

10.11.12

a guide for
girls leading girls

Day of the Girl

Proclamation Project Toolkit

DAY OF THE GIRL

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"Being part of the first Day of the Girl means a lot because I can help put a change in the world for girls."
–Madison H, age 13

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DAY OF THE GIRL

Why a Day?

The United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution in 2011 to establish October 11 as the International Day of the Girl Child. The term "girl child" is commonly used abroad to distinguish the unique challenges faced by those under age 18 from those faced by women.

According to the U.N., this annual girls' rights Day will:

"help galvanize worldwide enthusiasm for goals to better girls' lives, providing an opportunity for them to show leadership and reach their full potential."

The campaign for this Day was spearheaded by Canadian girls who inspired School Girls Unite, an organization in the Washington, D.C. area, to mobilize support in the United States. Since 2004, School Girls have focused on the right of every girl in the world to get an education. Girls everywhere are confronted with stereotypes, discrimination, abuse, violence, and other reasons that shortcut opportunities now and in the future.

Annabelle, a seventh grade leader of School Girls Unite, says:

"For such a long time, people have disrespected us, and have thought men are superior. But this is our time. We need to protect our rights."

We ask girls across the U.S. to help spread the word about this first ever Day of the Girl on 10.11.12. It is an opportunity to educate others about the importance of girls, to speak against specific injustices, and to advocate for equality everywhere so girls can pursue their dreams. October 11 is the kickoff for a movement that are determined to see grow every year here in America as well as across the globe. It cannot happen without you so please join us!

Why a Proclamation?

A proclamation usually begins with several WHEREAS that describe problems followed by THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED which, in this case, will declare 10.11.12 as the Day of the Girl. This official declaration, that is agreed to by local or state government leaders, can be a powerful tool to increase public attention about girls' issues and serve as a first step for solutions. Across America in cities large and small, girls will demonstrate leadership and impact by working with their government leaders on Day of the Girl Proclamations.

"After officially making October 11 the Day of the Girl, I feel very accomplished and filled with pride because it took a lot of teamwork to make this big change. I never thought I would ever talk to important people like elected officials. At first I was nervous but then I got used to it. Now I know how to get my point across and how to act business like. The steps we took were successful and I hope that other girls can follow our lead." –Marisa S, age 13

Roadmap: 4 Easy Steps



* Please be sure to register your project. It only takes a few seconds at **www.DayoftheGirl.org/register**. This allows us to keep track of action everywhere so if there are several groups pursuing proclamations in the same city or state, we can help you coordinate with other 10.11.12 dreamers and doers.

Also, we hope the SAMPLE ACTION PLAN will help you organize your project. Contact us anytime at 1-800-KID-POWER or Girls@DayoftheGirl.org.

Watch the 3-minute video—produced by Girls For A Change—on how to get a proclamation:
www.DayOfTheGirl.org/ActNow

STEP ONE

Find Out Which Local Government Official Can Help You

1 Do an Internet search for your city council, which might be called town council, county commission, or board of supervisors. On the website, see if you can spot information about how to request a proclamation. Also identify your city or county councilmember and keep track of this representative's full name, email and telephone number.

2 Before calling this government office using the telephone number you just copied, rehearse with a friend the questions you want to ask. Most likely you will talk to a staff assistant rather than the government official. Also, practice leaving a voicemail message and make sure to speak clearly and repeat your telephone number. Before you dial, make sure you've got paper and pencil to write down the info.

- Remember to introduce yourself (and the name of your group or organization if you have one) and that you are calling to find out how to request a proclamation.
- Ask how many days before October 11th you need to submit your proposed proclamation.
- Request the exact email address for sending your draft proclamation and also write down the full name of the person you're speaking with.
- Expect a friendly conversation. You may want to ask if government leaders are currently working on specific programs focused on girls that you might want to learn more about and perhaps include in your proclamation.
- Thank them for the information and help.

STEP TWO

Draft Your Proclamation

1 Just use the sample proclamation in your Toolkit as a model and draft your Day of the Girl Proclamation. You can change the "whereas" paragraphs, perhaps including specific concerns. You can check out "Sources on Girls' Issues" in this Toolkit as well as the LEARN page at **www.DayoftheGirl.org/learn**.

2 When you think your proclamation is ready, send an email to your elected official and ask to meet to discuss your proposed proclamation. Sometimes a local representative will be happy to meet at your organization or school. (By the way, a physical letter is so rare these days that your local representative is likely to really pay attention to it.)

3 Prepare for your meeting with your local official and decide who will make specific points. Also, plan to discuss the possibility of a proclamation ceremony on October 11, 2012, perhaps at the city or county building or at another community location.

