



Girls' Fest 2020

Overview and Objectives

OVERVIEW

Girls' Fest, created by Jersey City-based *Speranza Theatre Company*, is a day of arts-focused creative activities, panel discussions, keynotes, and workshops designed especially for young women. We'll celebrate the ingenuity and creativity of girls of all ages, abilities, and disciplines – theatre, music, visual – and encourage them to discover the leader within by harnessing their creative talents. At **Girls' Fest**, participants will interact with leaders in the arts, industry, government, education, and the media, coming in contact with a diverse world of leaders and leadership styles.

Leadership requires the skills to thrive in a world that is increasingly uncertain and complex. The arts help us safely explore unknown territory, be courageous, and take conceptual risks. Through engaging and collaborative activities, participants of Girls' Fest will develop essential skills to become strong and creative future leaders.

EXPOSURE

Research suggests that educational and cultural practices tend to depict men in a larger variety of occupations and as agents of change while women are more frequently portrayed as observers or victims. **Girls' Fest** offers:

- Career exploration
- Opportunities to hear from and/or meet inspiring female leaders in a wide range of fields
- Resources and support for finding internships and volunteer or shadowing opportunities

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Girls lack of confidence appears to be one of the strongest factors deterring them from pursuing leadership, and skill development can boost girls' confidence. Through practical application and theatre-based activities, we will address common, specific obstacles that deter girls from pursuing leadership, including fears of public speaking, appearing bossy, or being disliked. Specific skills practiced throughout the day include:

- Public speaking
- Effective or assertive communication
- Conflict resolution
- Problem solving
- Networking and self-advocacy
- Goal setting

MENTORSHIP

Leadership programs should connect girls with older, respected girls and women who can model and inspire them to seek out leadership and guide them in navigating barriers they face to pursuing leadership. **Girls' Fest** will offer access to leadership role models and peer mentors, all with a background in the arts. All of the mentors have first-hand experiences of how their artistic skills and education have contributed significantly to their personal and professional lives.



COLLABORATION

The best theatrical work is developed through keen collaboration between all of the artists. Collaboration and teamwork are not only essential skills for today's workplace, these experiences can help girls develop perspective-taking, social awareness, and respect. By sharing artistic "tools," participants will be presented with specific tactics to use for future experiences.

In theatre, music, and dance, it is essential to work as an ensemble, celebrating our similarities and differences. Working in diverse groups can be especially valuable — breaking down stereotypes and enabling girls to draw on rich wisdom about leadership in various cultures. Through collaborative experiences and relationship building, girls can also work to override competitive feelings.

Girls' Fest offers:

- Team or group-based projects/activities
- Relationship building experiences or skill-building
- Opportunities to work with diverse groups
- Identifying their unique qualities
- Mission Statements

HIGH EXPECTATIONS AND MEANINGFUL OPPORTUNITIES



Leadership programs should hold girls to high expectations and provide them with real, meaningful opportunities to take responsibility for others. Girls will develop confidence and the desire to pursue leadership when they take on problems that are meaningful to them. **Girls' Fest** offers participants the opportunity to participate in panel discussions, group activities, and small group projects which will culminate in the creation and presentation of a performance—whether a song, dance, spoken-word performance—it will be something the girls develop utilizing skills they learn throughout the day and that speaks to subject that is meaningful to them.



Throughout the workshops, through interactive activities, mentors will highlight skills learned from the arts and how they can be applied to the everyday world. Skills such as:

| Skill | Application |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Stage Presence | Confidence Command the stage Understand and recognize body language Practice focus Remain calm and address nerves |
| Blocking/Spatial Awareness | Understand personal space Visualize |
| Vocal Articulation and Projection | Public Speaking |
| Improvisation | Think on your feet Adjust to Change |
| Rehearsal | Preparation Time Management |
| Script Analysis | Land ideas |
| Storytelling | Speak from your knowledge base Make personal connection Craft compelling argument Appeal to human needs/resilience |
| Casting | Branding Accept rejection Learn from failure |
| Actor/Audience Relationship | Know your audience/client Make personal connection |
| Imagination/Artistic Vision | Have foresight Solve problems creatively Plan strategy |

