

Girls Incorporated of Sarasota County



Volunteer Handbook

Girls Incorporated of Sarasota County

201 S. Tuttle Avenue

Sarasota, FL 34237

Tel: (941) 366-6646 ext. 207

Fax: (888) 673-3042

Director of Community Relations: Georgann Nugent

Welcome to **Girls Incorporated® of Sarasota County!** We are so excited that you have decided to volunteer with our agency! Volunteers serve as a very important part of our programs and are valued by all staff and members. As a volunteer you will be able to make a huge difference in the lives of our girls. We are able to better serve our girls because of the time and talents of our volunteers. Your experience will be a rewarding and enjoyable opportunity.

Please use this handbook to get acquainted with Girls Incorporated and our volunteer policies. Volunteer Coordinator Georgann Nugent will be available to answer any questions you may have.

To Our Volunteers

by Lisa Ellinwood

V is for the Very special people that you are

O is for the Overwhelming support & compassion you offer others during their time of need

L is for the Little things you do that make such a difference in someone's life

U is for the Unspoken words that sometimes mean just as much

N is for the Need you fill when others aren't able

T is for the Time you give of yourselves on top of your own busy schedules

E is for the Emotional support you continually give

E is also for the Endless energy you all seem to possess

R is for the Responsibility you have taken on & never once complained

S is for the Smiles you bring to the girl by just being you!

Girls Incorporated[®] of Sarasota County

Philosophy and Mission Statement

Girls Incorporated of Sarasota County is a local affiliate of a national nonprofit youth organization dedicated to **“inspiring all girls to be strong, smart and bold.”** Girls Inc. fulfills its mission of empowering girls aged six and up to be self-confident, responsible and well-rounded individuals by delivering research-based, age-appropriate, after-school and summer educational and sports programs designed specifically for girls at the Girls Incorporated National Resource Center.

The primary areas of Girls Inc. programming focus on literacy, math and science, career and life planning, health and sexuality, leadership and community action, sports and adventure, self-reliance and life skills, and culture and heritage. Girls Inc. programs are designed to serve all girls regardless of a girl’s socio-economic, ethnic or religious background. Appreciation of diversity and acceptance of others is at the core of the Girls Inc. philosophy. The organization prides itself in offering girls multi-cultural experiences in a safe and harmonious environment. Transportation is provided to girls from the twenty-plus schools to the Girls Inc. facility daily and sliding-scale scholarships are available for the after-school and summer programs.

History

In 1973, Girls Clubs of Sarasota County was formed through the initiative of community leaders in order to provide a safe place for girls to receive after-school programs. The agency dedicated its facility on Tuttle Avenue in 1976 and added a sports complex in 1983.

During the 1980s, Girls Clubs of Sarasota County established a foundation to manage endowment funds and backed the creation of Coquille, an auxiliary, volunteer-based fundraising branch that attracted significant attention and participation from the community. During this time the agency began to implement the new research-based programs that were coming from the Girls Incorporated National Resource Center. In 1989, following the lead of the national organization, Girls Clubs of Sarasota County became Girls Incorporated of Sarasota County. The same year the agency launched its annual storytelling event, *Celebration Luncheon*, which is designed to recognize the achievements of outstanding women from the community and provide positive role models for Girls Inc. girls.

Girls Incorporated undertook several outreach initiatives during the 1990s, made possible by grant-making organizations, private donors and community support. In 1991, the *Newtown Project* was implemented to provide the girls and parents of the Newtown community access to the agency’s programs. By the mid 1990s the *Educational Talent Search* program (ETS) program was established to help open the doors to post-secondary education for junior and senior public high school girls. In 1999 alone ETS outreach workers helped over 400 young women to plan their future careers, gain admittance to colleges of their choice and find the necessary financial support. During the latter 1990s, Girls Inc. expanded its outreach initiatives to include program delivery as part of the regular curriculum at Venice Middle School, and address the issues of preventing teen pregnancy and substance abuse prevention through workshops at other agencies.

