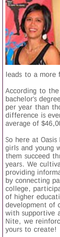
September 2009

Oasis for girls

Cultivating generations of strong, creative, and empowered young women

Dear Rachel,



Many of us know someone who's experienced a job loss due to the tightening job market. Despite some signs of an improving economy, unemployment is high and jobs are scarce.

Although the situation is difficult even for seasoned, well-educated young people, it's even harder for those whose education stopped with a high school diploma. It's clear that a college education opens doors and leads to a more financially stable future.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, those who have bachelor's degrees will earn on average about $23,000 more per year than those with only a high school diploma. The difference is even greater for those with advanced degrees - an average of $46,000 more per year, in fact.

So here at Oasis For Girls, we continually strive to provide our girls and young women with the tools and resources to help them succeed throughout their middle and secondary school years. We cultivate an atmosphere of higher learning by providing information on college options and financial aid. And by connecting participants with Oasis alumni currently in college, participants can begin setting their sites on the world of higher education. Through programs to support the development of critical thinking and self-awareness, mentoring with supportive adults, and events such as Career Networking Nite, we reinforce the message at every turn: The world is yours to create!

We also prep our girls for success in the business world so that their work opportunities can support (and finance) their dreams. In our RISE Life Skills Education program, high-school-aged Oasis girls explore career options, learn how to apply for a job, and practice interviewing skills. And our Young Women's Leadership Institute encourages Oasis' young women to develop the initiative, activism, and leadership skills to make a positive mark on the world.

The economy is difficult right now, to be sure. But our message - for ourselves and our girls - remains firm: with determination, preparation, and vision, you CAN weather any storm.

Rachel P. Paras, Executive Director
Oasis For Girls
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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!

DONATE NOW!
CLICK2PLEDGE

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!

Preparing Girls to Succeed in the Workforce Spotlight on Career Networking Nite

Living a healthy, empowered life depends on the ability to make smart choices. Supporting young women in developing that critical skill is the goal of Oasis' RISE Life Skills Education program. A highlight of RISE is Career Networking Nite, when professionals are invited to come together with RISE participants to talk about their jobs and to share career and life advice.

"It all starts by surveying the girls about what they're interested in doing in the future," says Jocyl Sacramento, RISE program coordinator. She and other Oasis staff then contact members of their professional and personal networks to see who might fit the bill. Partnering organizations such as Pow.wow Network, as well as other youth and social service organizations, have also served as sources of terrific guest speakers.

One of the panelists for this past summer's event was Vanessa Mayorga, who as Teen Program Coordinator at La Casa de las Madres, has referred many girls to Oasis. "I've known about Oasis for several years now through my involvement in youth development and social service, and I highly regard their programs," says Mayorga. "I believe their programs are effective in engaging young women and teaching valuable information that empowers and inspires."

At the event, which also featured a case manager from the Vietnamese Youth Development Center and an Environmental Engineering Ph.D. candidate from UC Davis, Mayorga discussed her work at La Casa, her college experience, her outlook on social service work with women, and her plans for graduate school. "The guests usually talk about their journey to getting where they are now, how they feel about their job, what the obstacles are - not only about their job, but also being a woman at that job," adds Sacramento. "They also provide advice to the girls regarding the education they need and how long it took them to get through school."

RISE participants take good advantage of the opportunity to ask plenty of questions of panelists. According to Sacramento, they ask questions like, "How much money do you make?","How many hours do you work?","What do you love about your job?",and "What's challenging about your job?" And the RISE girls' inquiries go far beyond basic fact finding, covering topics such as balancing work and family life and choosing between money and happiness. "The young women were inquisitive and well-prepared with thoughtful questions, and engaged panel participants with confidence," observes panelist Mayorga.

Sacramento believes the impact of Career Networking Nite comes from giving RISE girls personal insight and encouragement about their own career possibilities by connecting them with successful women who have similar life stories. "I really try to put together a panel that reflects the girls who are in RISE," she states.

