

Program Overview: Goals, Atmosphere and Structure

Program Goals

The goals of the Rosie's Girls Summer Program are:

- To increase girls' self-efficacy and self-confidence,
- To expose girls to a variety of trades and technical fields, and
- To encourage participants (and the adults in their lives and communities) to challenge the expectations our society has for girls and women.

While carpentry serves as the centerpiece trade, the Rosie's Girls Program[®] includes a variety of other skilled trades areas including (but not limited to) welding, electrical wiring, fire fighting, bike repair, and auto repair. Through these nontraditional activities, young girls are challenged to:

- Develop a broader sense of their capacities and capabilities,
- Consider careers in nontraditional fields,
- Develop new areas of physical and emotional confidence,
- Expand math and science skills through concrete applications, and
- Push past preconceived limitations.

The program also includes other activities designed to help participants to strengthen their own sense of self and to critically assess our society's expectation for women and girls.

Program Atmosphere

The Rosie's Girls[®] Summer Program seeks to encourage thoughtfulness about both individual efforts and group interactions. Activities in the program are generally *non-competitive*. Program staff should employ an instructional approach that supports girls' learning styles: collaborative, noncompetitive, and encouraging a strong connection amongst members of the community (participants and staff).

Staff should seek to hail each girl's personal accomplishments without comparing them to others. For example, one girl may have little difficulty cutting a straight board with a hand saw while another may find this particularly challenging. The efforts of each girl should be applauded and encouraged and their outcome (a straight or a jagged board) need not be compared. Each girl's efforts and improvements should be emphasized – improvement from day 1 to the end of the program is more important than comparing one girl's accomplishments to another. Further, many of the program activities are designed to encourage group cooperation and examination of what does (and does not) work when one is part of a group.

Program Structure

The Rosie's Girls Summer Program incorporates five main units. We will briefly describe these units below. For further details, consult the curriculum.

Rosie's Girls Summer Program units include:

- 1) trades
- 2) arts,
- 3) "*what makes Rosie's Girls Rosie's Girls*" activities,
- 4) games and initiatives, and
- 5) physically challenging activities

1) Trades: Participants are exposed to a range of skilled trades with carpentry as the program's core activity.

Carpentry: In the carpentry unit, girls learn basic skills such as hammering, measuring and sawing and build a range of skills by hands-on application in increasingly complex projects. Initial projects may include building wooden platforms for girls whose height makes it difficult for them to work effectively on adult-sized worktables and building toolboxes to hold their tools. The carpentry unit culminates in a collaborative community service project that meets an identified community need.

Carpentry meets most days and runs throughout the three weeks of the program.

Other Trades: Additional trades blocks during the session introduce participants to the tools, methods, materials and safety techniques used in various other trades areas such as electrical wiring, welding, fire fighting, and bicycle and auto repair.

These other trades units occur almost daily. Individual units last from one to three days in order to balance young girls' need for variety with our desire to give the girls adequate time to gain comfort with and mastery of the skills.

2) Arts: Daily arts activities further encourage participants to develop their own voices by exploring a range of activities designed to promote individual self-expression. Yoga and dance promote physical movement. Visual arts activities might include silk-screening camp t-shirts, casting plaster masks of each girl's face or hand, and making collages to represent aspects of themselves. Other arts activities might include poetry or creative writing, a drumming workshop, or stand-up comedy.

Arts activities occur most days and may be taught by core staff members or outside consultants, depending on the skills required.

3) *What Makes Rosie's Girls Rosie's Girls* Activities: *The What Makes Rosie's Girls Rosie's Girls* unit contains activities that we believe set the tone of the Rosie's Girls Program and are key to the program's success. These activities seek to create a sense of community amongst participants and give girls opportunities to think critically about the world around them. This unit's activities fall into two categories: a) "creating community" and b) "a girl's world."

These activities occur at different times throughout the program session.

a) Creating Community Activities: The curriculum includes a number of activities designed to create a sense of community for Rosie's Girls participants in which girls take responsibility for themselves, each other and the space around them.

b) A Girl's World Activities: The Rosie's Girls curriculum includes a variety of activities that seek to help girls understand the subtle (and not-so subtle) messages that women and girls receive about how they should act, what they should look like, who they should please and what they can become – messages that can limit girls' options, opportunities and attitudes. Additionally, in order to understand the significant—and often overlooked – role that women have played in history, each girl prepares and presents a brief presentation about a famous woman in history (which we call "woman of the day" presentations).

4) Games and Initiatives: A variety of activities are incorporated into the Rosie's Girls day to help girls learn more effective communication skills and successful ways to work as a team (and have fun!).

5) Physically Challenging Activities: Physically challenging activities (such as a ropes course, rock climbing and self-defense) are designed to build participants' self-confidence, group cohesion and to encourage girls to push past perceived personal limitations. These activities not only provide an opportunity to challenge girls' fears, but also require the support of others to be successful both individually and as a group.