Major renovations were completed to the Sarasota Facility in 2004. Girls Inc. Sarasota was named the Affiliate of the Year in the Southeast Region of the United States in 2005, then the first recipient of the Excellence in Action Award- Outstanding Affiliate of the Year of 2008.

Girls Incorporated[®] Of Sarasota County Program Overview

Girls Incorporated[®] is a national research, education, and direct advocacy organization that inspires girls to be strong, smart, and bold. Programs based on research gathered at the Girls Inc. National Resource Center encourage girls ages 6 to 18 to take risks and master physical, intellectual, and emotional challenges. Programs are offered through a network of 1,000 sites nationwide and are facilitated by trained professional staff.

Operation SMARTSM builds girls' skills and interest in science, math, and technology. Hands-on activities give girls the opportunity to explore, ask questions, and solve problems. Components of Operation SMART include: *Eureka!*, *GirlsLinkSM*, *GirlsLink Gets SMART*, *Girls Dig It*, and *Career Action*.

Preventing Adolescent PregnancySM is an age appropriate program that helps girls identify ways and reasons to avoid early pregnancy. The program fosters girls' communication skills, provides basic health education, and encourages girls to plan for the future through four age-appropriate components: Growing TogetherSM, Will Power/Won't PowerSM, Taking Care of BusinessSM, and Health BridgeSM. The first two components have been translated into Spanish.

Media LiteracySM encourages girls to think critically about media messages and fosters their awareness of the scope and power of the media and its effects of girls and women. Girls gain media literacy skills that enhance their ability to critically examine and advocate for change in entertainment, news and advertising media.

Project BoldSM strengthens girls' abilities to lead safer lives. Girls develop strategies for self-defense (including physical techniques), for seeking out and talking with caring adults about personal violence, and for advocating on violence issues for girls and young women. Age-appropriate components include *Kid-Ability!TM (Kid Jr.)*, *Action for SafetySM* and *Taking Action*.

Economic LiteracySM introduces girls as young as six to basic financial concepts, including money management and investment. The program explores how money affects us locally and globally as it fosters development of the skills needed to be financially self-sufficient.

Friendly PEERsuationSM builds girls' skills for resisting pressure to use harmful substances such as alcohol, tobacco, household chemicals and other drugs. The two-part substance abuse prevention program teaches girls ages 11 to 14 healthy ways to manage stress and confront peer, media and other pressures. The girls then assume roles as PEERsuaders for younger girls.

Sporting ChanceSM builds movement and athletic skills, cooperative and competitive spirit, health awareness, and interest in all sports as girls explore career opportunities related to sports and experience the benefits of healthy risk taking. The program lays a foundation for a lifetime of sports participation through two age-appropriate programs: *SteppingstonesSM* and *BridgesSM*.

DiscoverySM partners girls and women in community action projects chosen by girls, building leadership skills and creating lasting change. This leadership development program for girls ages 9 to 11 celebrates the heritage of girls and women as leaders, and fosters girls awareness of themselves as community resources and trustees of the common good.

GIRLS INCORPORATED® MEMBERS

Who is a Girls Inc. girl member?

A member:

- is a girl between the ages of 5 and 14 years
- is a girl who could benefit from friendships, positive role modeling and programs
- may be from a large family
- may be from a single parent or two parent home
- may be a girl who has not had the opportunities of other girls her age
- may be a girl who is experiencing difficulties in school or at home

Our girls are individuals and treated as special people with unique qualities and talents.

Our members are special!

