

## YWCA Ulster County

### Girls Inc. Ulster and Dutchess Counties

## *Highlights 2015*



Thank you for your interest in the programs and accomplishments of the YWCA Ulster County. The agency is proud of its services and the following report provides highlights of the work of our agency in 2015.

Parenting and Family Values is a 12 week evidenced based curriculum. Program participants meet on Thursday from 5:30- 7:00 pm. These parenting classes cover the development of infants through adolescents and include specific exercises to help the participants understand the wants and needs of the specific age group. It also teaches the value of parenting and modeling appropriate behavior. In 2015, there were 43 participants and 30 completed the program.

Children’s Center at Family Court serves 735 families 2015 (726 in 2014). We welcomed Head Teacher, Denise Dachenhausen and Assistant Teacher, Kianna Brodhead to the Children’s Center at Family Court. We were also lucky to have, Mae Ennist, a Foster Grandparent join the team there. The advisory committee sponsored three events, a June Luncheon, Trivia Night, and a Vine Van Gogh Sip and Paint fundraiser to raise funds for the center. Our community supports the program through donations of books, school supplies, and hats and mittens. The center is grateful to Fidelis Cares and Lisa Libraries for their ongoing support. We appreciate the consistent support our advisory board gives yearly to this special center.

A total of 35 clients were served in 2015 through our Teen Parent Services. TPS provides client focused case management for pregnant and parenting teens. We received referrals from school staff and from several community agencies. We continued to maintain a “Baby Boutique” on the third floor and have diapers, wipes and formula available as well. Teen Parenting Services had a “Father’s Group” at the Highland Residential Center with 13 males participating.

Youth Leadership Program was successful with 10 participants. They all completed the program. Family of Woodstock facilitated group workshops on developing job skills and healthy decision making.

Something for Nothing continues to provide a valuable service in our community. In 2015, we received 53 referrals. Of the 53 referrals 39 participants started the program and 38 completed the program. The majority of program referrals are provided by the Town of Ulster Court.

Our agency is proud of the [Families Now](#) program. The staff of this unique program receives referrals from the Department of Social Services and works closely with family members by focusing on their strengths and their successes. Gail Neish completed her first year as the Program Director.



[The Magic Circle School](#) opened its 2<sup>nd</sup> location in September at BOCES in Port Ewen. Jamie Kesick our Director of School Aged Programs accepted a major leadership role in the opening of the new center. I'm very grateful to have her on the team. The Port Ewen location is a 10 month program and runs on the BOCES schedule as opposed to the YWCA locations 12 month schedule. The Magic Circle Schools serve infants through prekindergarten. 111 children were enrolled in our schools in 2015. 21 children were enrolled in our Universal Pre-K program. We have 25 families who have enrolled their child(ren) for 2+ years. Seven with siblings enrolled.

Events in 2015 included:

- Preschool Expo
- Family culture night
- Child ID and car seat inspection
- Halloween Parade through our uptown neighborhood
- Thanksgiving Food Drive
- Polar Express
- Beach day at Sojourner Truth Park
- Family and Friends Thanksgiving Feast
- Annual garden project and Food Trust program

... and frequent walks to the Senate House in uptown Kingston.

The Magic Circle School welcomed head teachers: Jeff Haber, Elise Morse, Jessica Smith, and Megan Banks. Assistant teachers welcomed were: Casey Elmendorf, Shacora Davis, Katlyn Sorbello, Elizabeth Arrandale, Maggie Kokas, and Krista Dixon. Our new Food Manager, Jeremy Hughes, is off to a great start. Miranda Walker was promoted to be the Assistant Childcare Director. She has taken on a vital role in opening, enrolling, and training staff in the Magic Circle Schools.

We continued working with the West Corp Foster Grandparent Program.

Successful fundraisers included Tunes for Tots in the spring and the Midland Fundraiser in the fall.

Our school's Facebook site continues to be very popular with our families and the community. Our parents tell us that they really enjoy seeing the daily updates on the children's activities. The Parent's Bulletin Board continues to be a great location to post information including our menus and community events. Our website was updated to reflect the new Magic Circle School and contains information on our programs including the forms and handbooks for our Magic Circle School.



**Girls Inc. of Ulster and Dutchess Counties** had a year of growth with programs at new sites. Our Girls Inc. Director, Mary Farel has done a wonderful job of sustaining funds and growing programs while completing her MSW at the University of Albany.

- **Girls Inc.** programming continued in Dutchess County at the Poughkeepsie Middle School. Hip Hop dance was offered once a week.
- **Girls Inc.** continued at John F. Kennedy and George Washington (GW) Elementary Schools with the Girls for Real Food, Economic Literacy, and Leadership and Community Action programs for fourth grade girls and the Literacy Initiative and STEM for third grade girls.
- **Girls Inc.** partnered with Farm to School Educator and Consultant, Nicci Cagan. Nicci worked with fourth grade girls at GW teaching them about the seed to table concept with girls learning about nutrition, and prepping and cooking food. The concepts of 'local' food and growing your own food were emphasized. The project culminated in an end of year luncheon where foods the girls had made during the year were served. Girls gave speeches about what they learned in the program.
- REEL Girls! collaborated with the Center for Creative Education (CCE) again and offered a summer program at CCE for middle and high school girls. Girls created videos on: Bullying, Social Media, and one girl's Military family.
- Myer Elementary School was the site for the *Transitioning to Middle School* program.
- The homeschool program created and completed several short documentaries in the REEL Girls! program over the course of a year-long program.
- This is the first year **Girls Inc.** programming was offered to all grades (5<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup>) at the J. Watson Bailey Middle School in Kingston.
- A **Girls Inc.** Club at Kingston High School that meets 9<sup>th</sup> period was launched in September with a focus on leadership.
- At John G. Borden Middle School in Wallkill, girls focused on bullying as part of a Leadership program in the spring and in the fall began The ZINE Project as a school year long program.
- At Saugerties Jr High School 18 girls ages 13-15 participated I the Leadership in Action Program. The girls provided community services to the Mother Day 5k event.
- 12 girls, all members of the Varsity/JV Volleyball team at Onteora High School also participated in the Leadership in Action program.

The **Girls Inc.** Advisory Committee, consisting of eight members met for the first time in March. They had two other meetings in June and November.

We welcomed Shahedra Ward to the Girls Inc. staff in December. She will be facilitating groups and providing administrative assistance to the program.

**Girls Inc.** received another two-year grant cycle from the Dyson foundation with \$25,000 each year. In addition, a grant for \$7500 from Patrina Foundation, \$9000 from Helen's Hope Foundation, \$1,500 from M&T Charitable and \$1000 from Stewart's Shop was received. Natalie Merchant contributed \$10,000 to Girls Inc. with \$5000 towards operating costs and \$5000 for Kingston High School Scholarships in 2016.



And finally, thank you to all the members of our staff and the board of directors who work so hard for our community. I'm very proud of our commitment to provide advocacy, education and services to the women, children, and families since 1923.

2015 Special events included:

- Our annual October Tribute to Women Dinner at The Chateau venue in Kingston
- Champagne Reception in June at the home of Laurel Andretta
- Mother's Day 5K to support Girls Inc.
- A Winter Soiree in January

Dan Ruback, Jamie Kesick, Leslie Fitzgerald and Megan Zweifel, thank you for your contributions to the agency's administrative team.

Respectfully submitted,

*Andrea*

Andrea Park, Executive Director

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