance of Moccasins accompanied by creating their own moccasin artwork.

During in-school programming, girls learned how to advocate for change and be leaders in preventing and eliminating intergenerational gender-based violence in their communities by deepening their connection to the land, culture, and Indigenous ways of life. They have also learned

how to apply Indigenous values to everyday adversity unique to girls, by standing up for themselves and using their voice to tell their stories. After completing the program, participants at Thickwood Heights Public School reported a 10% increase (from 72% to 82%) in the following statement: *I feel connected to my own culture, race, or ethnic group.*



L: Participants of the Northlands Online School discuss the importance of art in story telling with Elder Tom McCallum

Girls Inc. Staying Strong Mentoring Program (Ages 6-8 & 9-14)

Mentoring focuses on healthy lifestyles, self-esteem, art, leadership, and anti-bullying through activities facilitated by trained youth and adult mentors with Girls Inc. staff. Mentoring helps to build self-confidence and enhance relationships with family and peers while developing a higher engagement in one's community.

➤ Unifor Hall

In 2023, a total of 171 girls participated in the Mentoring program. The program was implemented across all seasons (afterschool during the school year) and as a summer camp during the month of

July. In 2023 we saw a steady increase in the number of participants in the 9+ age group and a dedicated group of girls who registered with each season for the 6-8 age group. During the program girls learned about themselves, each other, and the world around them through stories of current events and related activities to engage them as local and global citizens. In addition to this participants got to try their hand at different activities including painting, macrame, and more. Coordinators observed changes within participants as sessions progressed allowing girls who were shy and timid to open up more and engage with their peers / mentors.



Top L: Participants of the summer 2023 visual arts week showing their completed art work with the WBRL.

Top R: Group photo of the 9+ age group during a discussion on stress management.

Bottom L: Participants of the mentoring program getting messy making paper mache bowls

Bottom R: A participant of the winter 2023 program displaying their artwork during a follow along paint session.

The Power Within: Be Real Be Me (Ages 9-14) in partnership with Plan International Canada

In partnership with Plan International Canada, the Power Within equips girls with the skills, knowledge and resiliency they need to develop strong body confidence and self-esteem. One study found that on days that girls do not feel good about their bodies, 15% stay home, 13% won't give an opinion, 5% will not go to a job interview and 3% will not go to work. The Power Within project seeks to tackle the root causes of low self-esteem and body confidence, including beauty ideals and negative body talk.

In 2023, Be Real Be Me was launched as a sub pilot program for this partnership. The program hosted 13 participants during the winter season from January to March where participants discussed the topics of the program, held discussions and completed related activities.



Photo: Participants of the Be Real Be Me program and facilitator Hanna.

#GirlsToo (Ages 9-12 & 13-15)

Building on the #MeToo movement and our flagship programs Project BOLD and Media Literacy, girls create a cultural shift towards breaking the silence around gender-based violence (GBV). Through art, girls express their learning about consent, gender equality and healthy relationships. Girls-led advocacy takes place in Sexual Violence Awareness Month in May as well as 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence between November 25 and December 10.

- Holy Trinity
- Unifor Hall
- Online
- Justin Slade Youth Foundation
- Northlands Online School

A total of 170 participants in the #Girlstoo program in 2023. Of this total, 55 participated in school/summer programming while the remaining 115 participated in workshop style programming. This includes 16 Days of Activism workshops that took place within two school boards (Catholic & Northlands) as well as in person at the Unifor Hall and in partnership with the Justin Slade Youth Foundation. Participants discussed Gender Based Violence and the different ways in which they could advocate for change within their community and beyond.



L: Participants completing their advocacy piece with local Métis artist Lindsay L.

R: Participants pose with their completed red dresses during the MMIWG2S+ workshop.

Women of Inspiration Celebration

More than 400 people gathered 'TOGETHER' on March 18, 2023, to celebrate five incredible women from across the Wood Buffalo region during TOGETHER : Women of Inspiration Celebration 2023 presented by Bouchier.

Girls Inc. of Northern Alberta is pleased to announce that year over year excitement for the gala increases and with it, an increase in funds raised that help maintain cost free programming for girls aged 6-18. Thanks to the amazing support from this community and beyond, the organization was able to raise nearly \$70,000 in net proceeds.