Being a volunteer means that you are prepared to accept girls as they are including their strengths and weaknesses, their congenial and uncongenial qualities, their positive and negative feelings, their constructive and destructive attitudes, their endearing and annoying behaviors while keeping in mind their dignity and worth as individuals.

~~~~~

**Girls Incorporated® inspires all girls to be  
Strong, Smart, and Bold**

## **THE GIRLS' BILL OF RIGHTS**

Girls have the right to be themselves and to resist gender stereotypes.

Girls have the right to express themselves with originality and enthusiasm.

Girls have the right to take risks, to strive freely, and to take pride in success.

Girls have the right to accept and appreciate their bodies.

Girls have the right to have confidence in themselves and to be safe in the world.

Girls have the right to prepare for interesting work and economic independence.

# Volunteer Policies

## Becoming a Volunteer

Every potential volunteer of Girls Incorporated® of Sarasota County must go through a screening process. This screening is to ensure the safety of all Girls Inc. members. The screening process includes:

- Completion of a Volunteer Information Sheet
- Local Law Enforcement Check
- FDLE Criminal History check
- Notarized Affidavit of Good Moral Character
- Interview with the Girls Inc. Volunteer Coordinator
- Signed Oath of Confidentiality
- Attendance to the Girls Inc. Volunteer Orientation

## Volunteer Commitment

The decision to volunteer comes from a genuine desire to offer friendship and support to girls ages 5 – 14. In order to volunteer you must be willing to make a commitment to the girls, the agency and to the programs you will become involved with. Girls Incorporated asks that you make a minimum commitment of one regular scheduled shift each week.

It is very important for our members to have consistency. They come to expect to see the same faces and have the same activities at scheduled times.

## Confidentiality

All volunteers will be required to sign an Oath of Confidentiality. As a volunteer you may be privy to confidential information about our members and/or their families. The sharing of this information concerning a member should occur only with the Volunteer Coordinator and/or the Program Coordinator. Under no circumstances should this personal information be discussed with anyone except persons fully authorized by staff. You should never discuss personal or private information regarding our members in public. Doing so is a violation of the agencies policy on confidentiality and more importantly of our members' privacy. Girls Inc. strives to create a safe environment for our members and this policy assist in assuring safety. We understand that you may want to share positive aspects of Girls Incorporated and the girls you will be working with. We ask that you use your discretion when doing so and please protect the privacy and rights of our members.

### **Confidentiality is waived only when there are specific situations that warrant it,**

- Indications that a member is at risk of harming herself, harming someone else or of being harmed. In these situations immediately contact your Volunteer Coordinator and/or the Program Director
- Any "secret" about child abuse. A volunteer is bound to report such a disclosure immediately; therefore you cannot keep a secret. Do not make a promise that you cannot keep! If this occurs you must also contact your Volunteer Coordinator and/or the Program Director.
- If you receive a subpoena to court.

## **Your role as a volunteer/mentor**

As a volunteer you are first and foremost a role model to the members of Girls Inc. who are very impressionable. They are always watching and listening. Please be aware that many impressions will be drawn from the way in which you act or react. These are character building years.

### **Things to remember:**

- Be a friend
- Be yourself
- Be honest
- Be understanding and patient
- Be reliable and responsible and provide support
- Be a facilitator of simple life experiences
- Show respect
- Be open minded and flexible
- HAVE FUN!

## **Responsibilities of a Volunteer**

As a volunteer you are accountable to all members and the Girls Incorporated of Sarasota County.

### **Responsibilities to members:**

- Accept the girls for who they are, and encourage her goals
- Allow them to express their thoughts and feelings
- Ensure a safe environment
- Help them to evaluate alternatives and make their own decisions
- Show sincerity and commitment
- Show them that friendship is unconditional
- Help girls to feel like they are a part of the organization by attending agency events/activities
