

POWERFUL DATA, EMPOWERING YOUNG WOMEN



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While developing a strategic plan for Girls Inc. of Alameda County, Fern Tiger Associates worked to gather as much data as possible to inform its work, with a special focus on learning what was known about teenage girls in the county. That task proved challenging, as such data was either nonexistent or scattered among many agencies. Recognizing the gap in information about the health, experiences, and well-being of local girls, FTA proposed that Girls Inc. become the expert on this subject by conducting and publishing such research for the first time.

This one suggestion (out of many in the plan) grew into a multi-year, multifaceted endeavor to collect primary quantitative and qualitative data about girls and to train a cadre of high school girls to gather, interpret, and recognize the power of this information for advocacy.

With the help of a dedicated advisory committee, FTA developed a comprehensive, 116-question health and well-being survey, which was administered at public high schools in northern Alameda County, capturing first-hand data from more than 2,000 girls. FTA recruited 30 girls from these schools to participate in a specially-designed training program, where participants spent their Saturdays being exposed to research methodologies, learning to conduct interviews with their peers, developing advocacy skills, and taking part in training to present findings at a press conference and to local city councils and school boards.

**GIRLS INC. OF ALAMEDA COUNTY**, a 45-year-old organization serving 6,000 girls (ages 6-18) annually, offers academic, recreational, and counseling programs to help all girls be strong, smart, and bold.

#### *Plans for the Girls*

*Research Project focused on surveying girls in classroom settings – a none-too-easy task, because schools are reluctant to sacrifice class time, even for a much-touted health and wellness survey whose data schools wanted. Principals, teachers, and districts had to be convinced of the Project’s merits. Schools also required that boys be surveyed – resulting in 1,800 boys’ surveys, which have not yet been analyzed.*