4 Meet with your elected representative or their staff assistant. Go over your draft proclamation. Expect some changes to your proposed proclamation since it must get the approval of the entire council. (Keep reading for "Tips for a Successful Meeting with City Leaders" and "Planning a Proclamation Event".)

Sample Request

Dear Councilmember [insert last name]:

We are very excited that the United Nations recently established October 11 as the annual International Day of the Girl. Today there are many more opportunities for girls but serious problems continue. We believe an official proclamation can help raise awareness about this girls' rights day and increase attention on specific issues.

We would like to schedule a time to meet with you to discuss the possibility of a Day of the Girl proclamation and share our proposed language. We hope to hear back from you soon. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,
[Your full name]
[Name of your group/organization]
[Street address, city, state, zip code]
[Telephone and email]

You will need call back the government office if you do not receive a response within one week.

"I witnessed change. I held the proclamation. We girls have a universal connection. We are humans and we make a difference. We should celebrate all over the country and the world!" –Torie A, age 16

DAY OF THE GIRL

STEP THREE

The Big Event

1. Find a place to hold your event. This could be at the city council, or somewhere else in the community. Prepare and rehearse brief speeches for the October 11 proclamation ceremony. Also brainstorm other activities to do at this event, so that everyone has fun and learns about your topics of interest!

2. Invite other friends, parents, teachers, organizations, etc. to attend the proclamation event. Remember to figure out transportation and make sure you arrive at least 30 minutes ahead of time.

3. Check first with parents and then email your local newspaper a photograph with one sentence describing the proclamation and include your telephone number in case a reporter has questions. (Refer below to "Winning Media Attention".)

4. Enjoy your event!!!! Take pictures, and have fun! Make sure to talk with your friends and other people attending about the research you did, and what you think you might want to do in the future to help increase equality for girls everywhere.

STEP FOUR

Now What?

You did it! Thanks for building the movement and making a difference!

1. Upload your proclamation and a photo of your victorious group to be shared with the world at www.dayofthegirl.org/register.

2. Write a blog about your experience and please email to **Girls@DayOfTheGirl.org.**

3. Write a thank-you letter to your government official.

4. Meet with your friends and brainstorm what you want to do next! You might want to volunteer with an organization you discovered during your research. Or you might dive deeper into one issue and come up with an activity, such as a producing a video or speaking out about a specific proposed law. Regardless what you choose to do, let us know if we can help you and keep us informed of your activities at girls@dayofthegirl.org. Keep the ball rolling!

"Until you see equity in gender at every level of government and at every level of business and in every part of your life, your work is not done I love people who think big and think first. Way to go!" – Nancy Floreen, Montgomery County Councilmember in Maryland, praises girls who drafted a Day of the Girl Proclamation



Sample Proclamation

Here's a model that you can use anyway you like, perhaps using certain sections and emphasizing issues you may want community leaders to focus on a single issue rather than many girls' rights. Expect that your government official might make edits to your draft which must be approved by the entire council.

WHEREAS, equality and universal access to education for every girl and boy are among the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals supported by 189 countries including the United States; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations established October 11 as the annual International Day of the Girl Child supported and co-sponsored by the United States and 97 other countries; and

WHEREAS, The "Day of the Girl" campaign calls on communities across the globe to recognize that girls worldwide face many injustices such as discrimination, gender stereotypes, child marriage and lack of education; and empowers girls to fight for their rights; and

WHEREAS, the (city/county/state) of _____ joins (name of your group) _____ and other organizations, and supports increasing girls' participation in sports, science and math-related activities, high school graduation rate, and providing equal opportunities for all girls by speaking out against gender-based injustices, celebrating all girls' potential, and encouraging all girls to pursue their dreams; and

THEREFORE BE IT PROCLAIMED that I, _____, (Mayor/Town/City Council/County Council/Governor, etc.), hereby do proclaim October 11, 2012 as the Day of the Girl in the (town/city/county/state) of _____.



"The Day of the Girl is important to me because I think it would be very empowering for girls nationally and would bring light to gender issues."
–Julia F, 15

Sources on Girls' Issues

To make it easier for you, we have put together a lot of information in one place on the LEARN page at **www.DayOfTheGirl.org**. Here is a snapshot of some major crises facing girls and sources are included at the website.

ILLITERACY

By 2015, females will make up 64% of the world's (adult) population who cannot read.

SCHOOL DROPOUT

Only 30% of girls in the world are enrolled in secondary school. In America, the dropout rate is worse for boys, but one in four girls does not finish high school, and the dropout rate is even higher for minorities.

FORCED MARRIAGE

One in seven girls in developing countries is married off before age 15.

VIOLENCE

In the US more than half (54%) of all rapes of females happen before age 18. One in five high school girls has been physically or sexually abused by a dating partner. Worldwide children as young as age 11 are forced to work as prostitutes. Some estimates have as many as 1.2 million children being trafficked every year.