Adding to the esteemed list of 87 Women of Inspiration this year were Saakshi Arvikar, Surekha Kanzig, Amy Parsons, Precious Majekodunmi, and Kg Banjoko.

Sticking with the organization's motto of breaking down barriers, beer baroness and Dragons Den star Manjit Minhas shared her tale of how finding the perfect mentor helped her succeed. Manjit captivated listeners

explaining that at the age of 19 and working at her father's liquor store, she found her calling. Partnering with her brother and scraping together all the money she had, she set out to build her business.

Building on the Women of Inspiration Series since 2012, we SHATTERed barriers and stereotypes surrounding girls in 2020. In 2021, we bought those shattered pieces together to create a MOSAIC – representing women's struggles. In 2022 we amplified the VOICES represented in each piece of the mosaic. This year we are bringing those voices TOGETHER. Together, let's discover, and act.

If you missed this year or wanted to watch the Women of Inspiration videos again, head over to the Girls Inc. of Northern Alberta [YouTube channel](#).



L-R: Sundas Shamshad, Denise Gairdner, Amy Parsons, Tasneem Rahim, Katie Erb



L-R: Denise Gairdner, Sundas Shamshad, KG Banjoko, Tasneem Rahim, Katie Erb



L-R: Sundas Shamshad, Denise Gairdner, Mother of recipient Precious Majekodunmi, Tasneem Rahim, Katie Erb



L-R: Sundas Shamshad, Denise Gairdner, Surekha Kanzig, Tasneem Rahim, Katie Erb

Scholarships

Women of Inspiration Education Award

Girls Inc. of Northern Alberta and Syncrude annually announce three recipients to the Women of Inspiration Education Award.

These three scholarships recognize young women in Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo who are breaking barriers and creating change through their post-secondary studies. The women receiving these scholarships are role models for girls in our community. They inspire them to be strong, smart and bold.

This year, we received 38 applications, a substantial increase from the previous years. The three scholars selected by the Women of Inspiration Committee are:

- **Afeefa Ahmad** for the Barb Jewers Memorial Scholarship
- **Brooke Plews** for the Elsie Yanik Memorial Scholarship
- **Agametoichi Okoro** for the Ann Dort-MacLean Scholarship

These outstanding young women join 30 others who have been proudly supported by Girls Inc. and Syncrude since 2013, serving as powerful role models who inspire all girls to be strong, smart, and bold.

Afeefa Ahmad, selected for the Barb Jewers Memorial Scholarship, is pursuing a degree in Biochemistry at the University of Alberta, hoping to venture into medicine and become a doctor. She is an enthusiastic volunteer who is also a Girls Inc. girl. She has an impressive track record, including being a part of the RCMP National Youth Council Advisory and Mayor Advisory Council on Youth. Afeefa shared, “The road to pursuing your dreams may present challenges, but it is definitely a path worth traveling. Remember that your potential knows no bounds, and with determination and resilience, you can achieve anything you set your mind to... always remember that you possess the power to shape your own remarkable story”.

Agametoichi Okoro, selected for the Ann Dort-MacLean Scholarship, is pursuing a degree in Mechatronic Engineering at the University of Waterloo. She is a passionate advocate for youth empowerment and gender equity. Agametoichi initiates discussions about local Black role models

and leads workshops to strengthen youth in underrepresented fields, like STEM. She works as a Marketing Director of STEMConnect, a student-led initiative to increase access to STEM education among communities.

Agametochi said, “I want to send a message to girls to be involved in your community in the things you are interested in. Many of my extracurriculars stem from current interests and passions that drive me as a person, which led to my contributions, which put me where I am today. Even if the road seems difficult and there aren't many people or role models to look up to, I believe that you should continue to let your passions drive your actions in all your activities because it turns out to be worth it in the end”.

Brooke Plews, selected for the Elsie Yanik Memorial Scholarship, is seeking to become a social worker at Mount Royal University. She is a member of Fort McMurray #468 First Nation, who exemplifies advocacy and community involvement through her efforts to raise awareness about the lack of cultural competency and cultural safety she had encountered. She seeks opportunities to mentor Indigenous youth and children, guided by the ‘Truth and Reconciliation 94 Calls to Action’, and advocates for inclusivity and equity.

