



FOR TEEN GIRLS INC.

Helping Teen Girls Become Community Jewels

Overview

PEARLS for Teen Girls Inc. is a dynamic and innovative nonprofit leadership development organization serving at-risk, primarily African American and Latina girls, ages 10 to 19 in Milwaukee, WI. The PEARLS organization helps girls achieve in school, avoid teen pregnancy, and use their personal power to achieve their goals and dreams.

PEARLS programs are girls-only gatherings that meet after school, during school, or on Saturdays at local schools and youth-serving organizations. A typical PEARLS session features 20 to 25 girls in a guided conversation led by a trained adult program coordinator and an assisting teen facilitator on topics such as school, relationships, careers, and health. PEARLS is on track to serve 800 girls by the end of 2010, up from 179 in 2006.

"I am inspired by the girls we serve because they serve as powerful reflections of what is possible when a collective group of people engage based on mutual trust, respect, and expectations of each other to bring our best selves," says Danae Davis, CEO of PEARLS for Teen Girls, and a former executive at MillerCoors.

Social Responsibility Challenge

Milwaukee has one of the highest teen birthrates in the country, with 44 births per 1,000 girls ages 15 to 17 in 2008. PEARLS is working toward the goal of the United Way of Greater Milwaukee to reduce pregnancy rates to 30 births per 1,000 teens by 2015.

Solutions

Using the PEARLS attributes—personal responsibility, empathy, awareness, respect, leadership, and support—the program offers a custom curriculum that focuses on helping girls build leadership skills such as self-reflection, critical thinking, goal setting, and personal accountability.

"The PEARLS program is dedicated to teaching girls that they are unique, precious, powerful, and capable of reaching their own self-determined goals and dreams," Davis says.

According to Michae, one of the girls involved in PEARLS, "Looking at people that came from the same background as me doing things that I thought I couldn't do, made me come to an understanding that I shouldn't doubt myself. Before I came to PEARLS, I didn't know who I was. But as my stay in PEARLS began to get longer, I noticed that I began to think highly of myself, and now I know that I am a leader."



Parents are equally pleased. "Three of my daughters are PEARLS girls. I have watched the attitudes of my daughters change and their self-esteem grow," says a single mother.

Measurement/Results

- 100 percent (791) of PEARLS girls avoided teen pregnancy in 2010.
- 97 percent (32 of 33) of PEARLS seniors graduated from high school in 2010.
- 97 percent (31 of 32) of PEARLS 2010 graduates were accepted to at least one college.
- 87 percent of girls served in the spring semester set and actively worked toward at least one goal.
- In the spring semester, 72 percent of girls who set a goal achieved it. Those who did not achieve goals had opportunities to work with adult program coordinators to reflect on their process and results.

Other SR Involvement

The PEARLS Board of Directors has commissioned a committee to determine whether, under what circumstances, and in what timeframe the PEARLS program could be authentically expanded to serve a significantly larger number of girls in the Milwaukee community.

Photos: College tours help encourage PEARLS participants envision a world of future possibilities.



Organization: PEARLS for Teen Girls
Location: Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Website: <http://pearlsforteengirls.com/>
Founded: 1993
Employees: Eight full-time, 12 part-time