

**GIRLS INC. OF  
YORK REGION**

**2023**

**ANNUAL  
REPORT**

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**girls  
inc.**

of York Region

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# Organizational Overview

Established in 1979, originally as Big Sisters of York Region, later becoming an affiliate of Girls Incorporated, Girls Inc. of York Region is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to empowering girls ages 5 - 18 to seek the highest quality of life possible. Through robust, evidence-based programming and services, we help girls reach their fullest potential in all areas of life.



## Vision

Girls Inc. of York Region empowers girls to discover their inherent strengths and grow up to be healthy, educated and independent.

## Mission

By offering evidence-based programs in a safe pro-girl environment, Girls Inc. of York Region inspires all girls to be Strong, Smart and Bold. We are champions for the rights and well-being of all girls while focusing on the needs of those from vulnerable communities.

# A Letter from Leadership



**Barb Wallace - Executive Director**

In 2023, Girls Inc. of York Region continued to uphold its commitment to delivering high-quality research-based programming tailored to the needs of girls and young women across York Region. This dedication saw the organization experiencing unprecedented growth, as it navigated through the recovery following the Covid-19 pandemic. Girls Inc. found itself propelled into a new post-pandemic landscape, marked by fresh challenges and an ever-increasing demand for support.

A myriad of issues continued to affect young women and girls, and this was manifested through a more than 100% increase in subsidy requests since 2022, a continuation and increase in demands for mental health support, and a trend towards girls struggling with delayed social skills and decreased physical fitness. Recognising the urgent need to address these pressing issues, Girls Inc. swiftly

pivoted its strategies, ensuring that its programs were agile and responsive to the evolving needs of its participants.

One significant response to these challenges was the expansion of in-person programs at our office and in schools, coupled with hiring an additional social worker to increase access to regular mental health check-ins. The expansion of programs and services aimed at providing crucial support and guidance to young women grappling with the repercussions of the pandemic.

Furthermore, the organization extended its support beyond program participants, reaching out to families in need by providing essential supplies such as grocery gift cards, hygiene kits, back-to-school supplies and Holiday Hampers. This comprehensive approach underscored Girls Inc.'s unwavering commitment to supporting the holistic well-being of the communities it serves.

Expanding its reach and impact, Girls Inc. continued on an ambitious initiative to double its afterschool programs and broaden its lunchtime offerings, ensuring that its services were accessible to even more young women across York Region. This expansion was a testament to the organization's dedication to inclusivity and its steadfast commitment to empowering girls from all walks of life.

Looking ahead to the future, Girls Inc. remains focused on its strategic pillars, emphasising evidence-based programming, broadening outreach efforts, enhancing wellness support, and strengthening its infrastructure. By fostering long-standing relationships with funders and exploring new revenue streams, the organization is well-positioned to sustain its growth trajectory and extend its reach, thereby impacting the lives of girls and their families in York Region and beyond. This continued success would not be possible without the unwavering support of its dedicated staff, volunteers, funders, parents, and the girls themselves, whose resilience and determination serve as a beacon of hope for a brighter future.



**Lisa Tremaine - Board Chair**



# Impact



## 65%

of participants are able to express themselves better due to Girls Inc. programming



## 90%

of Girls Inc. participants plan on pursuing post-secondary education



## 87%

of our Summer Camp participants feel safe and welcome at camp



## 71%

of Girls Inc. participants are excited about math and science.



## 77%

are happy with how their body looks

*"Girls Inc. is a place that is like a sense or a feeling of home to me. I always have fun there and I always make new friends. This place makes me feel safe and welcomed, it makes me feel included. When I am having a bad day, they understand and still welcome me. This place has impacted me in so many positive ways. It teaches you confidence, how to be brave, bold, and they embrace everyone. This place is special. This place is Girls Inc."*

*- Kristen, Program Participant*

# Program Highlights

## Afterschool Programs

In 2023, Girls Inc. of York Region successfully held its after-school programs entirely in-person for the first time since 2020. This return to in-person sessions led to a significant increase in engagement and impact. We expanded our programs to five locations throughout York Region, thereby extending our reach and influence more broadly within the community. Our primary focus for 2023 was on physical and mental health in response to the impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on children and youth. All programs were aligned with our comprehensive curriculum, catering to different age groups with targeted activities and exercises designed to promote essential concepts such as self-confidence, physical fitness, mental resilience, gender equality, and a high quality of life.



