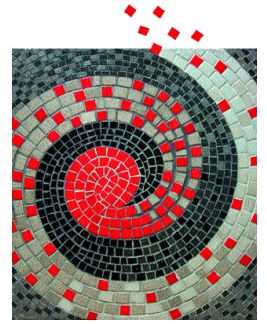


Emphasize Quality



Monica Spear

Girls Inc. of Greater Santa Barbara

“ ... by setting our own expectations high, and valuing ourselves and what we do professionally, we can raise the image of the youth service profession within our communities”.

STRONG REPUTATION AS A HIGH-QUALITY ORGANIZATION

A key factor in Girls Inc. of Greater Santa Barbara’s ability to attract qualified and competent staff is their strong reputation in the community for being an organization of integrity and fairness. Over the past 47 years, they have taken the initiative to be leaders in the community as advocates for girls and young women. Operating on the premise that quality is of the utmost importance, their reputation in the community has been built not only on the high quality programs they offer for girls and young women, but also on how the organization invests in its staff. As a result of the work they do and the supportive work environment they provide their staff, they are able to recruit direct care workers with relative ease from within the community.

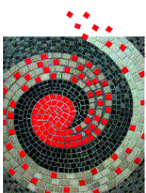
HIGH-QUALITY REQUIRES PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Girls Inc. of Greater Santa Barbara has developed their reputation in the community of being a good place to work by understanding that high quality programming requires having highly trained and competent staff. Internal training is offered, but staff also are encouraged to seek outside education and training opportunities. Each staff member is invited to submit a request for education/training expense from the overall staff education/training budget, and approval of requests is made on a case by case basis. Girls Inc. of Greater Santa Barbara also

offers a pay rate increase based on completion of training or education (for example, completion of college units, obtaining a college degree, CPR certification, completion of specific Girls Inc. program training). Many of the part-time staff are college students working on degrees in youth-related fields of study. Recognizing that for some this is a first job and that for many it represents a career “stepping stone”, Girls Inc. of Greater Santa Barbara staff talk with these students about their future career planning and resume development. By offering internal training and encouraging staff to seek outside education and training opportunities staff is being provided with the tools they need to be successful. Girls Inc. of Greater Santa Barbara is also raising the professional image of youth workers by placing a value on education/training and talking with students about their futures in the youth development field.

ACKNOWLEDGE YOUTH WORKERS

Girls Inc. of Greater Santa Barbara’s recruitment and retention efforts have been helped by their reputation in the community as a place where employees feel valued and can develop a sense of belonging within the organization. The organization strives to maintain an environment that is supportive and challenging in which staff not only work well together, but also have fun together. They believe it is essential to communicate to staff that they are making a difference in the community, and that they are a valued part of the organization. They also believe it is equally important to not undervalue the need for recognition of staff efforts, particularly in non-monetary ways. Several events are held throughout the year that serve to develop work-related relationships and build a more cohesive workplace. For example, there is an annual agency-wide staff appreciation dinner as well as bi-annual awards programs within each program department. Some special awards are presented at these events, but this also is a time when every staff member receives acknowledgment for their efforts. Social events for staff and their families are held several times throughout the year.



Girls Inc. of Greater Santa Barbara believes it is important to communicate to the community the value of the work being done with youth, and how it contributes to the future welfare of the local community and society in general. They hold the attitude that by setting our own expectations high, and valuing ourselves and what we do professionally, the image of the youth development profession can be raised within our communities.

***Girls Inc. of Greater Santa Barbara** provides onsite and offsite programs for 2,600 girls (ages 4–18 years old) in the Santa Barbara, California area. They employ 16 full-time and 66 part-time direct care staff, all of who must have some education in early childhood development and some prior experience working with youth. Ethnicity of the staff is as follows: 67% white (non-Hispanic/Latino), 21% Hispanic/Latino, 5% Asian-American, 4% African-American, and 3% bi-racial or other. Salaries and benefits packages are competitive with other organizations in the area. However, because of the seasonal nature of the work (e.g., limited number of hours available once the summer programs are over) and the high cost of living in Santa Barbara, it is difficult for staff to live in the area. They believe that their reputation for having a supportive work environment and placing a high value on their staff helped them maintain a stable workforce in spite of some of the economic challenges.*