- Speak with your Volunteer Coordinator if you have any questions or concerns
- Connect with other volunteer mentors, share positive experiences and suggestions

### **Responsibilities to the agency:**

- Participate in the orientation process
- Participate in organized discussion groups and educational programs
- Keep track of upcoming agency events/activities
- Maintain a professional attitude when representing Girls Inc.
- Ask questions when you are not sure or do not understand
- Notify the agency of change of address, phone numbers, illness or other related information that may affect your contact with the agency
- Notify your Volunteer Coordinator if your intent is to discontinue volunteering

### **A volunteer is not responsible for:**

- Solving girls' life problems
- Solving her family's problems
- Babysitting or buy her things
- Giving final authority on what is right or wrong

## **Rights of a volunteer**

### **As a volunteer you have the right to:**

- Appropriate training
- Select programs that you want to participate in
- Appropriate information to help you assist our girls
- Direction and assistance in coping with girl concerns or problems
- Being accepted and supported as an integral part of the organization
- Information on organized activities, meeting, agendas, policies and guidelines

### **Your expectations:**

Time is always needed to establish friendships and relationships. Do healthy things. Be friendly, understanding and caring. **Our girls love to be themselves and have fun!**

## **Dress Code**

While volunteering you are expected to present a clean and neat appearance and to dress in accordance with the work you will be doing. Please remember that you will be setting an example to our girls through your appearance. Please do not wear any clothing that might seem inappropriate.

Inappropriate attire includes:

- Halter tops, tube tops
- Clothing which expose bare midriffs
- Biking shorts
- Mini skirts
- Flip Flops (sandals and open toed shoes are permitted)
- Cut off shorts or tee-shirts with sleeves cut off
- Backless shirts or dresses
- Extremely short or tight shorts, pants or skirts
- Low cut sheer or revealing clothing
- Tee-shirts with offensive or inappropriate logos and wording, i.e. cigarettes, drugs or alcoholic symbols or emblems, or sexual overtures or implications or references to race, color, national origin, religion, handicap or material status suppositions or intentions
- Bathing suits outside of the beach or pool area
- Two piece bathing suits or thongs

## **Parking**

The visitor parking is located on each side of the Girls Inc. building. Parking in front of the building is limited to 10 minutes. Please park in a designated spot.

## **Complaints**

If you have a concern regarding your volunteer services, we need to hear about it. You are always welcome to discuss your concerns with the Volunteer Coordinator Georgann Nugent.

# **Girls Incorporated<sup>®</sup> of Sarasota County**

## **STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

The following Standards of Conduct apply to **all** girl members of Girls Incorporated of Sarasota County and will be strictly adhered to in all cases. It is important that **both** girls and parents understand and accept the behavior standards of the organization.

Our focus is to ensure that each child has a safe, fun and positive experience while here at Girls Incorporated. Staff will work with each child to prevent and reduce problems through one-on-one intervention. This may include a recovery time for the child (a “time out” period for however long your child feels she needs to be ready to participate again in a positive manner.) Emphasis is placed on the choices each girl makes. Each girl may participate with staff in the determination of privileges earned for good choices and the determination of consequences for poor choices. Any behavioral issues will be immediately addressed by the Program Director.

## **Girls Incorporated<sup>®</sup> Discipline Policy**

1. I (staff) will treat you (girl) with respect so you will know how to treat me.
2. If you cause a problem, I will ask you to solve it.

Possible problem areas include:

Safety of yourself or others.

Respect of facility and property.

Respect of other girls, staff, volunteers, guests and parents.

3. If you are unable or unwilling to solve it, I will report issue to the Program Director.
4. The consequence will depend on each girl and each situation.

# Girls Incorporated® Member Rules

## GENERAL RULES

1. Ask staff for permission and a pass to leave your group/room/area