## Lunch Programs

In 2023, we continued to expand our in-person services, achieving notable success with our lunchtime programs. These programs allowed us to collaborate closely with 22 schools, tailoring a specific curriculum to meet the personal needs of the girls. By organising smaller age-based groups, our staff could focus on identifying and addressing the unique needs of each individual, such as low self-esteem, bullying, and other social or emotional issues. The extended program length from six-week to eight-week sessions significantly enhanced our ability to provide targeted support and foster a positive impact on the participants' lives.



# Program Highlights



## Summer Camp

Our 2023 Summer Camp Programs expanded from one location in 2022 to two in 2023. Camps were hosted at Regency Acres Public School in Aurora and Poplar Bank Public School in Newmarket. This growth allowed us to accommodate over 170 campers in 2023. We offered engaging and educational weekly themes, including Ready, Set, SPLASH, #GamerLife, STRONG, SMART, BOLD, S.T.E.A.M, Disney Universe, Creative Campers, and Party Animals. We received excellent feedback from both participants and their parents/guardians. Our campers enjoyed weekly field trips to exciting destinations such as Wet N' Wild, the Science Centre, LegoLand, and Centennial Beach. Although we budgeted for 40 subsidized camp weeks, we received over 80 requests, marking a more than 100% increase from 2022 and highlighting a significant community need for our programs.

## In-Office Programs:

In 2023, Girls Inc. of York Region successfully launched multiple fee-for-service programs that took place at the GIYR office location in the program room multiple afternoons every week. These programs included Book Clubs for Ages 5-8, Book Clubs for Ages 9-12, Monthly Teen Nights (Including volunteer opportunities for teens), STEM Saturdays and Special Occasion Events/Parties.

# Program Highlights

## Georgina Island Programs:

In 2023, Girls Inc. of York Region continued to support girls on the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation reserve through the Georgina Island Leadership Program. Operating two to three days a week, this in-person program combined the Girls Inc. curriculum with Indigenous activities, frequently involving Indigenous community adults and elders. Participants also received warm meals and snacks. Additionally, throughout the year, Girls Inc. of York Region sent numerous packages containing school supplies, personal hygiene products, clothing, and other essentials to Georgina Island to support the girls and their families in meeting their needs.

## Mental Health and Wellness Counselling:

Our Mental Health and Wellness Counselling program offers a safe and supportive space for female-identifying youth to discuss important topics such as mental health challenges, interpersonal relationships, and their experiences at school and home. The program employs various modalities, including talk therapy and art-based creative expression. Due to a significant increase in demand, which resulted in a waiting list, a part-time social worker was hired to manage additional needy clients. In 2023, 45 children and their families participated in our counselling sessions, gaining practical knowledge of self-care tools essential for maintaining strong mental health. This is an increase of 60%.





# Event Highlights



## Prom Prep

In the spring of 2023, Girls Inc. of York Region hosted its first full-scale Prom Prep event since 2019 at Old Towne Hall, drawing over 150 attendees. For the second year running, GIYR collaborated with CP24 Breakfast Television to raise awareness about the organizational mission and the Prom Prep event, encouraging donations of prom dresses, accessories and formal attire. Upper Canada Mall facilitated donations by providing a drop-off point at Guest Services, allowing community members to contribute their gently used formal attire at their convenience. This effort resulted in the highest number of donations ever received, providing attendees with over 800 dresses to choose from.



