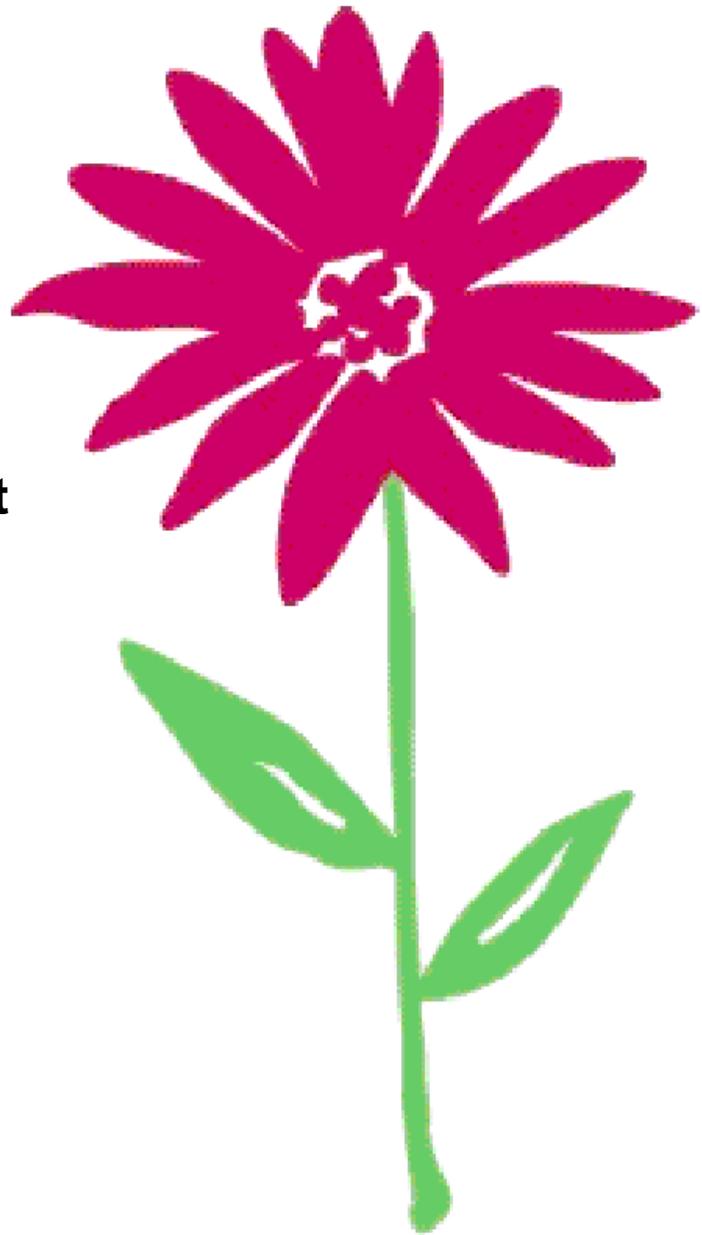


Growing

HGNA

**2005-2007
Biannual Report**



Helping Girls Navigate Adolescence, Inc.

Incorporated September 2005

The HGNA Mission

Helping Girls Navigate Adolescence, Inc. (HGNA) is a volunteer organization dedicated to empowering adolescent girls to achieve their fullest potential through education, advocacy, and community collaboration.

Specific Objectives and Purposes:

Sponsor relevant programs which empower adolescent girls to positively enhance their lives and the lives of others;

Sponsor programs where parents and other concerned adults can build their knowledge and skills, and share opinions and ideas with the guidance of experts and facilitators;

Provide mentoring and other programs for adolescent girls to enhance their abilities to think critically, set goals, and achieve success;

Be a resource for parents, educators, and community members for accurate research and information about adolescent girls;

Work cooperatively with other girls' organizations to maximize each other's goals and opportunities;

Raise public awareness of issues specific to adolescent girls including declines in academic interest and performance, lowered self-esteem, and increases in risky behavior.

Our Core Beliefs:

Every girl is unique and special.

Every girl has the right to grow up in a safe and nurturing environment where she can develop a healthy self concept.

Girls need a positive support system to counter negative, sexual, and toxic media and cultural messages.

Parents need a support system to navigate the responsibility and challenge of raising adolescent girls.

Girls benefit greatly from the support of a caring community as they navigate the profound physical, emotional, and social challenges of adolescence.