Brooke stated, “What inspired me to continually advocate for my community is knowing that my community is strong and resilient. It is those in the community who have faced many hardships in their lives that continuously inspire me. I want to help and walk alongside fellow Indigenous people who want to fight against the injustices we face”.

Women of Inspiration Education Award

Recipients 2023-2024



**Afeefa
Ahmad**



**Brooke
Plews**



**Agametoichi
Okoro**



Our Advocates

We are proud and grateful to work with our partners who advocate for the rights and opportunities of girls. Together, we continue to create a gender-specific safe space where girls can find sparks, passions and strengths on their own terms and act as agents of change. Without our advocates, we cannot do what we do.

Partners at a Glance

Government			
Government of Canada	Canada Summer Jobs 2023	\$7,014.00	2023-24
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo	#GirlsToo	\$80,000.00	2022-2024 (3 year partnership)
	Reaching SMART	\$19,550.00	2023-24
Corporate			
Suncor	Operation SMART	\$20,000.00	2023-24
Bouchier	Women of Inspiration Series	\$25,000.00	2019-2023/24 (5 year partnership)
Syncrude operated by Suncor	Mentoring	\$20,000.00	2023-24
	Women of Inspiration Education Awards	\$9,000.00	2023/2024
Pembina Pipeline	Power of Stories	\$5,000.00	2023-2025 (3 year partnership)
	Reaching SMART	\$5,000.00	2023-2025 (3 year partnership)
Imperial	Mind+Body	\$9,750.00	2023-24
Interpipeline	Sporting Chance	\$6,250.00	2023-2026 (4 year partnership)
TD Canada Trust	Economic Literacy	\$10,000.00	2023-24
Foundation			
Canadian Women's	Operational	\$20,000.00	2023-24

Foundation	Mind+Body	\$13,500.00	2022-23
	Economic Literacy	\$18,500.00	2022-23
	#GirlsToo	\$8,000.00	2022-23
Plan International Canada	Be Real Be Me	\$5,000.00	2023-24
Honda Canada Foundation	Next Chapters	\$5,000.00	2023-24
Canada Parks and Recreation Association	Sporting Chance	\$15,000.00	2023-24
Canadian Tire Jumpstart	Mind+Body	\$5,355.50	2023-24
	Sporting Chance	\$5,533.50	2023-24
Canadian Red Cross	Wildfire Support (Fort Chipewyan)	\$5,000.00	2023-24
	Power of Stories/Mind+Body	\$17,119.60 *total project funding \$57,065.32	2022-23
Canada Post Community Foundation	Power of Stories/Mind+Body	\$25,000.00	2023-24
Wood Buffalo Community Foundation	Economic Literacy	\$25,000.00	2023-24
Ted Rogers Foundation	Sporting Chance	\$25,000.00	2023-24

Champions for Girls

Champions for Girls recognizes generous philanthropists dedicated to inspiring all girls to be strong, smart and bold.

Visionary \$50k+



Amplifier \$20k - \$49.9k



Canada Post
**Community
Foundation**



ROGERS



Upholder \$10K - \$19.9K



Vanguard \$5K - \$9.9K



Kin Canada
Kinette Club
of Fort McMurray



**Government
of Canada**

Luminary \$3k - \$4.9K

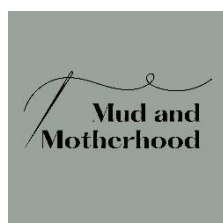


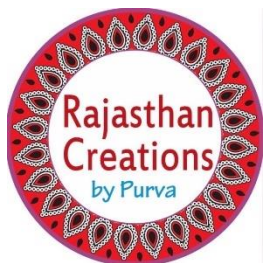
Dean Tabin



Advocate \$1K - \$2.9K

Tasneem Rahim





Burt Goodwin



The Ally \$500 - \$999

Riz Fazal & Gina Snooks



Community Partners

- Athabasca Tribal Council
- Bowmans Martial Arts
- Braiding Stories to Live By/ University of Alberta
- BrainSTEM Alliance
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- CAREERS: Next Generation
- Fort McKay Wellness Centre
- Fort McMurray Tarsands Lion Club
- Janvier Sekweha Youth Centre
- Justin Slade Youth Foundation
- Keyano College
- MacDonald Island Park
- Markaz Ul Islam
- Matt Lorenz Productions
- Period Education Project
- Pineapples and Palm Trees
- Plan International Canada
- School Boards (Fort McMurray Public School Division, Fort McMurray Catholic School Division, Northland School Division No. 61)
- Scientists in School
- STEM the Gap Academy
- The Fair Field Foundation
- Unifor Local 707-A
- Vista Ridge
- Waypoints
- Wood Buffalo Food Bank
- Wood Buffalo Regional Library
- YMCA Fort McMurray
- YMM International Airport

Fundraising Events

Our programs are free for all girls, as we believe that finances should not be a barrier for participation. We are grateful for the support and engagement of our community through fundraising events, which make this possible even during lean years.