## Pride Parade

The York Pride parade is a vibrant celebration of LGBTQIA2S+ identity, diversity, and equality. In June 2023, after a hiatus since 2019, the York Pride Parade returned to its full capacity. Over 45 staff members, volunteers, program participants, and their families proudly marched on behalf of GIYR, enthusiastically distributing promotional materials for our summer camps and programs during the parade.



# Event Highlights

## Spirit of the Girl Breakfast:

The inaugural Spirit of the Girl Breakfast was convened on May 26th to foster community networking to enhance partnerships, volunteer engagement, and community involvement. Esteemed women of influence, community advocates, political figures, and dignitaries convened for a breakfast gathering and presentation. Moreover, the event marked the commencement of the second year of the Send a Girl to Camp Campaign, held throughout June. In 2023, \$5000.00 was successfully raised through generous contributions from local donors and businesses.

## Bold is Beautiful:

In 2023, Girls Inc. of York Region and Benefit Cosmetics Canada renewed and expanded their Bold Is Beautiful Campaign. Throughout August, the proceeds from Benefit Brow Waxes were allocated to Canadian charities. Graciously, we received a donation of \$30,000 from these proceeds, a \$10,000 increase from 2022. As part of GIYR's involvement, GIYR staff dedicated a day at the Benefit Boutique to engaging with both staff and customers and discussing GIYR's mission and its programs designed for female-identifying children and youth.



# Event Highlights

## Back to School Events

For the second consecutive year, Upper Canada Mall in Newmarket continued its support and selected GIYR as their charity partner for their Back to School event and drive. Throughout the Back to School drive, guests at UCM contributed monetary donations and school supplies. Additionally, staff engaged children in GIYR activities at the GIYR booth while distributing promotional materials for our programs.

Eventmrkt organized and hosted a Back-to-School event, with all proceeds dedicated to supporting participants in need through GIYR. The event generated \$5000 from ticket sales, silent auction items, and beverage purchases.

Throughout August, local individual donors and organizations demonstrated their support by purchasing school supplies and donating them to GIYR. These donations were then distributed to program participants, receiving subsidy support in time for them to return to school.



## Fundraising Workshops

Throughout 2023, GIYR continued to hold a variety of small, in-house events for girls. The goal of these events expanded from just offering GIYR-themed programming to simultaneously raising funds for the organization. The fundraising workshops included “Val-Einstein”, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Spring, Holiday and Halloween-themed events that included relevant fun and creative activities.



# Event Highlights



## Girls Rights to Mental Health Event

In partnership with CMHA York and York University, Girls Inc. of York Region held a breakfast event on September 29 to discuss research findings about girls' mental health in Pressure, Judgement, Fear & Girlhood: A Girl-Centred Understanding of the Social Determinants of Girls' Mental Health and What We Can Do About It. A collaboration by Dr. Cheryl van Daalen-

Smith, RN, PhD & Dr. Marina Morrow, PhD, York University Faculty of Health, Michelle Hermans, RN, M.N., Nurse Practitioner, Canadian Mental Health Association, York Region/South Simcoe, Barb Wallace, B.A., Executive Director, Girls Incorporated of York Region, and Ariella Markus, B.Ed, M.A., Research Assistant/Project Coordinator. Individuals from GIYR, CMHA York, York University, York Region, York Region Public Health, YRDSB, YRCDSB, York Regional Police, Children's Aid Society of York Region and many others gathered together to discuss the findings of the research paper, their experiences at their employing organizations and brainstormed partnerships and ways to combat mental health challenges girls are facing.

## Holiday Hamper

During the Holiday Season, our mission was to ensure that no Girls Inc. family went without gifts and a holiday meal. Recognizing the stress faced by families on fixed or low incomes during the holidays, we initiated the Girls Inc. Holiday Hamper campaign to provide support. Sponsoring a Holiday Hamper meant ensuring that all Girls Inc. participants and their families could enjoy a festive season they might otherwise have missed out on. With a more than 100% increase in subsidy requests compared to the previous year, we matched donors with families in need, providing monetary donations for groceries and gifts. Each family received a hamper tailored to their needs, including warm clothing, family gifts, personal hygiene items, and holiday treats, ensuring a joyful holiday season for all. This campaign raised \$8000.00 from local businesses and donors.