Building supportive, healthy relationships, particularly with parents and peers, is a learned skill that contributes greatly to quality of life.

Growing

A Message from the President

June 30, 2007

Dear Friends,

Two years ago, I passed out sunflower seeds to a group of women gathered in my family room. Each of those women in turn planted a seed for growth and change for the girls of our community.

Since that first symbolic planting, Helping Girls Navigate Adolescence has put down roots and grown strong. Like the girls we serve, we are blossoming and finding our voice and purpose. In just two years, we've provided educational opportunities for parents, introduced weekly Girls Circle groups, and established Chick Chat, an annual day-long workshop, as the community's most exciting and effective venue for inspiring girls to realize their potential.

The seeds of these programs go back to October 2003, when a small group of Downers Grove women decided to act upon ground-breaking research on female relational aggression, commonly known as girl bullying. With the support of the American Association of University Women, we organized a panel discussion to explore the issue and its many negative, *lifelong* implications. "Girl Bullying: Why We Should Care," was presented at the Downers Grove public library to a standing-room only crowd.

Invitations to present similar discussions quickly followed, each time accompanied by the same request: Where can our girls go for help? By the end of 2004, we were convinced an organization in support of adolescent girls would be an asset to the community. Our intentions were confirmed after a second event, in March 2005, drew nearly 200 adults intent on sharing the issues impacting their daughters, students and patients.

As we planted our sunflower seeds in the late summer of 2005, HGNA also took its first steps, with the pro bono assistance of a local attorney and accountant, to incorporate as a 501(c)(3) corporation. The ensuing years have been productive and successful only as a result of the hard work of our volunteers and the generous financial support of the community.

As you peruse this inaugural report, please pause to reflect on the young women in your own life: daughters, granddaughters, neighbors, students, nieces. In a society awash in sexuality, violence, materialism and addictive behaviors, research proves that girls significantly benefit from the support of caring adults. Although at times we may feel bewildered by the challenging culture in which our young women are coming of age, we are encouraged by the famous words of Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

With gratitude,



A Girl's story

"Chick Chat was so much fun. We did a lot of activities that helped us learn what to do in tough situations. One of the groups I attended was about standing up for yourself and speaking out. Another one was about trying to settle with the mean girls at school. It was really fun to listen to everyone and see that you're not alone in the troubles you sometimes have.

I learned that when you're standing up to someone who said something mean to you, it's better to tell them straight out that you didn't like what they said than to talk about them behind their backs. Also, that a lot of girls who are mean are just looking for a friend.

The lunch speaker was really interesting. I learned how celebrities trick you about their image. And not every person has to be a size two because everyone is really beautiful in their own way."

Silvia, 11



Chicago Bandits catcher Selena Collins was the keynote speaker for the first annual Chick Chat event in 2006.



Yoga classes are a popular feature of each Chick Chat.



Author and former teen model Audrey Brascher alerted Chick Chat participants to advertising's hidden messages in 2007.



A healthy lunch and door prizes are also part of the Chick Chat experience.

Growing

Strength and confidence

HGNA understands the challenges and frustrations facing today's girls—everything from narrowly defined attributes of beauty to the groaning pressures of grades and extracurricular activities, to the ups and downs of family and social relationships. Our programs are all designed to provide girls with resources, guidance and support.

Girls Circle is a weekly after-school program that teaches resiliency and interpersonal skills to girls aged nine to 13. HGNA was awarded a federal grant for Girl Circle facilitator training in Fall 2006 and piloted the program in Winter 2007. Girls Circle is being offered this Fall in conjunction with the Downers Grove Park District with additional groups planned to begin in January 2008.

Chick Chat is a workshop where girls can explore their interests and issues. Participants hear motivational speakers, enjoy a healthy lunch and yoga or hip-hop lessons, and break into small groups with trained facilitators to discuss topics such as cultivating inner beauty and developing healthy family and peer relationships. The third annual Chick Chat, for girls in fourth through sixth grade, is scheduled for February 2008.

Ask Ashley is that special friend every girl can count on for the best advice. When girls log onto www.hgna.org, and ask Ashley for advice, they and their parents are assured they're getting the very best, with answers carefully crafted by a licensed therapist or board-certified pediatrician.



Girl Circle provides a safe environment for sharing feelings about topics ranging from social and family relationships to body image and competition. It's also a great place to make a new friend.

