

WOMEN'S FOUNDATION OF MONTANA

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Bozeman's Girl Power teaches change from within

Only two years old, Bozeman's "Girl Power" program already has a waiting list of teenage girls who want to participate and women who want to volunteer as mentors. Girl Power is a self-empowerment program that serves disadvantaged teens in Gallatin and Park counties. Like its parent organization, the Big Sky Youth Empowerment Project, Girl Power uses mentors, peer groups and adventure-based outdoor programming to build self-esteem and provide positive social connections.



More than 40 girls applied for 12 available positions this past year. Working with mentors, they meet once a week for workshops on life skills like healthy relationships, body image, communication, health and conflict resolution. One day each weekend for 12 weeks, they engage in rigorous outdoor activities like white water rafting, rock climbing and ropes course challenges. All of the gear that is needed for the outdoor activities is donated by manufacturers and it becomes the property of the participants who use it.

Girls are selected through a comprehensive interview process to assess the number of risk factors in their lives (income level, parental status, history of abuse, history of probation, etc.). The goal of the program is to serve girls with 10 to 18 risk factors. Girl Power is guided by the belief that enhanced self-esteem, coupled with good communications and teamwork skills, are paramount to securing and maintaining employment and making healthy choices throughout life. Ideally, girls stay with the program for more than a year and eventually serve the program as mentors.

The total number of teens served by the Big Sky Youth Empowerment Project in 2007 was 60. More than 175 youth applied for these available slots; more than 90 adults applied for 36 mentor positions.

We are proud to partner with such a positive youth-oriented program.