# Financial Report

## Highlights

In 2023, Girls Inc. of York Region reported revenue of \$1,237,036 during the year, an increase of \$362,833 vs 2022, representing a +42% growth in revenue.

We successfully secured increased funding through long-standing donors and grantors including Ontario Trillium Foundation, United Way, York Region and Canada Summer Job. In addition, we expanded our fundraising reach and received donations from private foundations such as Maple Leaf Sports Entertainment Foundation, and several family-run foundations that are committed to improving the lives of children and families and supporting meaningful changes in youth mental health.

Expenses for the year totalled \$994,588 and represents an increase of 15% compared to 2022. With Covid restrictions completely behind us in 2023, we were able to ramp up after-school programs and summer camps. But more importantly, we increased our staffing to meet the increasing need in our community for mental health support.

As a result, we are able to record a surplus of \$242,448 in 2023 and our operating fund currently sits at \$571,505, of which \$552,989 is unrestricted. This strong position will allow us to strengthen our infrastructure and enhance our programs and wellness support, positively impacting the lives of girls and their families in our community.

## Looking Ahead

We continue to strengthen our fundraising and outreach programs. We anticipate grants and donation activity will be sufficient to cover our anticipated operating cost during the year. GIYR will continue to build on the four strategic pillars to provide high-quality support to the needs of the whole girl in the community.

### Revenue

**42% Growth**



### Staffing

**Increased to expand programs and mental health supports**



### Program Expansion Cost

**15% Increase**





# Staff & Board



## Staff Members

- Barb Wallace** - Executive Director
- Emily Agnoluzzi** - Communications & Operations Manager
- Terra Cable** - Program Manager
- Jade Davidson** - Social Worker
- Lesley Edwards** - Program Facilitator
- Joanna Georges** - Program Facilitator
- Jessica Gomez** - Social Work Manager
- Emily Lynch** - Program Coordinator
- Emma Rusu** - Program Facilitator
- Avaa Sharpe** - Program Facilitator
- Ashley Villers** - Program Facilitator



## Board of Directors

- Lisa Tremaine** - Board Chair
- Patricia Bifulchi** - Director
- Victoria Calverley** - Past Chair
- Sarah Cole** - Director
- Jo-Anne Dignard** - Director
- Hava Guttman** - Director
- Shana Kapustin** - Director
- Jenny Liang** - Treasurer
- Lindsay Owen** - Director
- Lisa Palmili** - Director
- Angel Wu** - Director



