This year marked a historic election for womyn and people of color running for office. In preparation for November, Girls Inc. afterschool program at Justice Page Middle School engaged in a lesson called “Who Can Vote?” Youth were given lists of groups of people and dates. They worked to determine when each group – such as white men, white womyn, black womyn, Indigenous people and people with disabilities – were given the right to vote. After the activity, the youth were surprised how long it took for many people to be eligible to vote, and they were upset to learn that some people are still fighting for their right to vote in the United States today. Students were asked, “If you were given the right to vote this year, would you vote? Why or why not?”

One middle schooler mentioned they probably would not vote as a way to protest until everyone got the right to vote. However, another student chimed in and said, “I’d vote because that’s what it means to have privilege. I’d make sure to vote for someone who’d allow everyone to vote.” As Girls Inc. groups learned about the importance of voting and running for office, many youth encouraged the adults in their lives to vote or register to vote by signing a Girls Inc. voting pledge card. This fall, Girls Inc. at YWCA Minneapolis collected a total of 147 pledge cards. Altogether, Girls Inc. National collected over 4,137 pledges from affiliate sites. Thank you to everyone who helped Girls Inc. make “herstory” in our country’s most recent midterm election and contributing to Minnesota’s top rank in voter turnout!
This October, the Girls Inc. afterschool program at Marcy Open and Anwatin Middle School participated in an exciting collaboration between Google and Rookie Magazine. Youth were guided through a series of activities using computer coding to create collages, personalized emojis, GIFs and more. One participant said that she had not expected coding to be so much fun and learned that “Coding was easier than I thought.” Another middle school student reflected that, “Coding was more than just dragging blocks across the screen… Coding is like giving the computer a language it can understand.” As coding can be a daunting task for many students, Girls Inc. afterschool youth were thrilled to discover that coding was easier than imagined and could become a fun hobby!

If you are interested in exploring coding and making your own personalized emojis and GIFs, the Google Made with Code projects are available for free online at madewithcode.com/projects

Staff Highlights

Meet the new staff who recently joined our Girls. Inc. at YWCA Minneapolis family!

Elena Gustafson is our new Girls Inc. Afterschool Coordinator. A really unique fact about Elena is that she recently moved to Minnesota but has spent five summers leading canoe trips in the Boundary Waters.

Certeria Magee Robinson is our new Girls Inc. Eureka! Youth Counselor. Something interesting about her is that Certeria can make 100 one-topping pizzas in 30 minutes.
Girls Inc. Eureka!

This November, nine Girls Inc. Eureka! youth took a trip to the University of Wisconsin - Stout. For many, it was their first time exploring an out-of-state college. In collaboration with Project Success, the group learned about what to look for in selecting a college, the variety of student life activities, how to afford a college education and reduced tuition rates for Minnesotans when attending Wisconsin universities.

Eurekans toured classrooms and labs in the engineering building and observed the diversity of the school. Some youth expressed desire for an institution that not only offered their interests, but also reflected their identity and culture. During the student panel, they were able to engage in intimate conversations about the transition from high school to college life and the importance of building community through student groups. The University of Wisconsin - Stout provided an informative early program for Eurekans as they search for a perfect college fit!

Girls RAP

In August, Girls RAP collaborated with the University of Minnesota, Mankato for their annual Leadership Retreat. More than 20 Girls RAP graduates spent the day learning about the high school to college transition, campus life, professional leadership, identity and empowerment. This retreat also included a campus tour, breakout sessions, lunch and an etiquette dinner workshop prepared by Ms. Juliet Mitchell from Eagles Wings L.L.C.. One highlight was the passport scavenger hunt, where girls divided into teams and raced to have their ‘passport’ stamped by specific campus sites such as the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the Womyn’s Center and LBGTQ Student Affairs. On the bus home from Mankato, a Girls RAP graduate who is currently in middle school noted, “I wasn’t considering college because I thought it was something I didn’t have to think about until my junior or senior year.” She went on to explain that the field trip encouraged her to start preparing for college and showed her the benefits of doing so early.

YWCA Minneapolis Girls RAP is an intervention program that works with 125 girls each year, ages 12 through 18, who are involved or at risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system. Program participants resolve their offense and stay out of the criminal justice system permanently by building skills and motivation for positive life choices.

If you would like to receive more information on how to get involved with Girls RAP, please contact La’Kisha Hollmon-Griffin at lhollmon-griffin@ywcampls.org
Womyn for Healthcare

Girls Inc. Afterschool launched two new high school groups this year to provide youth with sustained exposure and additional opportunities within the Girls Inc. program.

Womyn for Healthcare is one of the new high school groups and offers a college and career readiness program for girls and non-binary youth interested in pursuing careers in healthcare fields. They meet twice a month at YWCA Midtown to explore advocacy issues in healthcare, network with healthcare professionals and learn how leaders are working to address health disparities.

In upcoming workshops, youth will meet with a pediatrician, take a field trip to Roots Midwifery and Birth Center in North Minneapolis to learn about becoming a midwife/OBGYN and apply for summer STEM or Healthcare opportunities.

If you would like to receive more information or join a Girls Inc. high school group, please contact Danielle Joseph at 612-215-4370 or djoseph@ywcampls.org

Eureka!

Eureka! Is an intensive five-year summer and school year program for girls focused on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) that supports girls in 8th grade through high school graduation, preparing them for the next step in their education after high school. Girls eligible to apply are current 7th graders (8th graders in Fall 2019).

Apply in January 2019 at ywcampls.org/girlsinc or contact Leah Eby at 612-215-4369 or leby@ywcampls.org

Applications are due by Friday, March 22, 2019

Calling for Youth Art Submissions

Want to see your work featured in our next newsletter? Here’s how:

1. Create an art piece (drawing, painting, writing, poetry, photograph, etc) that answers: “What does a STRONG, SMART and BOLD girl look like to you?”

2. Attach another piece of paper that includes your name, age, email (if available), phone number and a short description of who you are and what your art piece means to you.

3. Send your art piece and description to Girls Inc. at 2121 E Lake St, Minneapolis, MN 55407 or email it to Wennicha Yang at wyang@ywcampls.org no later than Thursday, January 31, 2019.

You will be contacted by a Girls Inc. staff if your art is chosen to be featured in our next newsletter, March 2019.

We can’t wait to see your submissions!