In 2023, we leveraged lessons learned from the (post-)COVID era by taking positive risks to resume fundraising events and providing the community with opportunity to gather safely.

2023 Fundraising Calendar

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Proceeds
Women of Inspiration Celebration 2023 (Mar 18)													\$ 72,800.91
AGLC Cash Calendar (383/500 tickets sold)													\$4,532.85
HomeHardware BBQ (May 21-23)													\$1,792.27
Name That Tune: June 1													\$500
29th Annual Golf Tournament (Sep 3)													\$21,700.20
Fort McMurray Marathon Run for a Reason													\$5,375.19

Cash Calendar

We were able to raise an impressive \$5,375.19 (+\$1K< by last year) through the sale of 383 tickets at \$20 each . Our ticket-raising efforts were aided during our other popular events like the Home Hardware BBQ and Name That Tune. We attended other community events to sell tickets like Community Registration Day, and a local golf tournament in July. We also received incredible support from local businesses like Servus Credit Union and Fort McMurray Orthodontics, who helped us spread the word and sell tickets. We are also grateful to our dedicated board members, who went above and beyond by assisting with additional ticket sales.

**girls
inc.**

of Northern Alberta

Licence #639843

CASH CALENDAR

Inspiring all girls to be strong, smart and bold.

2023 NOVEMBER						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 \$50	2 \$50	3 \$175	4
5	6 \$50	7 \$50	8 \$50	9 \$50	10 \$175	11
12	13 \$50	14 \$50	15 \$50	16 \$50	17 \$175	18
19	20 \$50	21 \$50	22 \$50	23 \$50	24 \$175	25
26	27 \$50	28 \$50	29 \$50	30 \$500		

- Cash prize draws every weekday in November
- Tickets valid for ALL draws, multiple chances to win
- Only 750 tickets printed
- Draw location - Girls Inc. Office
- 17B-10019 MacDonald Ave, Fort McMurray
- Winners will be notified by phone and/or email

#GIRLS200
— RESPECT STARTS YOUNG —

**COST
\$20**

*MUST BE 18+ TO PURCHASE

Licence #639843

Home Hardware BBQ

Girls Inc. successfully secured the coveted May Long weekend with Home Hardware, offering an opportunity to sell hotdogs by donation. Thanks to Home Hardware's generosity, we received a donation of 20 dozen hot dogs and buns, 20 dozen assorted pops, and the use of their BBQ, table, and tent. It's amazing to see local businesses support non-profits like Girls Inc. in raising funds during the summer months!



29th Annual Golf Tournament

Girls Inc. raised just over \$20,000 to support girls aged 6-18 in Wood Buffalo at the 29th Annual Golf Tournament For Girls Inc. presented by Imperial. Golfers enjoyed a fun afternoon of golf, food, silent auction, and prizes at Miskanaw Golf Club on September 3. The event's Emotions theme brought everyone together for tacos, sundaes, games, and networking while supporting Girls Inc.'s cause. The funds raised will be used to continue offering free, girl-specific programs in the region.



Name That Tune

Thanks to Tavern on Main, and Mike Jones, Name That Tune sold 50 tickets and successfully raised \$500. The triumphant team secured the grand prize—team entry to our 29th Annual Golf Tournament.



Name That Tune 2023 Winners

Run For A Cause

Fort McMurray Marathons Run For A Reason allowed runners to choose a non-profit organization to raise money for. Thanks to many generous individuals, over \$5,000 was raised to help empower girls to be strong, smart, and bold. We were also able to be a part of the marathon, manning a water station along the route.



Social Media Impact

Girls' Inc. has seen consistent growth across its social media pages over the past year. In particular, Facebook followers increased from 3,207 in March 2023 to 3,424 in December 2023. Instagram also experienced a rise in followers, from 1,161 in March 2023 to 1,243 in December 2023.