BODY IMAGE

More than half (54%) of 3rd-5th grade girls worry about their appearance and 37% worry about their weight. More than half (57%) of music videos feature a female portrayed exclusively as a decorative, sexual object.

"At such a young age, I have done this. So many important people came to our proclamation ceremony!"
–Maya J, age 12



On our website you will find 10 brief reports that give an overview on issues that girls face locally and globally.

- Negative Media Images by Anika, 19
- Title IX: Sports & Education Equity Guaranteed by Torie and Julia, both 16
- U.S. Girl Dropout Crisis by Mira, 20
- Relationship Abuse: Teen Dating & Domestic Violence by Joanne, 19
- Sex Trafficking in America by Shannon, 19
- Limited Work Opportunities by Joanne, 19
- Girls Denied Education Worldwide by Shannon, 19
- Global Gender-Based Violence by Shannon, 19
- Child Marriage: Tragic Tradition by Mira, 20
- Female Mutilation: Human Rights Horror by Elena, 18

Each of these reports identify dozens of organizations that have additional information. Also listed are videos such as PSAs about teen dating violence and the popular GirlEffect video about girls overcoming obstacles in developing countries.

You can also find a lot of other resources within your community. Many school districts are developing curriculum to combat gender-based violence and reduce the high school dropout rate, especially among Latinas.Public schools have a Title IX Coordinator whom you can ask about serious problems of-sexual harassment or girls not having the same opportunities to participate in sports.Police departments can be contacted about sex trafficking, which is a growing problem from Atlanta, Georgia, to Portland, Oregon.Your State Human Rights Commission is another useful research hub to learn more about discrimination and what policies are being proposed or implemented. You're bound to find even more places once you start looking!

We also can help you get the latest information on any specific issue related to girls and equality–locally or globally.

Tips for Successful Meetings With Your Elected Officials

PREPARE

Before your scheduled meeting, plan how you can have the most impact in a short amount of time. Count on 10 to 15 minutes even though the meeting may last much longer. Outline the points and questions to discuss, including reviewing your draft proclamation and options for the proclamation ceremony. Decide who will talk about specific points and rehearse.

BRING WRITTEN MATERIALS

Prepare a folder to give to your elected official or their staff that includes your contact information, your proposed proclamation and a list of sources--for example, statistics from one of the reports on the Learn page of www.DayoftheGirl.org.

BE CONFIDENT

Firm handshakes are important. Look them in the eye. It's normal to feel intimated by important people, but remember, 'they put their pants on one leg at a time, too.' And at this point, you should know your information inside and out, so there's nothing to be nervous about!

RELAX

Expect to engage in more of a conversation than a formal discussion or debate. During the introductions, it is a perfect opportunity to share your story about your concern for specific issues and why you think the Day of the Girl is important. Try to lead the meeting rather than rely on the elected official or their staff--if there's a pause in the conversation, that's your cue for speaking up!

THANK THEM

Be polite by thanking them for their time. Make sure to jot down the names of any staff aides at the meeting, since they may be the ones you will want to contact prior to 10.11.12 about the proclamation event.

Most likely, they will be excited to see you and willing to listen. It is unusual for people your age to demonstrate such initiative. Most elected officials are inspired that the next generation is active in the community.

"The young ladies participating in School Girls Unite are extremely smart and talented. It's been my pleasure to visit with them to discuss the policies that matter most to them while brainstorming ways they can make a significant impact. This program is so unique, innovative and inspiring and serves to enhance the girls' inner qualities, promote positive self-esteem and reinforce that the sky is the limit for their future." – Calvin Ball, Howard County Council Chairman in Maryland

"It's empowering for people who don't think politicians will listen to us. These officials who are really busy were really gracious with their time and genuinely nice people and we got such an amazing reaction." –Shayna G., 17

Planning a Proclamation Event

Option 1: City Hall

You can receive the official proclamation at the building where your government leaders meet. Councils do not meet every day so the ceremony might be held before 10.11.12. Most likely the time for this event will be during school, so you will need to arrange for an excused absence. Often your elected official will read aloud the proclamation and then you will be invited to speak briefly. Check ahead of time to see if the time limit is 5 minutes. Then you can plan who will say what and for how long. After the ceremony, expect questions such as:

- How did you get involved with Day of the Girl?
- What do you plan to do in the future to advance equality for girls?
- What was one of your favorite parts of this project?
- Make sure to get someone in your group (who won't be a speaker) to take pictures at the proclamation ceremony!

