

Cool Girls, Inc.



dedicated to the self-empowerment of girls

## GSU/CDC Collaborative Grant

Georgia State University and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have been awarded a \$100,000 seed grant (\$50,000 per year for two years) to conduct research on promoting positive youth development to prevent teen pregnancy and sexual risk behaviors.

The study will focus solely on the efficacy and impact of Cool Girls, Inc.'s youth development program and will examine changes in sexual behavior for 200 program participants and a demographically matched comparison group of 100 non-participants.

The goals of the research are to examine:

- 1) Whether Cool Girls, Inc. – a promising and well-established youth development program – is effective in promoting adolescent reproductive health.
- 2) How Cool Girls achieves its prevention goals. The primary focus for this will be to examine the role of self-determination and social capital as links between program participation and declines in risky sexual behavior.

Gabriel P. Kuperminc, Ph.D., a Psychology Professor at Georgia State University, expects that the research findings will support a subsequent proposal for a full-scale, multi-year longitudinal study of Cool Girls' programs to determine if and how program participation contributes to long-term reductions in sexual and other health risk behaviors across adolescence.

For Cool Girls, the approval of the research project is extremely positive in terms of the validation of the anecdotal evidence regarding the program efficacy. Beginning in 2000, and each year since then, Cool Girls has retained Georgia State University (GSU) psychologists to conduct annual independent evaluations of Cool Girls programs. Evaluators interview program participants and non-participants who are enrolled in the same school, and compile a comprehensive, comparative analysis of the respondents' academic status, decision-making skills, sexual and physical health knowledge, and more. Every year, evaluation results demonstrate that Cool Girls participants:

- Improve academically.
- Perform better on standardized tests than comparison non-participants.
- Have significantly higher math grades than the comparisons.
- Are equipped with the information they need to make responsible decisions regarding safe, healthy lifestyles, and sexual activity.

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### About Cool Girls, Inc.

Cool Girls, Inc. (Cool Girls) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the self-empowerment of girls. In 2009, Cool Girls will serve 500 girls throughout the metropolitan Atlanta region, providing direct-service after-school programs, academic tutoring, mentoring, health and fitness education, cultural and social experiences, pregnancy prevention workshops, summer camp, and college scholarships.

Since 1989, Cool Girls has helped thousands of under-resourced and economically disadvantaged girls develop the knowledge, skills, and self-assurance they need to achieve academically, to lead healthy lives, and to break crippling cycles of poverty, teen pregnancy, violence, sexism, and racism. Every program is provided free of charge. For more information, please call Cool Girls at 404-420-4362 or visit [www.thecoolgirls.org](http://www.thecoolgirls.org).