

**"The world has paused,
but the need has not."**

Dear Girls Inc. Friends and Families,

As we collectively deal with these challenging and unprecedented times we are in with COVID-19, I sit at my desk and marvel at the grit and determination of our community, and the world really, to overcome all obstacles and to be **strong** while facing this pandemic head on. We are all using our resources, experiences, wisdom, and tools to work **smarter** on everything that is thrown our way. Some of the measures we are having to take to persevere and thrive in the future are pretty darn **bold**. It reminds me of what we ask our girls to do and be every day - **stronger**, **smarter** and **bolder**.

As we have had to make an agonizing decision to suspend programming at our two campuses, we knew the health and safety of the girls, their families, the staff and the community at large were at stake. That was a risk we could not take. Even so, we knew this meant, for more than 500 girls ages 6-18, a suspension of trusted afterschool care, academic enrichment, life skills training, informal science, math, and technology programming, leadership development, mentoring, and amazing field trips. The girls would not be able to be served in the manner in which they had been accustomed. Many of you have met some of our members or at least have heard them speak at fundraising events about the impact Girls Inc. has had on them personally. They are truly the inspiration behind everything we do and every single decision we make. We had to keep them safe.

We are so grateful for the school systems who rallied to provide breakfasts and lunches for families during community wide closures. They can never be thanked enough. While it was extremely painful to see so many families walk to the feeding sites

in pouring rain to get lunch for their kids, it made it abundantly clear that while regular programming has been suspended everywhere, the needs of the girls and their families have not.

As we move forward, we want you to know that the most amazing Girls Inc. staff and board volunteers are carefully devising new strategies to meet the immediate needs of these girls and are looking to the future as well. They are busy exploring virtual learning and as many personal engagement opportunities as possible to maintain staff bonds with the girls. A recent trip to check in on Girls Inc. members both warmed our hearts and chilled our souls. Some girls were smiling as big as possible and appreciated the visits. They were happy to have this “special time” with family. Some girls’ families were literally on the move, seeking resources. We do not know where they are. Another couple of girls’ momma said they didn’t have any needs but they appreciated everything the community was doing. She said this standing outside her motel room door while her girls looked out their ground level window wishing they could come back to Girls Inc. and normal days.

We plan on working harder than we ever have before to meet the girls’ needs and those of their families to help them be stronger in the face of all this adversity. We know the stress right now is hard on everyone. It is especially hard to deal with stress in confined, crowded living spaces without basic needs being met.

We will partner with other agencies to provide the most effective and efficient use of our combined resources. We offer to the community whatever we have available to help others meet the needs of the wonderful people they get to serve as well. We will continue to follow all the executive orders and maintain social distancing with any and all program partners. We may be standing 6 feet apart, but our hearts are melded into one purpose - working together to meet our community's needs.

Girls Inc. has been in the community for more than 50 years now. We are so appreciative of the genuine care, concern and generosity you have shown us to help us grow and thrive. Every gift you have ever given, every hour you have ever volunteered, has made us **stronger**, **smarter** and **bolder**, just like the girls we serve. Thank you. Together we will create the new normal that is upon us all. Please let us know how we might help you and your family. We will stay in touch to keep you informed as we move forward. Be sure to follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to stay up to date on everything - links below.

I have read that with great challenges come great opportunities. Bring it on! We're all in this together and together we can do anything. In the meantime, our prayers go out to all of you that everyone may stay safe and healthy.

Respectfully,

Tish Correa Osborne
CEO