A **Mother's** story

"I'm very impressed with the knowledgeable speakers and resources HGNA is providing parents.

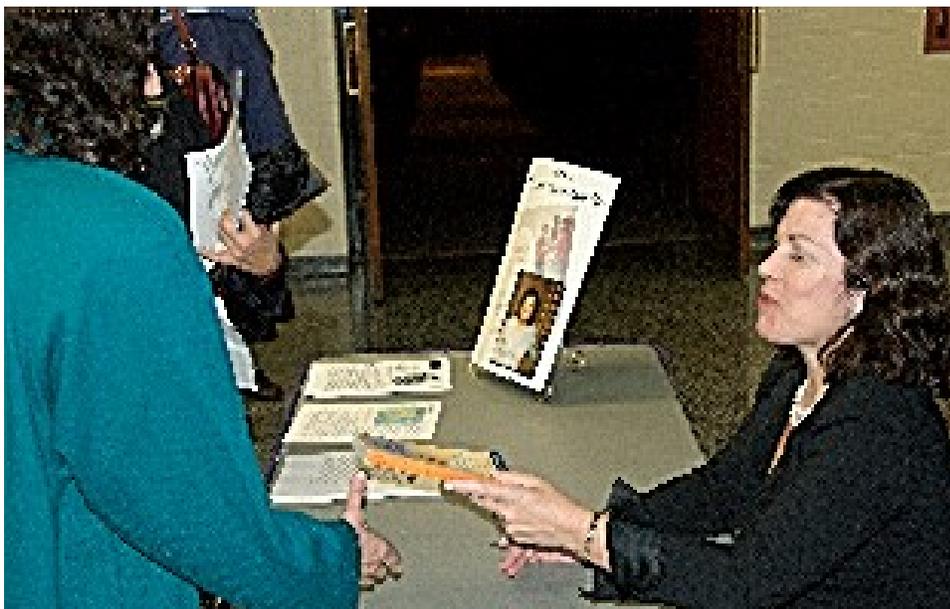
I've benefited the most from the time speakers have allowed parents to ask questions and share information. The discussions have touched on everything from how to choose appropriate reading material for girls to how to navigate the overabundance of marketing directed at them. My daughter was only 10 at the time and I didn't realize how much out there was inappropriate.

When HGNA plans these evenings, it allows parents to set aside time for something important. This is a time when moms and dads can come together and talk about issues facing their daughters. HGNA is an organization we can trust."

Cathy, Downers Grove



Dr. Roni Cohen-Sandler spoke to parents and visited with event co-chairs Kathleen Turza and Breda Doak of HGNA.



Dr. Roni Cohen-Sandler, a psychologist and best-selling author, shared her expertise on the social and academic pressures facing adolescent girls at a workshop for parents and professionals held in October 2006 at Downers Grove North High School. Cohen-Sandler provided parents and educators with strategies to help girls reduce stress, build resiliency and bolster confidence.

Growing

Knowledge and Understanding

HGNA believes that the best way to serve the interests of adolescent girls is to involve their parents, teachers and other professionals in the process. From the very beginning, we've sponsored workshops, panel discussions and expert speakers to help adults understand and address the issues confronting their daughters, students and patients.

Bullying Workshops

HGNA has built a reputation in the community as a leader in the effort to define, recognize and address the problem of relational aggression or girl bullying. We regularly present workshops to community organizations including PTAs, church groups and the Township of Downers Grove Parent University.

Speakers

HGNA regularly sponsors presentations by nationally known authors, educators, psychologists and other experts who share their expertise on challenges facing adolescent girls with parents and professionals. Presenters have included Roni Cohen-Sandler, Ph.D., and author Rosalind Wiseman.

Professional Development

Whether alone or in partnership with other organizations, HGNA provides professionals with opportunities to enhance their knowledge of adolescent girls and their concerns. Recent offerings include training in the Girls Circle program and "The Safe School Challenge," a workshop hosted by the DuPage County Regional Office of Education.



Rosalind Wiseman, best-selling author of "Queenbees and Wannabees," above left, discussed the importance of being aware, not naive, in parenting adolescents at a March 2007 parent workshop co-sponsored by HGNA. Principal Maria Ward of Downers Grove North High School, HGNA Vice President Cathy Fisher, author Roni Cohen-Sandler, Ph.D., and HGNA President Mary Ellen Young, above right, following Cohen-Sandler's presentation on "Stressed Out Girls" in October 2006.