  2. Leave all personal items at home (electronic devices, cell phones, Ipods, games, stuffed animals, etc.)
  3. Dress appropriately (always wear athletic shoes, clothing that covers you, and only your own clothes and shoes)
  4. Always walk from one area to another...no running inside.
  5. Food, drinks and candy in Kid's Café only
  6. Do only your own hair and use only your own hair items (brush, barrette, scrunchie, etc.)
  7. Be safe and respectful of all property and people
  8. HAVE FUN!!!
- 

## LOCKER RULES

1. You will share a locker with another girl(s)
  2. Put your stuff in your locker only
  3. Go into only your belongings (respect your locker mate and her belongings)
  4. Go into only your locker
  5. Food and drinks should be kept in your lunchbox or backpack
  6. Swimsuit and towel should be kept in a bag or your backpack
  7. All personal decorations should be on the inside of your locker
- 

## BATHROOM RULES

1. Keep main bathroom door open at all times
  2. Always flush after you go
  3. Wash your hands when finished
  4. Throw away paper towels in trash can
  5. Let staff know if there is a problem (need more paper towels or toilet paper, toilet is not working)
-

## GYM RULES

1. Gym equipment stays in the gym
2. Food, candy, drinks and personal items should remain in your locker or cubby
3. Closed-toed athletic shoes are required for sports
4. Enter equipment room only with permission from staff
5. Gymnastics (cartwheels, handstands, etc.) are done during gymnastics class only
6. Throw and kick balls only to someone who is ready to catch it
7. Participate and have fun!
8. Clean up at the end of class

## POOL/SWIMMING RULES

1. Always wear your swimsuit in the pool (t-shirt and/or shorts may be worn over your swimsuit)
  2. Walk in pool area and locker room (flip flops may be worn in these areas)
  3. Jump from side or walk down stairs into pool
  4. Play safely
  5. Gutters are for water only (no walking or playing please)
  6. Use your inside voice unless you need help
  7. Put away all toys at the end of class
  8. Put your wet swimsuit and towel in a bag
  9. Use the locker room stalls if you need to go to the bathroom
- 

## COMPUTER RULES

1. Ask if you have questions or need help
  2. Visit positive, approved websites **only**
  3. No email, instant messaging, chat rooms, blogs or bulletin boards
  4. Print only with permission
- 

## BUS RULES

1. Seat belts on
  2. Food, candy, gum, drinks and personal items (including electronic devices, head phones, toys, etc.) should remain in your bag
  3. Throw away gum in your mouth in the trash can
  4. Remain seated at all times with your feet on the floor, leaving the aisle clear
  5. Use your inside voices
  6. Keep all parts of your body inside the bus window
  7. Silence at all railroad crossings
- Remember- when off campus you are representing Girls Inc and expected to continue to follow all the normal rules. Speak politely to others, walking, hands to yourself...etc.

## PLAYGROUND RULES

### **General:**

1. Walk under pavilion at all times
2. Play safely
3. Hands to yourself

### **Playground Structure:**

1. Use arms to hand from the monkey bars
2. Slide down slide feet first, one person at a time

### **Climbing Rock:**

1. Up to three (3) girls may be at the top of the rock at one time
2. Sitting only on rock
3. Climb down safely

### **Supernova:**

1. Up to seven (7) girls at a time
2. Always face the middle with your feet near the ground

### **Swings:**

1. One person per swing
  2. Sit on swing
  3. Keep chains untwisted
- 

## KIDS' CAFÉ/MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM RULES

### **Kids' Café (lunch, snack, etc.):**

1. Wash hands before lining up
2. Use good table manners
3. Place unwanted, unopened food items in share box
4. Ask permission to get an item from the share box
5. Ask permission and clean up your space to leave

### **Multi-Purpose Room:**

1. Use only furniture that belongs to Girls Inc.
2. Cards and games stay in multi-purpose room
3. Use crayons and pencils only for drawing and writing
4. Sign up to use the computer

**The following information will be helpful when working with our girls.**

## **Communication Skills**

Communication is a very important factor when dealing with friendships. In most cases, communication is the main difficulty encountered in a relationship with a younger member. Establishing sound communication is a challenge. It may be easier for you to do most of the talking, even to 'preach', but girls have heard plenty of this before. What she probably has not experienced is an adult who will hear her out and really listen to what she has to say. Listening is not just hearing the words but really understanding them. Ask follow up questions about her story. Watch her body gestures and listen for influx in tone of voice. Remember children tend to complicate their communication because they often have a hard time relating to new adults and their thought process may take some time to form. It takes time and patience to hear what the child is saying.

