

# Girl's Best Friend Foundation

Annual Report 2004



How can groups and communities  
support powerful, activist girls  
and nurture their  
ideas, voices, and actions?

Everything  
Girl's Best Friend Foundation  
does is in answer  
to this crucial question.

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## A girl-friendly program offers girls and young women opportunities to:

Build relationships and have their voices heard

Work with girls whom they perceive as different from themselves

Prepare for and assume leadership positions

Create a setting where everyone matters

Make a difference

Learn to analyze and articulate their concerns

Have fun while working hard

Stretch beyond their own perceived limits

*Speak for Yourself:*

*What Girls Say about What Girls Need,*

Lynn M. Phillips, PhD (2002)

## Grants

The largest part of GBF's work is making grants. In 10 years, we've put \$3.6 million in the hands of passionate, insightful youth and youth workers. Our design for change is multifaceted. We support an array of organizations that offer springboards for girls' engagement and multidimensional growth. We offer resources in a variety of forms.

**I** learned... that I can work with people who are different than me and that I can take myself and other girls seriously. I learned that we have a lot of talents that could help our community. I feel a lot stronger now than when I came into it.

—Teresa, 14 years old,  
participant in *Speak for Yourself:  
What Girls Say about What Girls Need.*  
Lynn M. Phillips, PhD (2002)

We gave eighty-eight grants last year, frequently supporting multiple aspects of the same organizations, to strengthen and deepen their work.

For instance, GBF gave both **Girl World of Alternatives, Inc.** and **Dramagirls of Redmoon Theater** multiple grants last year. Each organization received a three-year, \$16,500 per year program grant, and a \$5,000 girl-led research grant.

Mentoring, sports, leadership development programs, and career and media workshops to girls and young women of Uptown, Edgewater, and Rogers Park—that's Girl World.

A team of four Girl World members led the Girl Driven Research Project, exploring the question: Why do some low-income youth desire high priced material items?

Dramagirls is a performance group of thirty middle school aged girls in Logan Square. Video was their medium for scrutinizing key program concepts and words—and if and how these help girls express themselves and further their self-confidence.

At both programs, girls are building relationships with other girls and adult allies, applying technical skills, engaging in issues that matter to them, and expressing their opinions—while having fun. The core grant supports day-in-and-day-out programming costs. The evaluation grant adds the tool of investigation, a way for girls to systematically question, analyze, and solve community problems.

The **Fund for Staff Development**—modest grants to enable grantee staff to attend to their professional development—was one of the new kinds of grants GBF added last year. In a field with frequently stretched organizational budgets and many eager learners, a little bit often goes a long way.

**Literature for All of Us** \$260 to support attendance at the Lucille Clifton Workshop, a roundtable writing workshop with The Poetry Center of Chicago.

**Korean American Resource and Cultural Center** \$90 to cover registration for one staff member to attend a three-day community organizing training presented by the Community Renewal Society.

**Southwest Youth Collaborative** \$600 to support a staff member to attend an INCITE! conference (The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex), and to meet with other youth and community organizers in southern California.

GBF also continued to make occasional grants for special opportunities and challenges. When the **Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health and Planned Parenthood/Chicago Area** announced the launch of Real Truth for Illinois Youth—a project to make comprehensive sex ed available in public schools—GBF eagerly jumped in as a lead funder.

## Convening

Foundations focused on a specific field—such as girls' development and activism—can play a valuable role as a crossroads for those seeking to develop their knowledge and skills.

**GBF** *is a conduit for women like me, who are doing work in what seems to be an isolated way, in a specific community, whether they be girls of color, girls who are lesbians, girls who are incarcerated. There's communication between us now, where there wasn't before. That strengthens our work.*

—Susan Nussbaum, staff of the Empowered FeFes, Access Living

GBF provides forums and training for grantee staff to learn together. We offer training in evaluation to all grantees. For the first time, last year we supported two **Leaders Circles**—structured small groups for peer learning. One circle was for program directors, the other for executive directors. Feedback was enthusiastic:

**I** *absolutely used what I learned in my work. Sometimes it was a technique or exercise, other times it was greater confidence or more specific language.*



Occasionally, GBF features youth worker superstars from out of town. This was the case last February, when Lateefah Simon of the Center for Young Women's Development (and a new MacArthur "genius award" recipient!) led a **Training of Trainers**.