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Barb Webster
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\$25 - \$200

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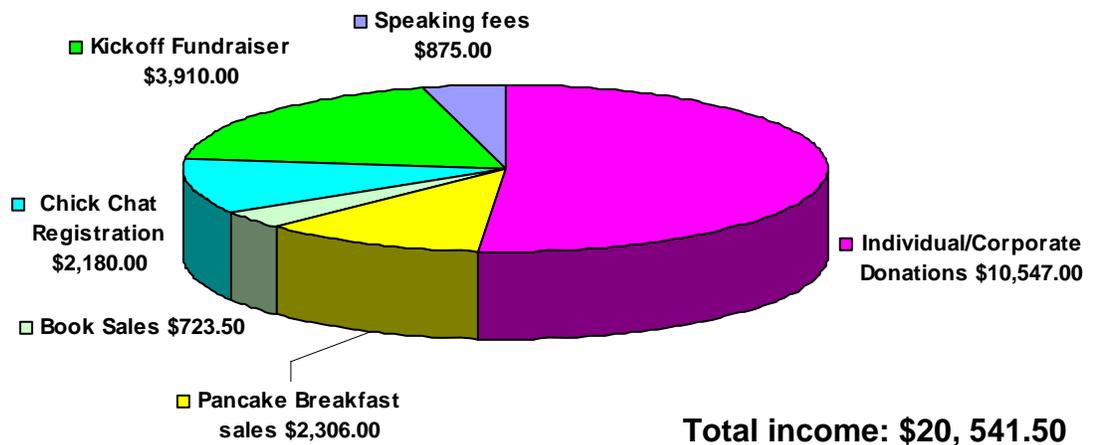
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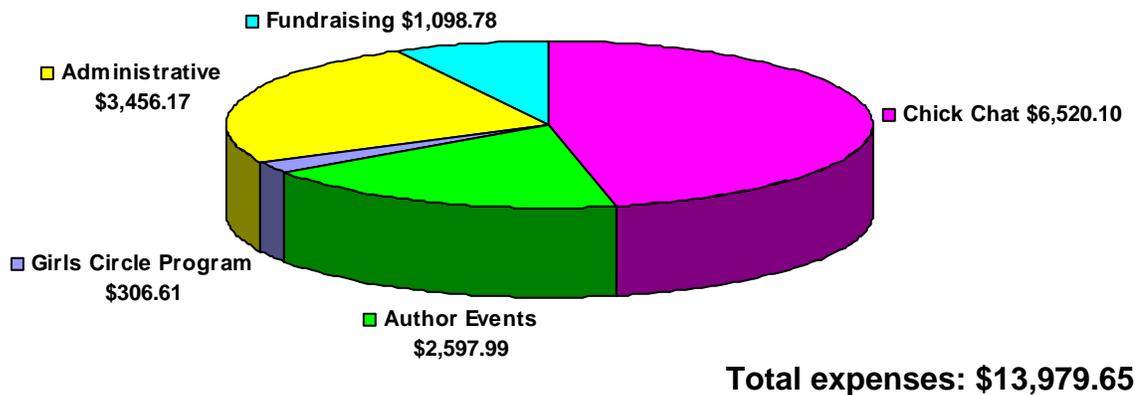
Growing

Financial Resources

Income 7/1/05 - 6/30/07



Expenses 7/1/05 - 6/30/07



Cash on hand as of 6/30/07: \$6,561.85

Growing

Community Involvement

Our volunteers are priceless resources and essential to the success of our programs. This year, HGNA took steps to increase and develop its volunteer base by holding our first Volunteer Information Night, establishing the volunteer coordinator position to oversee recruitment efforts, and initiating an e-mail notification service to keep our volunteers aware of our programs and needs.



HGNA depends on the help and creativity of dozens of volunteers, from moms and teachers to high school girls and members of local service clubs, such as the *Downers Grove Junior Women's Club*.



A **Volunteer's** story

"I got involved so I could work with girls in a mentoring role, as opposed to my role as a teacher. HGNA has become a pivotal part of my life because I've seen the difference we've made. HGNA strives to teach girls to really love who they are and find value in their individuality. I've seen girls take pride in who they are, when initially it was all about just fitting in. If we don't take the time to show them this, who will?"

Megan, Herrick Middle School

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