

MEET MRS. ASHLEY:

Mrs. Ashley's passion to work with kids and knowing some of the "wonderful and inspirational" Girls Inc. staff are what motivated her to become part of the Girls Inc. staff six years ago.

"Girls Inc. is more than an afterschool program," she said. "It is a place that believes in every girl that walks through the door. Every member is given the tools to thrive in their communities, take risks and try new things, stand up for what they believe in, be themselves, become leaders and so much more."

Mrs. Ashley said that every day provides a new story and is a new moment for a member and while these moments may take months or even years, watching the girls blossom into leaders is the most impactful moment for her.



"It makes me smile ear to ear," she said.

Two Girls Inc. programs, are important to Mrs. Ashley for different reasons, she said.

"Leadership and Community Action allows the girls to give back to their community no matter if they are six or 18," she said. "It is great to see the girls invest their time in something they believe in, make a change whether small or big, and build relationships with others in the community."

The second is Sporting Chance where girls are introduced to sports, are taught to be safe in an active environment and are encouraged to make healthy, active choices.

Being closed to members has been difficult for Mrs. Ashley because she knows the importance of Girls Inc. in the girls' lives. While she has been safely delivering meals and supplies to several members, she still misses the contact of being with them at Girls Inc.

"This is a home-away-from-home for so many girls," she said. "The hardest thing is knowing the girls have been taken away from their day-to-day routines and worrying about how they are truly coping during the pandemic."

She wishes she could have longer conversations with them to let them know it ok, but it is hard while being socially distant. She cannot wait to return and see the bright smiles and hear the awesome stories and laughter of the girls.



"My day to day is vastly different due to not having the girls at the center," she said. "I have been making connections with the girls and parents in so many different ways."

One of these is through her Music with Mrs. Ashley virtual programming where she has shared her singing and dancing talents with the girls through social media.

"Coming up with the various music classes has been a blast to do," she said. "This a way for girls and their families to have fun while staying home and have some positive energy."