We're thrilled when GBF's convening opens up brilliant new lines of work. This year, activist grantees asked GBF to help create a summer activist training program for Chicago youth. Through a grant for a feasibility study, GBF is exploring the idea of a **Summer Freedom School**.

## **GBF** *isn't six degrees removed from girls or community.*

—Respondent to summer 2004  
GBF communications assessment

In addition to what GBF offers directly, we are zealously backing the young **Chicago Girls' Coalition**. This wonderful membership organization offers networking and training to all girls' programs locally, and will continue long beyond GBF. With support from a GBF capacity-building grant, the Coalition will begin to formalize the involvement of girls in its work. We're confident the Coalition is becoming a force of collective power with, by, and on behalf of girls.

## The GBF Girls Program

**Sisters Empowering Sisters** (SES) helps ensure that GBF stays in touch with the real challenges and possibilities of direct work with girls.

SES participants each year create their own funding guidelines, seek out and review funding proposals, and recommend grants totaling \$40,000 to projects created by girls, for girls. In December 2003, they made grants to:

**Girls Unite!** a program within Hull House that is planning a one-day teen dating violence awareness and prevention gathering for girls and young women, to include arts-based responses to domestic violence (mural-making and spoken word). ..... \$3,850

**Beautiful Zion**, on the south side of Chicago, is an arts-based empowerment program started by

and catering to girls who reside at Family Rescue domestic violence shelter. The girls want to choreograph, teach, and perform praise dance for the residents of the shelter. .... \$3,850

In the spring, the Sisters traveled to D.C. to join the national March for Choice, created and carried out a participatory research project, designed a new SES shirt, recruited new members, and began a mural that celebrates girls.

**W**e made history today...to be in a place where change is made, with [so many] who want change and are marching, in a time when standing up for what you believe in can somehow get censored...it was astounding to see so many people—not just women—standing up for their beliefs was astounding...the pro-lifers frightened me, but...they just remind me to keep myself safe and to be responsible. They don't change my views.

—SES member, after the March for Choice

To the young women who graduated from high school and from SES this summer, and to those girls continuing and joining, GBF extends big thanks for keeping us real and ardent.

## Developing New Resources, Continuing To Learn

GBF is partnering with the Crossroads Fund and Chicago Foundation for Women on the **Safe Space Project** to learn more about how community-based youth programs can make and maintain safe space for LGBTQ youth. We did this because: sexual and gender development are indispensable tasks for all adolescents; because the assumption that all youth are straight marginalizes all those who are not; and because making youth programs welcoming and supportive of all is necessary to make them girl-friendly.

In November, GBF posted new online resource guides to the best of what's currently available for youth groups seeking to be inclusive of a range of sexual and gender identities. Users told us it offered immediately actionable and useful info—such as changing language in their trainings or brochures, or introducing topics in their programs.



In December, the three foundations released a report to youth workers and funders, about current barriers and gaps. The findings came from grantee focus groups and surveys, with recommendations for how to move forward. There is much to accomplish.

We asked skilled practitioners if they would contribute to the field by working together to articulate and document how they effectively make safe space—a top recommendation. They generously agreed to lead.

Leaders from ten organizations meet monthly with co-facilitators. They're creating and compiling elements of a new safe space "toolkit," and addressing challenges in their own programs. The first new resources will be released in 2005.

**I** think the work GBF's doing to document what organizations are doing puts us all in a better position—to put the work on the map, help me articulate my own program goals when I'm out in the community, and it's useful to leverage new funding.

