

# Oasis for girls

Cultivating Generations of Strong and Creative Leaders

Dear Rachel,	In This Issue:
<p>Summer's finally here!</p> <p>While the season doesn't officially begin until June 21st, the end of the school year signals the start of summer programming at Oasis For Girls.</p> <p>The aimless, unstructured days of summer can be a challenge for our city's young people; without meaningful, supervised activities, summer can mean weeks of boredom, at best.</p> <p>The results of our Measure Up surveys show that for the city's girls, it can be difficult to find safe, engaging, and consistent summer programs. Many girls -- especially those from immigrant families -- report finding themselves unwelcome or uncomfortable at programs serving both boys and girls.</p> <p>But by providing engaging, productive, and girl-appropriate arts, life-skills, and leadership opportunities throughout the summer months, Oasis For Girls provides a productive, transformative experience for San Francisco's girls.</p> <p>Our spectrum of fun, girl-friendly, age-appropriate activities supports their ongoing development, enhancing their ability to meet the challenges ahead.</p> <p>And thanks to our beautiful new space on 11th Street, we can now serve more girls, in more ways, than ever before.</p> <p>So on a hot summer afternoon, stop on by and take a look -- you'll find that, with the support of our generous donors, we can offer a true Oasis For Girls.</p> <p>Jessica Van Tuyl, MSW, Interim Executive Director Oasis For Girls jvantuyl@sfoasis.org</p>	<p>A Wish List</p> <p>Evaluation and Effectiveness</p> <p>Upcoming Events</p> <p>Congratulations to Our Future Fund Award Winners!</p> <p>Why I Give: Oasis Donor Dana Curran Mortenson</p> <hr/> <p><b>A Wish List!</b></p> <p>We've got a great new home, and we'd welcome a hand in furnishing it.</p> <p>No gift is too small - we've got a lot of shopping to do!</p> <p>Can you help? We've established an online wish list at Target to make it easy.</p> <p><a href="#">View our wish list here.</a></p> <hr/> <p><b>Quick Links</b></p> <p><a href="#">Oasis For Girls website</a></p> <p>Here's our new address: Oasis For Girls 245-11th Street, 3rd floor San Francisco, CA 94103 Phone: 415-701-7991 Fax: 415-701-0131 sfoasis.org</p> <p><a href="#">Join Our Mailing List!</a></p>

## Evaluation and Effectiveness: The Results of our "Measure Up" Project

Did you know...

- 82% of participants in Oasis's Arts Apprenticeship Program felt that the program helped them be more in control of their own bodies;
- 83% of participants in Oasis's RISE program felt that the program helped them gain leadership skills;
- 32% of Oasis girls would like Oasis to offer technology training.

Those are just some of the findings revealed by Oasis's Measure Up evaluation project, which concluded this past May. The nine-month initiative was developed with two objectives in mind: 1) to determine the needs of girls in San Francisco, and 2) to evaluate the effectiveness of Oasis's programs.

But the project wasn't overseen by an outside private consulting firm, as you might expect -- instead, *Measure Up was conducted by Oasis alumni*, working with Oasis For Girls staff and Youth in Focus (YIF), which supports youth-led action research, evaluation, and planning to advance social justice. Through YIF's Stepping Stones package, the Measure Up team received intensive training, coaching, and program development support.

So why should young people take the lead on a project like this? According to Oasis Program Coordinator Jocyl Sacramento, "Young women hold two perspectives," as both residents of San Francisco and Oasis alums, "and they can better identify with the youth they are interviewing." The youth-led approach also gave the girls the opportunity to develop and hone valuable skills, such as setting goals, designing and using data collection tools, interviewing peers, conducting focus groups, performing data analysis, and writing reports.

The project sought to examine two primary questions:

- "How do girls ages 13 to 21 feel about the accessibility of health, safety, and girls' programs in their neighborhood and surroundings?"
- "How has Oasis made a difference in the lives of girls they've served and what are some of the ways to change Oasis?"

From December 2008 to February 2009, the Measure Up staff conducted interviews, focus groups, and online surveys. They then spent two months analyzing the data they collected; in May 2009, they wrote, produced, and published a summary report of their findings.

The evaluation report confirms the importance of Oasis' emphasis on girl-focused youth-development programs, which were widely praised by the study's respondents. It also reveals several unmet needs, including the desire for additional programs in technology training, tutoring, and mentoring.

The report has value in several realms:

- It provided youth staff with hands-on experience in conducting needs-assessment and evaluation projects;
- It provides insight into the community's needs for youth-development programming;
- It helps potential funders understand the importance of Oasis programming;
- Finally, says Sacramento, "It will help to determine if Oasis is 'measuring up' to the expectations of the girls."

Today, Measure Up is already affecting things at Oasis: many of the girls' recommendations are now being developed into pilot programs scheduled for autumn 2009. And that's just the beginning. The organization has just begun Measure Up/Phase II, to help us develop an enhanced array of programmatic evaluation tools.

We offer our heartfelt thanks to all of those who helped make this project possible; Measure Up has exceeded our expectations, enhanced our understanding, and will inform our work for years to come.

