



www.girlsincindy.org

Girls Incorporated® Backgrounder

The Early Years

The Girls Incorporated movement started in New England, during the Industrial Revolution, as a response to the needs of young women who had migrated from rural communities in search of newly available job opportunities in textile mills and factories. The oldest Girls Inc. affiliate, in the United States, formed in 1864 in Waterbury, Connecticut, which provided programs for young working women, and daughters of mill families. In the mid 1930s, Dora Dodge, the executive director of Worcester affiliate, published an article in a national magazine that expressed the growing need of programs for girls. The article led women, in similar situations, to come together and discuss different ways to make programs. On May 18, 1945, representatives from 19 interested organizations met to form the Girls Club of America.

1963 – 1974

After the establishment of the Girls Club of America, the national organization received hundreds of requests from towns and cities across the country. Girls Inc. was different from other organizations because it offered a place for girls to go that provided them with care from the same people each day.

1974 – 1993

1974 found the organization reexamining its original mission in terms of realities of a new era. Its mission was focused, but still prepared girls for adult roles as mothers and wives. The change was needed in response to the powerful changes of the civil rights movement, women's movement and the flood of women entering the workforce. Conferences provided recommendation for a number of different programs (health and sexuality, education and employment and delinquency prevention).

Margaret Gates, co-founder of the Center for Women Policy Studies, helped create and build a framework for all programs. In the 1980s the organization raised and invested more than \$10 million to pioneer a process that involved affiliates in planning, piloting, evaluating and implementing ground breaking programs. In the beginning of 1990, the national organization changed its name to Girls Incorporated.

1993 – Present

As times have changed, the face of Girls Inc. has changed as well. Our programs are continuously changing because we are now living in a world that is more complex. Our goal is to help girls across all races and ethnic groups to become economically independent young women. Girls Inc. has transformed into a multifaceted organization to meet the needs of all girls.