—Megan Carney, Associate Director,  
About Face Youth Theatre  
Safe Space Resource Group

### Safe Space Resource Group

Megan Carney, About Face Youth Theatre  
Lesley Kennedy, Chicago Girls' Coalition  
Shannon Kenney, Coalition for Education on Sexual Orientation  
Courtney Bell, Chicago Women's Health Center  
Tammy Ko Robinson, Video Machete  
Jane Palmer, Illinois Center for Violence Prevention  
Cat Quinn, Latina Girls' Club  
Nancy Mullen, Questioning Youth Center  
Jorge Valdivia, Radio Arte

GBF's board of directors and staff learn together, too. In the past year, we deepened our understanding of girls with disabilities, learned more about how foundations can build nonprofit capacity, and retained a consultant to conduct a comprehensive review of our communications. We were active in national groups such as the **Funders Collaborative for Youth-Led Social Change** and the **Women's Funding Network**, as well a host of Chicago-based community and philanthropic groups.

Continuing to learn helps us keep GBF evolving, and is basic to our ability to be resources to girls and to adults who work with them. We hold ourselves accountable, individually and collectively, to be knowledgeable, resourceful, and well connected in ways that serve the interests of young women.

**I** feel they go so far beyond giving us money, it's really about inspiration and providing a model for the high expectations...that's been a gift. I feel a real partnership with this foundation.

—Tawanna Brown, Program Director,  
Sisters of Struggle & Sisters in Unity,  
Family Matters

## GBF and Partners

GBF aims for mutual regard and shared commitment, in good times and in hard times.

**GBF** *'s leadership gave us the space to do the planning we needed to do to move forward. They don't punt, they wrestle with the same issues we all wrestle with. Being in a relationship with a funder who helps us frame the questions and find the answers is quite wonderful.*

—*Jobi Petersen, Executive Director,  
Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health*

We understand that gender-conscious social change work is still young. We know that ingenious program staff and young women are creating new ways to work together every day.

**I** *learned how to interview people, to take action in the community, to make a movie. I'm not a person who likes to talk much. When it came to asking questions during an interview I tried to make myself as clear as I can and loud enough so that everybody can hear me. My feeling kind of changed with this experience. I feel like if a group of women work together to reduce street harassment, it can solve problems. I feel more empowered. I would like it if other teenagers have that opportunity to work together.*

—*Christine Rene, Young Women's Action Team,  
Friends of Battered Women and Their Children*

We know that moving from theory to daily practice doesn't always go smoothly. We understand that girls have complex lives and need multiple kinds of assistance and opportunities.

**I** *n my shop class I learned many things. I learned the real meaning of teamwork, hard work, and effort. Right now my final project is a table and it is very hard work, but it is worth it. I'm not sure if I am going to sell the table or keep it because there are people who want to buy it. Whatever I do it will be good and I will know that I've made a beautiful table and that it took a whole lot of hard work and effort.*

—*Shanita Brown,  
Young Women's Advisory Group,  
Chicago Women In Trades*

We understand that plans don't always work out. We know young women have dazzling insights and luminous ideas.

**W** *hen I return to Chicago I will take in a greater perspective of life. I'll know that dirt isn't just dirt—it gives life to trees and homes to animals. Things aren't what they seem until you look closer.*

—*Jalesha, a member of the 2004 All Girls Expedition  
to Montana, run by Project Exploration and the Young  
Women's Leadership Charter School of Chicago*

And we know that the groups and communities GBF supports are at least as vested as we are in being there for and with girls. Together, we are working toward a simple goal: to make the world girl-friendly.

