



Dear Rachel,

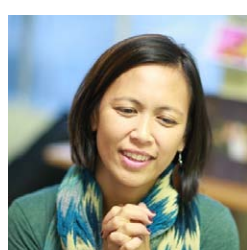
With two kids now in tow, sometimes it seems like a lifetime ago that I turned ten.

But then I come to work and that same sense of eager excitement all comes rushing back to me -- because *this year, Oasis For Girls is 10 years old!*

And when I look around our new office space today, it's as if I can see all of the gifts that have helped us get here. It's thanks to all of you -- our supporters, friends, partners, collaborators, and funders -- that we have so much to celebrate:

- While in our early days Oasis provided drop-in services focused exclusively on the arts, *today* we offer an array of leadership and life skills resources brought to life through girls' artistic exploration.
- At its inception, Oasis For Girls served just middle school girls. *Today*, our range has expanded to include young women in high school and of college age, giving them real-life opportunities to exercise their own leadership capacities.
- At first, Oasis sought to serve girls just from SOMA. *Today*, we serve girls from all over San Francisco; some come from as far away as Daly City and Richmond to see what we have to offer.
- And as for the little basement office we called home in 1999? Well, *today* we live in our glorious new third-floor digs at 11th and Howard, with plenty of room to make a true oasis for girls.

So today, when we sing "Happy Birthday to Oasis" for the 10th year in a row, it's you we really want to thank. With your steadfast support, through thick and thin, in good times and tough times, you have stood by Oasis.



To our supporters: we thank you. Whether through gifts of time, of money, of connections, or of expertise, your support has been invaluable to us, and to the generation of girls we have served along the way.

In this issue of our newsletter, I hope you will enjoy reading more about our celebration of Oasis's new space, our past decade of work and the beginning of our new era... and of course, about the girls we are so proud to support.

Warmest wishes,

Rachel P. Paras, Executive Director
Oasis For Girls
rparas@sfoasis.org

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A Wish List!

We've got a great new home, and we'd welcome a hand in furnishing it.

We've already received a George Foreman grill from a generous donor -- it's great for making healthy snacks!

Can you help with additional donations? We've established an online wish list at Target to make it easy.

[View our wish list here.](#)

It's Easy to Donate Right Now!

Want to help support the advancement and capacity of the girls and young women of our community?

Just click the "Donate Now" button, below, and you'll join the ranks of supporters helping us to help shape our collective future!



Quick Links

Oasis For Girls website

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

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

At the Heart of Things: Why We Do What We Do

For us here at Oasis, the dawning of our 10th anniversary can be measured in the names, the faces, and the trust of the thousands of girls who have come through our doors over the past decade.

For ten years now, Oasis has been a place of refuge, support, and growth for girls and young women who might otherwise have had few places to turn. Whether it was in our first "home" -- a little space in a building's basement -- or today, in our safe, expansive light-filled offices (complete with heat!), we've always hoped to meet girls where they are, and to help them get where they want to go.

At Oasis, our job is to help our girls *get to the heart of things*: to know themselves, and examine their struggles and our world, celebrate their successes and discover their own possibilities. By offering a safe place, a place to tell their stories and find themselves and each other, we help girls claim their own lives and determine their own futures.



It's in service to this goal that we design everything we do here at Oasis. While "the arts" serve as a framework for all of our programming, what makes us special is our use of the arts to a larger purpose: one of self-discovery, social commentary, and shared expression.

Our mission is to help girls and young women to engage in a process of continual inquiry, to use arts training and life-skills workshops and leadership experiences as opportunities to discover their own thoughts, express their own desires, and support the development of a more socially-just world.

So at Oasis, we embrace conversation, critical thinking, and unexpected discovery. We trust that our process helps girls and young women to illuminate the heart of things -- of the self, of others, of society -- thus preparing them to make a better future.

Our Open House and 10th Anniversary Celebration

It was a dark and stormy night...

...but inside, our new space was warm, light and filled with smiles, as Oasis girls, funders, staff, volunteers, family, and friends came together on October 13th to celebrate Oasis's Open House and 10th Anniversary!

Our lobby was joyously full of mixing and mingling party-goers who shared memories and thoughts inspired by our photo albums, girl artwork, and memorabilia that reflected our amazing decade of growth.



To mark the organization's first decade, the girls and staff of Oasis created an organizational timeline, which ran the length of one hallway. As with all of Oasis's efforts, the timeline simultaneously traced three elements -- girls' lives, Oasis's life, and the larger life of the world outside. "It was a really great juxtaposition of the larger world landscape, the Oasis landscape, and the landscape of the lives of the girls that we serve," says Jessica Van Tuyl, Director of Programs and Services.

A spoken-word piece presented by youth representatives, Jah'torri Bettis and Madeline Ing; words of reflection by Oasis's co-founder Ly Nguyen and current Director Rachel Paras; and testimonials by longtime "Oasis girls" Ebony Dortch and Shirley Acuna: *the evening was filled with the sounds of women's voices.*



As a highlight of this event celebrating community, Oasis presented its Community Leadership Award to Gloria Galang of [G. Galang Design](#), who has worked for months to help Oasis develop a new logo and "look" to support the next decade of Oasis's development.