## Upcoming Events

- **Monday, June 22:** Summer programming begins
- **Monday, June 29-Wednesday, July 1:** Leadership Institute Retreat
- **Monday, July 20, 6:30-8:00 pm:** Family Night
- **Tuesday, August 4, 3-5 pm:** Career Networking Night
- **Thursday, August 13, 6-8 pm:** Final Summer Event at Brava! for Women in the Arts

*All events are open to the public and are located at Oasis For Girls, 245-11th Street, third floor, San Francisco (unless otherwise indicated).*

*Please join us!*

## Congratulations to Our Future Fund Scholarship Award Winners!

In 2001, Oasis began awarding Future Fund scholarships to support the educational advancement and leadership development of its alumnae. Typically, we award three \$1000 scholarships each year; this year, however, thanks to generous support from **Pow.wow**, a Bay Area group networking the power of women, we are thrilled to be able to offer scholarships to four deserving Oasis participants. This year's winners are:

- **Erika Castillo** is a Mexican American young woman who just joined Oasis in Spring 2009 with the RISE program. Erika is graduating from MetWest High School in Oakland and will attend Dominican University to study Education in the fall.
- **Runa Miah**, a Bangladeshi young woman from SoMa, is an old school Oasis girl! She has participated in RISE, 2 Arts Apprenticeships, and was a Measure Up staff this past Spring. Runa is graduating from Lowell High School and will be attending California State University, East Bay to study psychology.
- **Somia Shaikh** is a Pakistani and East Indian young woman who is relatively new to Oasis, participating in RISE last summer. Somia is graduating from Galileo High School and will be attending San Francisco State University to study Biology or Biomedical Science.
- **Letitia Zhao** is a Chinese young woman who has been involved with Oasis for a few years now through the RISE and Arts Apprenticeship programs. Letitia is graduating from Lincoln High School and will attend UC Davis in the Fall to pursue a degree in Food Science of Business Management.

Each young woman will receive \$1000 to be used for college expenses, including tuition, books, and supplies. Congrats to the 2009 Future Fund Winners!

Seed money to begin the Future Fund awards was generously donated by Susan Schindler in memory of Carmel Sanger, a vibrant SoMa entrepreneur.

Pow.wow is a networking group for creative, dynamic, and business-savvy women. Its goal is to support the success of its members by creating a supportive and positive learning environment, empowering through education and exchange of ideas, increasing the visibility of its members, and giving back to the Bay Area community of women. Powwow can be found on the web at: [www.powwownetwork.org](http://www.powwownetwork.org).

## Why I Give - A Profile of Oasis Donor Dana Curran Mortenson

Dana Curran Mortenson's involvement with Oasis For Girls runs a bit deeper than that of most donors. She first encountered the organization in 2005, when a group of Oasis girls became involved in an arts education program run by World Savvy, a global education nonprofit led by Mortenson.

"Oasis actually applied to be a partner. We approached them, thinking it would be a good fit," says Mortenson. "So we worked with the executive director and one of their program managers to have a group of girls at Oasis participate in the program." Thirteen Oasis girls ended up taking part in World Savvy's Global Youth Media and Arts Program (MAP), which highlights the connections between community and world affairs, and helps youth learn to use art and media as tools for self-expression, dialogue, and community engagement.

The Global Youth MAP is just one of three core programs run by World Savvy, which Mortenson cofounded in 2002 with Madiha Murshed. The two women formed the organization in order to meet the growing need for global knowledge and 21st century skills among K-12 youth in the United States. Today, World Savvy serves about 6,000 middle- and high-school youth and teachers across the country, often partnering with other organizations such as the San Francisco State University College of Education, Link TV, and the Center for Teaching International Relations.

World Savvy's past partnership with Oasis has enabled Mortenson to gain an insider's view of the organization. "I knew a lot about their mission and approach to working with young women, as well as their philosophy and how they operate," she explains. Because both organizations focus on youth, she sees quite a few parallels between the two. "A lot of what they do resonates with me, and I'm familiar with it from my own work."

She also appreciates the fact that Oasis recognizes the special role women in general -- and young women, in particular -- play in social change. She notes that programs such as Oasis' "make sure women grow up self-assured, confident, with leadership skills, and a sense of their own voice and how to use it.... Girl-focused programs bring about greater gains in society than other programs that provide less of a razor-sharp focus on girls," she asserts. "[Oasis] has a real knack for getting the young women in their programs to talk about empowerment, and to look at the things in society that are disempowering to women so that they can work to correct that."

Mortenson has personally donated to Oasis on several occasions -- most recently during the spring direct mail campaign -- and is interested in partnering with Oasis again in the future. "Having Oasis and World Savvy work together on a project to address the global status of women and girls...those things have huge value, especially when you're trying to manage shrinking resources," she says. She's also thought about creating a group for executive directors at nonprofits that work with Bay Area youth. "We'd get together to talk about issues such as funding...because I think really good collaboration, whether I'm a donor or not, is born in those spaces."

Whatever type of partnerships World Savvy and Oasis continue to forge together in the future remains to be seen, but Mortenson is committed to supporting Oasis any way she can. "I have a lot of respect for the way that they do their work," she states. "I'm excited about creative ways to work with them."

We at Oasis salute Dana, who dedicates her personal life and professional capacities to help make the world a better place.

To find out more about World Savvy, check out their [website](#).