# Girl's Best Friend Foundation Fiscal Year 2004 Grants

## Core

About Face Theatre, Youth Theatre  
 Access Living, Empowered FeFes  
 Advocate Charitable Foundation, Latina Girls' Club  
 Alternatives, Inc., Girl World  
 Beyondmedia Education, Girls! Action! Media!  
 Cambodian Association of Illinois, Khmer Angel Teen Girls Club  
 Center on Halsted/Horizons, The Young Women's Program  
 Centro Comunitario Juan Diego, Junior Health Promoters Program  
 Chicago Women in Trades, Aspiring Tradeswomen  
 Chicago Women's Health Center  
 Chicago Youth United\*  
 Chinese Mutual Aid Association, Multicultural Youth Project\*  
 Coalition for Education on Sexual Orientation  
 Community Extension Project, Inc., The Girls' Group  
 Developing Communities Project, Young Women's Leadership Development  
 Family Matters, Sisters of Struggle and Sisters in Unity  
 Family Planning Service of Western Illinois, Initiative for Girls  
 Friends of Battered Women & Their Children, Young Women's Action Team  
 Girl Scouts of Chicago, Chicago Girls' Coalition  
 GIRL TALK  
 Girls in the Game

Global Girls Inc.  
 Guild Complex, Young Women Writers Project  
 Health and Medicine Policy Research Group, Healing Girls in the Juvenile Justice System  
 Health Resource Center for Women with Disabilities, M & M Roll Model Program  
 Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health  
 Korean American Resource & Cultural Center, Building Sisterhood  
 Literature for All of Us  
 Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum, Radio Arte  
 Mikva Challenge, Young Women's Leadership Project  
 Music Theatre Workshop, Fabulous Females  
 Project Exploration, Sisters 4 Science  
 Questioning Youth Center  
 Redmoon Theater, Dramagirls  
 Southwest Youth Collaborative, Sisters Organizing for United Leadership  
 Street-Level Youth Media, Female Action Voice and Change Program  
 UMOJA Student Development Corporation, Women of Destiny and Just US Girls I & II  
 Young Chicago Authors, GirlSpeak  
 Young Women's Empowerment Project

\*First time support in FY04.

## Sisters Empowering Sisters Grants

Arab American Action Network, for *Killing Ignorance: Understanding Arabs & Muslims*  
 Arab American Family Services, for a mentorship program  
 Chicago State University, to excite girls about math and science  
 Community Extension Project, for a one-day girls' conference  
 Community TV Network, to create a comprehensive sexuality video  
 Family Rescue, Beautiful Zion  
 South Side Help Center, to create a rites of passage documentary  
 Southwest Youth Collaborative, Sisters Organized for United Leadership  
 Street Level Youth Media, to make a documentary highlighting females in underground and local hip hop  
 Uptown Center Hull House, Girls Unite!  
 YWCA Lake County, Girls on the Move

## Fund for Staff Development

Chicago Girls' Coalition  
 Community TV Network  
 Family Planning Service of Western Illinois  
 Friends of Battered Women & Their Children  
 Global Girls  
 Guild Complex  
 Korean American Resource & Cultural Center  
 Latina Girls' Club  
 Literature for All of Us  
 Southwest Youth Collaborative

UMOJA Student Development Corporation  
 Young Chicago Authors  
 Young Women's Empowerment Project

## Discretionary

Access Living  
 Beyondmedia Education  
 Crossroads Fund  
 Girl Scouts of Whispering Oaks Council  
 INCITE!  
 Korean American Resource & Cultural Center  
 Planned Parenthood/Chicago Area  
 Redmoon Theater  
 University of Illinois, Chicago's Office of Women's Affairs  
 V-DAY Chicago 2004

## Capacity Building

Chicago Girls' Coalition  
 Literature for All of Us

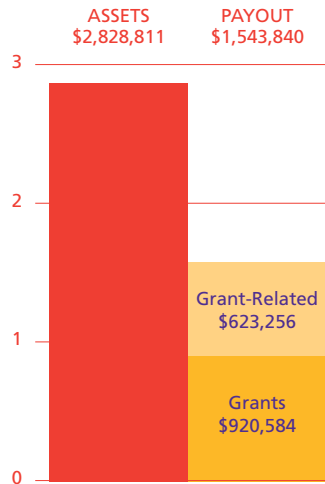
## Evaluation

Alternatives, Inc.  
 Chicago Women in Trades  
 Family Matters  
 Redmoon Theater  
 Also participating, but not a grant recipient: Sisters Empowering Sisters

## Special Opportunity

Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health, for a consultant to assess the feasibility of a Summer Freedom School  
 Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health & Planned Parenthood/Chicago Area, for Real Truth for Illinois Youth  
 Women's Funding Network, for *Making the Case*

## FY2004 Financial Report



In the past year, Girl's Best Friend Foundation paid out more than \$920,000 in grants. That equaled more than one third of GBF's year-end assets. We used the equivalent of more than half of our assets for grants plus related program, operating, and administrative expenses.