# Donors

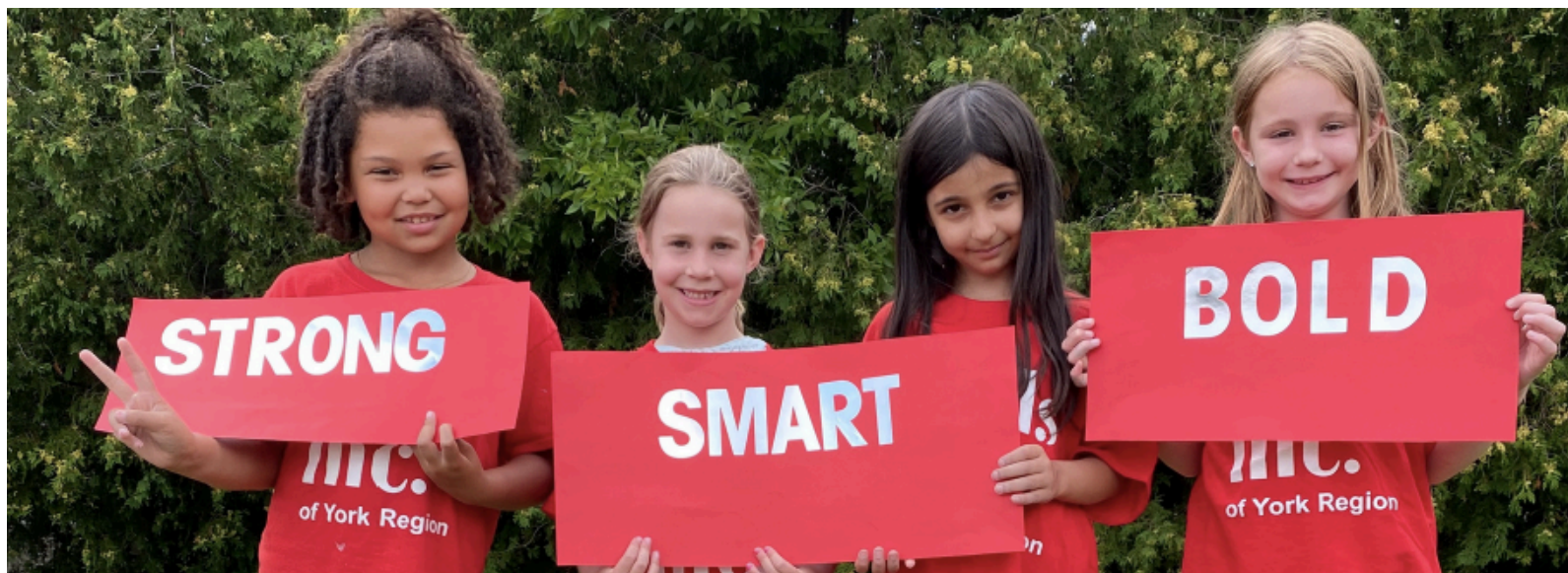
## Funders

Alice and Murray Maitland Foundation  
 Arthur and Audrey Cutten Foundation  
 Awesome Foundation  
 Aubrey and Marla Dan Foundation  
 Benefit Cosmetics  
 Bingo World Newmarket  
 Canadian Tire Jump Start Foundation  
 Canadian Red Cross  
 Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation  
 Charles H. Ivey Foundation  
 CHUM Charitable Foundation  
 City of Aurora, Community Grant  
 Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario,  
 Humanity Fund  
 Fyfe Foundation  
 George Lunan Foundation  
 Girls Inc. National, DEI Cohort  
 Gooder Foundation  
 Hodgson Family Foundation  
 Johansen Larsen Foundation  
 Leanne Childrens Foundation  
 Magna International, Hoedown  
 Marion and Ethel Kamm Charitable Foundation  
 Mazon Canada  
 McColl Early Foundation  
 Ministry of Sport, Tourism, and Culture  
 (MSTC)  
 MLSE Foundation  
 New Roads Automotive Group

Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF), Community  
 Resiliency Fund  
 Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF), Grow Grant  
 Regional Municipality of York, Community  
 Investment Fund  
 Service Canada, Summer Employment Grant  
 TELUS, Friendly Future Foundation  
 United Way of Greater Toronto

## Partners

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA),  
 York Region/South Simcoe  
 Child and Family Services  
 Women's Support Network  
 Market Candle Company  
 Rose of Sharon  
 Event Mrkt  
 CP24 Breakfast Television  
 Newmarket and East Gwillimbury Chamber  
 of Commerce  
 New Roads  
 Glamma Gals  
 Linking Georgina  
 Rose of Sharon  
 Starbucks  
 York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB)  
 York Region District School Board (YRDSB)  
 York Region Food Network  
 York University, Faculty of Health



# Contact Us

**girls  
inc.**

of York Region

**Girls Incorporated  
of York Region**

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Phone

905-830-0776

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Email

info@girlsincyork.org

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Website

www.girlsincyork.org

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Address

482 Queen St. Newmarket, ON.  
L3Y 2H4

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Charitable Number

118809508RR0001

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**STRONG. SMART.  
BOLD.**