Volunteers

Girls Inc. of Northern Alberta received invaluable help from a total of 72 volunteers in 2023, including 39 who helped with programming. Their dedication and hard work are deeply appreciated, and we owe much of our success and sustainability to them. Our heartfelt thanks go out to all our amazing volunteers!



Danni Richardson with After School Math Participants



Elizabeth Wells at Operation SMART



Yvonne and Qudsia at the Women of Inspiration Celebration

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors for Girls Inc. of Northern Alberta is composed entirely of dedicated volunteers. Board members play an essential role in cultivating donors, organizing fundraising events, coordinating special events, and growing our membership.

- President, Victoria Brown
- Vice President, Katie Erb
- Secretary, Brianne English
- Treasurer, Harsh Shah
- Director, Annalee Nutter
- Director, Jesse Wowk
- Director, Niki Gill
- Director, IJ Uche-Ezeala
- Director, Nicole McMillan
- Director, Anne Wang



Board of Directors



Victoria Brown
(President)



Katie Erb
(Vice President)



Brianne English
(Secretary)



Harsh Shah
(Treasurer)



Niki Gill
(Director)



Jesse Wowk
(Director)



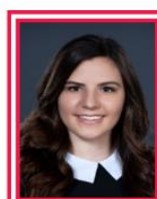
Anne Wang
(Director)



Annalee Nutter
(Director)



IJ Uche-Ezeala
(Director)



Nicole McMillan
(Director)



Staff

Executive Director: Sundas Shamshad filling the position for maternity leave of Nanase Tonda (returned in September)

Program Director: Katlin Okonkwo

Executive Assistant: Erin Piercey

Communications & Development Lead: Adam Ophus

Program Coordinator – Indigenous Relations: Hanna Alexander succeeded by Jessica Andrews

Program Coordinator: Riya Mangukia succeeded by Chilombo Mwela

Program Coordinator: Radhine Gesham

Program Assistant: Kali Padalia and Maryam Saleem



Financials

	2023	2022
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash (Note 3)	\$ 451,111	\$ 481,124
Restricted cash (Note 3)	18,869	4,435
Accounts receivable	12,500 -	
Goods and services tax recoverable	1,773	2,076
Prepaid expenses	29,026	15,997
	513,279	503,632
TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSETS (Note 4)	4,585	7,231
	\$ 517,864	\$ 510,863

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

CURRENT		
Accounts payable	\$ 25,173	\$ 19,000
DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS (Note 5)	86,852	97,350
	112,025	116,350
NET ASSETS	405,839	394,513
	\$ 517,864	\$ 510,863

	2023	2022
REVENUES		
Grants	\$ 383,585	\$ 390,141
Donations and fundraising	186,825	209,795
Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission	44,414	33,400
GST rebate	4,493	2,782
	619,317	636,118

EXPENSES		
Wages and benefits	396,288	418,668
Advertising and fundraising activities	84,992	84,961
Programming	55,935	85,669
Rental	46,576	41,147
Professional fees	5,355	5,500
Vehicle	4,911	7,049
Interest and bank charges	5,276	6,148
Amortization	2,646	3,139
Training	2,522	7,249
Office	2,424	4,130
Telephone	1,763	2,393
Board expense	1,435	969
Endowment contribution (Note 6)	-	11,000
	\$ 517,864	\$ 510,863

EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES FROM OPERATIONS

	9,194	(41,904)
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OTHER INCOME

Interest	2,132	2,549
Government assistance	-	5,267
	2,132	7,816

EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES

	\$ 11,326	\$ (34,088)
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	2022 Balance	Excess of revenues over expenses	Interfund transfers	2023 Balance
General Fund	\$ 387,282	\$ 13,972	-	\$ 401,254
Tangible Capital Asset Fund	7,231	(2,646)	-	4,585
	\$ 394,513	\$ 11,326	-	\$ 405,839

	2021 Balance	Excess of revenues over expenses	Interfund transfers	2022 Balance
General Fund	\$ 421,506	\$ (30,949)	\$ (3,275)	\$ 387,282
Tangible Capital Asset Fund	7,095	(3,139)	3,275	7,231
	\$ 428,601	\$ (34,088)	\$ -	\$ 394,513