This might not sound surprising—unless you know that IRS rules only require private foundations to make “minimum distributions” (grants and related expenses) of 5% of assets.

We've consistently paid out much more than the 5% minimum because we are committed to moving GBF's resources into community-based organizations, for girls and by girls, to benefit girls and young women—now!

We believe payout should relate to the goals and structure of a foundation. In addition to grantmaking, GBF operates Sisters Empowering Sisters, supports multiple grantee-to-grantee convenings, underwrites Leaders Circles for grantee staff, makes new resources available for girls programs, and provides evaluation training to all grantees. GBF is richly staffed because intensive technical assistance and capacity building are essential to our approach.

**W**hat makes GBF approachable? *The people—very open and honest, encouraging, personable. They want to get down and work with you, they don't mind rolling up their sleeves and working through a problem or a process with you.*

—*Marvinetta Woodley-Penn,*  
Executive Director, Global Girls

GBF is not endowed, but receives a gift each year from our founder. GBF has been increasing its yearly grants since FY2000. We will spend all GBF assets by July 2008. In the meantime, we'll continue to make robust annual investments in communities and organizations that ensure girls' self-determination, power, and well being.

You can find GBF's most recent tax forms (990-PF) posted online at [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org). The FY2004 completed return should be posted in early 2005.

## Board of Directors

Cyndie K. McLachlan,  
*Founder*

Nikita Buckhoy  
Tiffany Chiang

Tracy Fischman  
Cheryl Graves  
Linda Hannah  
Stephanie Kanter  
Lesley Kennedy

Presita May  
Kate McLachlan  
Mona Noriega  
Suleyma Pérez

## SES Sisters

Samantha Affram  
Sabuwra Baty  
Sonja Bugvilionis  
Joree Daniels

Ariel Herman  
Sonja Mixon  
Alejandra Piers-Torres  
Cristina Sainati

Ashten Stewart  
Nina Taylor

## Staff

Yasmin Ahmed  
Alice Cottingham  
Robin Dixon

Christine Plautz  
Ellen Sadur  
Julie Walther

Rayna Brown &  
Sarah Cohodes  
*summer 2003 interns*  
Naureen Shah  
*summer 2004 intern*

## Mission

Promote and protect the human rights of girls by advancing and sustaining policies and programs that ensure girls' self-determination, power, and well being.

To learn more about Girl's Best Friend Foundation and the exciting work of the communities and organizations we support, please visit our website [www.girlsbestfriend.org](http://www.girlsbestfriend.org).

We welcome your thoughts and comments.

## Girl's Best Friend Foundation



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## Objectification-Anxiety

### "What are you looking at?"

(My breasts' reflection/in his aged prescription bi-focals)  
"Tasty/Young/Thang"  
Licks/His/Lips  
(My heart beats/a hidden terror)  
How can you make me, a 150 pound heavy weight  
So  
Small  
Might as well/don't have a face/just  
Breast  
A Behind  
And most importantly/a vagina on killer legs  
(Your perverse hunger)  
"Ay, baby come mere"  
(Your absurd nature)  
"Hey hotcakes wanna ride?"  
(I am you Mother/Aunt/Sister/Cousin)  
"Ay girl you got enough to feed ten babies"  
So tired  
So tired  
of  
Objectification  
Waiting for the day  
When I can make  
All men  
Blind  
Until then  
"Go to hell!"

by Mary Keith

*GirlSpeak2004: hear us  
a literary publication of  
Young Chicago Authors*