### **Verbal**

- Use simple language
- Express feelings openly
- Show the other person that you are listening, e.g. "Yes, I see" or "how did that make you feel" or repeat exactly what they have said. They will know what you heard and that you are interested.
- Use of appropriate/ polite language is expected. No swearing.

### **Nonverbal**

- Relay messages through body gestures and facial expressions
- Stay in the other person's comfort zone, do not crowd them but do not leave their space completely
- Maintain eye contact
- Use appropriate touch as long as the member is comfortable with it

### **Listen**

- Stop talking and concentrate on what the person is saying
- Ask for clarification when needed
- Avoid distractions while listening
- Be relaxed
- Sometimes they are really talking it out for themselves, let them make decisions
- Do not offer advice, reflect the question back
- Restate what you have heard to make sure that you are really hearing the speaker

### **Comments on Communication**

"When I ask you to listen to me and you start giving advice, you have not done what I asked."

"Listen! All I asked was that you listen, not talk or do. Just hear me!"

## Child Development

Note that this model is a basic outline and that every child is different and has her own developmental pace.

### Ages 4 – 8

- Very active and have gained control over their bodies
- Moving towards self direction and control
- Becoming more selective in choosing friends
- Large muscle control superior to fine muscle coordination
- Begin to become sensitive to others feeling
- Go through phases of self reflection and seriousness with more thinking than talking
- Eager to please, like to help, enjoy responsibility and want to do well
- Want to know what things are for and what to do with them

### Ages 9 – 11

- Quarrels become less frequent
- Sensitive to criticism and ridicule
- As they approach puberty, increased interest and concern about sex
- Excellent fine and gross motor skills
- Peer group is a powerful influence and a source of behavior standards
- Exercise own autonomy
- Need understanding, but also firmness
- Emotions tend to be extreme, highs and lows

### Ages 12 – 14

- Very concerned about their physical appearances (being too fat, too thin, too tall, etc.)
- Defy adult authority
- Greatly concerned with what others think of them
- Moods change dramatically
- Certain amount of awkwardness exists; probably due to sudden growth and self consciousness
- May exhibit acting-out behavior against adult rules

### Remember:

Mentoring means,

- Giving and taking ( not stuff)
- Accepting girls as they are without stereotyping
- Trusting them as we expect to be trusted
- Being concerned about them as we expect others to be concerned about us

## **Girls Inc. Volunteer Coordinator- Georgann Nugent**

The Volunteer Coordinator is the Girls Inc. staff member who coordinates the volunteer activities. The Volunteer Coordinator will inform you of the specifics required to perform your volunteer functions and assist you in the day-to-day performance of your assignment.

The Coordinator is very interested in your success as a volunteer/mentor and will be able to answer any questions you have regarding Girls Incorporated and your role as a volunteer. We have one on one, mentoring with a MicroSociety group or special event needs for volunteers. We truly appreciate your time and dedication to our girls.

Several times a year we will gather to share mentoring suggestions, success stories and thanks.

It is also a time to recruit more volunteers. If you know of someone who many enjoy mentoring a girl, please share that contact information with the volunteer coordinator, as well as any suggestions you have for our volunteer program. It is my intention to build this mentoring program to fill all the needs of the girls and staff support.

“A chain is only as strong as its weakest link”

Many thanks for your interest,

G

Georgann Nugent  
Director of Community Relations  
Girls Incorporated of Sarasota County  
201 South Tuttle Avenue  
Sarasota, Fl 34237  
Phone 941- 366-6646 ext. 207  
Fax: 941-366-4617  
Email: [Georgann@girlsincsrq.org](mailto:Georgann@girlsincsrq.org)