Option 2: Community Celebration

City leaders can present the proclamation at your school or community location, perhaps after school or in the evening. One advantage is more of your friends can participate. This event can include music, food and other activities in addition to speeches by government representatives. You can invite other organizations to come and hold a forum to discuss a range of issues that girls face. If you produced a Day of the Girl video, this could be shown perhaps with other spots or other trailers:

- Many PSAs and videos are included with each of the 10 reports about girls' issues at **www.DayoftheGirl.org/learn**
- Miss Representation (**www.missrepresentation.org**)/ about the sexist portrayal of girls and women in the media
- 10x10 (**www.10x10act.org**) about 10 girls in 10 countries who struggle to get an education

We're sure you will come up with all sorts of creative ideas! Please remember to share photos so the whole world can see you in action. Email pictures to **Girls@DayOfTheGirl.org** or post at **www.Facebook.com/DayOfTheGirl.**

"The best part was getting the Day of the Girl proclamation. The celebration showed us that many adults really care. We really do understand there are things in the world that need to be fixed." –Rachel B, age 13



Winning Media Attention

You and your organization deserve to get recognition for achieving a Day of the Girl Proclamation! This publicity also shines the spotlight on this new annual girls' rights day and the issues that are most important to you. There are an infinite number of ways to win news media attention in addition to Facebook, Flickr, YouTube, Twitter, etc. Here are three simple suggestions for you to consider:

Weekly or daily newspaper

You might not read them but community leaders and elected officials do, including your U.S. Representative and Senators. This publicity can make many more people aware of the Day of the Girl and lead to all sorts of other opportunities, such as invitations to speak at conferences.

School district newsletter or PTA

These publications are always looking to highlight student leaders and your achievements.

Associated Press (AP)

In most big cities, there is an AP Bureau that has nothing to do with Advanced Placement courses. Search the Internet for the nearest AP Bureau. If the AP decides to highlight your proclamation, the story can go viral, because this news service goes to TV shows and radio stations as well as newspapers across your state and the country.

The simplest approach is to email a photograph, perhaps of you all holding the Day of the Girl Proclamation. Make sure to write a short paragraph that emphasizes the significance of this first annual girls' rights day and the issues of greatest concern to you. Include your name and telephone number in case they want to contact you for more information. Again, make sure to check with everyone who is in the photograph before sending out the picture.

You can write a short news release about your Proclamation Project, which can be easily distributed to a wide variety of news sources. Besides including the Five W's (Why, What, Where, When, Who), include a strong quote by one of the youth leaders which a reporter can use in their story without taking the time to interview you. We can help you with your news release as well as identifying reporters and producers, including magazines, whom you could try to convince them to do a story.

"The Day of the Girl is a growing movement. Girls have the voices to make a r,eal impact: don't ignore us. We have dreams to achieve, and we're tired of having society standing in our way." –Joanne C, age 19 and co-founder of Day of the Girl campaign

Sample Action Plan

Use this action plan or modify it to fit your project better. You can find it on our website at **www.DayOfTheGirl.org/ActionPlan.**

PREPARATION

For each task, note the following: who is responsible? What is the target date for completion? What is the actual date needed? Any notes?

- Register your project at www.DayoftheGirl.org/register
- Develop Action Plan (you're doing that right now!)
- Read through brief reports and pick which issues are most important to you
- Assign official photographer
- Group photo
- Assign other roles as necessary

STEP 1: FIND OUT WHICH LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL CAN HELP YOU

- Identify your elected official
- Find out what your community does to address girls' issues
- Learn how many days before Oct 11 you need to submit your proclamation
- Revise Action Plan, if necessary

STEP TWO: DRAFT YOUR PROCLAMATION

- Look at sample proclamations
- Draft your proclamation
- Write a letter or email to your elected official requesting a meeting
- Outline key points to discuss and rehearse
- Call to confirm your meeting with Councimember
- Prepare a folder for your elected official with draft proclamation and other information
- Meet with councilmember and take photos
- Discuss location for proclamation ceremony

STEP THREE: THE BIG EVENT

- Confirm time and location
- Decide program agenda
- Write speeches and rehearse
- Refreshments
- Decorations
- Invite friends, parents, teachers, and city leaders
- Collect quotes from city leaders
- Prepare to contact the news media
- Take pictures! (Including a group photo)

STEP FOUR: WHAT NOW?

- Email your proclamation, pictures and blog to **Girls@DayOfTheGirl.org**
- Write and send a thank you letter to your elected representative
- Make copies of official proclamation
- Brainstorm steps for future action!

CHECKLIST: DOCUMENT YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENT

Bravo! A few years from now when you are writing a resume, applying to college and for scholarships, it can really help to keep a set of photos, letters, newspaper clips. Here's an easy checklist.

___ First photo of your group
___ Your draft proclamation
___ Your letter or email to your government official
___ Photo of your meeting with your representative or staff assistant
___ Outline of your speech at Day of the Girl event
___ Actual Day of the Girl Proclamation (make a few copies)
___ Photo of Day of the Girl event
___ Newspaper articles and blogs about you and your group