To close the evening, Youth Program Assistant, Jah'Torri Bettis, invited the attendees to join in a final activity: to collectively create an Oasis Wishing Tree. Writing on paper leaves, party goers expressed their hopes for Oasis, with wishes running from the sublime ("success and laughter") to the straightforward ("money"). This Wishing Tree activity -- at once artistic, collective, aspirational, and practical -- beautifully reflected Oasis's core values. One wish in particular captured the spirit of the evening: "that love continue to find Oasis and that the tree continue to grow."

A great big shout-out to everyone who helped make this celebration a significant and memorable event! Thank you all for believing in and supporting Oasis girls and our work to serve them well. Special thanks to donors:

- D. Samuel Marsh Photography, for capturing memories of the evening on film;
- Cups and Cakes Bakery, for the delectable cupcakes that were almost too cute to eat;
- Our former neighbor Brainwash Café, for the delicious food; and
- Symyx Corporation, for the generous cash donation.

...and to volunteers, Julia Eden Ris, Freya Bernardo, and Madeline Ing. We couldn't have done it without you!

Photo credit D. Samuel Marsh Photography (upper right: Party Goers; lower left: Ly Nguyen, Oasis's co-founder)

New Times, New Look

With ten years of history behind us, we at Oasis have a brand new look to all our communications, celebrating the start of our second decade!

True to our identity as an arts-based, social justice organization *for girls* and driven *by girls*, Oasis young women participated in the "rebranding" process all along the way.

In developing a new logo, the girls' input reflected the energy and enthusiasm that characterize female leadership and empowerment. The girls chose colors that are strong, fun, and original, while the logo's lettering and our trademark "wave" echo their unbounded spirits. Above all, our new logo effectively says "movement" and "growth," two concepts that are essential to our communications...because they define *everything* we do.



Our rebranding is the work of Gloria G. Galang of [Gg.galang Design](#). Galang is an artist, graphic designer, and creative director whose designs are an important part of several SOMA-based community organizations and nonprofits.

We thank her for her work, her creativity, and her willingness to jump into our collaborative, girl-influenced processes. We are delighted by the results!

Photo: Gloria Galang (center) receives the Community Leadership Award at our Open House and 10th Anniversary celebration, presented by Jessica Van Tuyl and Rachel Paras

Oasis Faces: Participant and Volunteer May Deng

May Deng and Oasis For Girls go back a long ways.

How far? Well, Deng came to Oasis in 1999, the year of its founding.

Throughout her junior and senior years in high school, Deng remembers "going in a lot, sometimes almost every day," as a welcome respite from the demands of her young life. In the process, she developed close relationships with co-founders Ly Nyugen and Jill Pfeiffer, as well as with staff members, all of whom helped her with scholarship applications.

During her years as an "Oasis girl," Deng part in many of Oasis' programs, including the Arts Apprenticeship and the Leadership Circle (now known as the Leadership Institute). As she recounts now, one of the best parts of her Oasis experience was the opportunity to interact with girls from backgrounds different than her own, but who, she discovered, shared very similar concerns. "I was able to learn about girls from different areas of San Francisco, not just SOMA," she reflects.



A high point of her involvement was receiving a Future Fund Scholarship...along with her best friend! With the scholarship in hand, off she went to one of the country's pre-eminent universities, UC Berkeley.

After starting college, Deng thought she had pretty much left Oasis behind. But a visit from Executive Director Rachel Paras brought back fond memories, convincing her to get involved again. "I wanted to go back to the old community," she says. So despite a rigorous academic schedule, May still found time to volunteer with Studio Oasis and serve as a youth member on the girl-led Measure Up initiative. "Oasis is very important to the community," she explains.

After graduating and armed with a degree in Conservation and Resource Studies, Deng got a job with Americorp working with folks with special needs. Although her old life keeps her very busy, she's determined to stay involved with Oasis.

Deng's Oasis opportunities, support, guidance, and friendships are experiences she wants every Oasis girl to have. And she will be there as a volunteer helping to make sure that happens!

Photo: Oasis girl, May Deng

Upcoming Events

Join us for...



Swank's Sixth Annual Holiday Party will benefit Oasis For Girls!

Join us on December 4, 2009, from 7-11 PM, at Hotel Frank, 386 Geary Street in San Francisco*.

From Hotel Frank's ritzy interior to the bubbly VIP reception and the live jazz, this party will be the cat's meow!

[Pow.wow Network](#) and Oasis For Girls share the mission to build community around, support, and foster women (and girls) in business. Last year, the SWANK event raised over \$5,000 for Oasis and our Future Fund Scholarships.

We hope you'll join us this year, building on this momentum while enjoying a fabulous evening of cocktails and dancing. VIP tickets, at \$100, include a VIP-reception at 7 PM; general admission tickets at \$40 each, grant you entrée to the main event beginning at 8 PM.

**Please note the new location!*



To reserve your tickets now, go to <http://www.swankbypowwow.org/>.