The emphasis on shared experiences and the wide variety of panelists, combined with the enthusiasm and curiosity of the RISE girls, make Career Networking Nite an Oasis event that both guest speakers and girls greatly enjoy. And Mayorga whole-heartedly agrees. "Yes! I would do it again!" she says.

Adapting to the New Reality

As always, Oasis For Girls strives to provide high-quality programs to challenge girls throughout their developmental years. Over the past two years, we have intensified our programming to reach more girls, in more ways, with more resources.

However, we also recognize that with the changing economy, our plans must adapt to the new reality. The fundraising climate will prove challenging for some time ahead - perhaps several years.

To ensure that we can sustain our work in the new environment, we have recently modified our operating budget to protect our ability to provide core programs that are so critically needed by San Francisco's girls and young women. The hardest decisions have involved staff: We have decided to lay off two of our staff members, while also reducing the hours and pay for remaining staff. With less staffing, we are also temporarily reducing the program week: instead of serving girls every day, for now we are working within a three day per week model.

But no matter the economy's challenges, our mission remains unwavering: to provide high-quality, girl-focused youth development services to foster the growth of fabulous female leaders. We are committed to weathering this storm, to allow us to stand by the girls and young women who need safe, girl-focused opportunities.

We are so deeply grateful for the many ways people choose to support our organization and our girls. In response to our "critical moment" e-campaign last month, we were met with an outpouring of individual contributions and offers to volunteer. Our thanks go to all of you who work with us, in whatever fashion, to support the young women of Oasis.

These girls and young women continue to inspire our quest for new opportunities. This fall, we will be initiating another successful cycle of RISE for high-school girls; kicking off our middle-school program, Girl 2 Girl, at the International Studies Academy through a collaboration with Intersection for the Arts; and starting plans for a series of very special membership events to engage Oasis alumni.

As we move into this next phase of our growth, we applaud our outgoing staff for their dedication, creativity, hard work, and love on behalf of Oasis For Girls. We wish them the very best and offer our support in every way that we are able. Our deepest thanks to them; they remain here with us in the hearts, voices, and dreams of the girls they have served.

Beginning September 7th, 2009, Oasis will be open:

Mondays & Tuesdays: 11:00 AM - 7:00 PM
Wednesdays: 2:00 - 6:00 PM
Thursdays & Fridays: CLOSED

DONATE NOW!
CLICK2PLEDGE

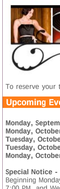
If you'd like to support our work, you may also send a check to our office at: 245 11th Street, 3rd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94103.

The "Sisterly Love" Event -- A Smashing Success!

Judging from audience's enthusiasm, "Sisterly Love", held on Thursday, August 13th at San Francisco's beautiful Brava Theater Center will be long remembered by Oasis girls and community of supporters!

"Sisterly Love" was the exciting culminating event for the participants of three Oasis programs conducted during the summer: RISE Life Skills Education program, the Young Women's Leadership Institute, and the Arts Apprenticeship program.

Over the summer, girls in each of these programs took the opportunity to explore and reflect on the theme of "love" and to present their insights through a variety of artistic expressions.



RISE participants focused on the theme of "self love", presenting their work as "Womanifestos" in which each RISE girl described her path to becoming who she is today. In the theater lobby, self-portraits created through photography and drawn images were brought together as a compelling exhibit.

Oasis' Young Women's Leadership Institute participants analyzed the impact of the media on relationships, including its effect on body image, self-esteem, and relationship ideals. Expressed through peer-to-peer video interviews (**See video here**) conducted by the Leadership Institute members, this project provided great insight into how young women today seek to transform the media to promote a more positive impact on their relationships with themselves and others.

Through a collaboration with Brava! for Women in the Arts, participants of the Oasis' Arts Apprenticeship program presented spoken word pieces they created in response to their exploration of "revolutionary love." These pieces were an amazing testament to the power of young women and their voices in making social change in their own communities.

To great applause, all artists were welcomed on stage to take questions from the appreciative audience, who included other Oasis girls, families, friends, and many other Oasis supporters. Participants spoke movingly of their experiences in each program, noting the skills they had gained and the valuable relationships they developed with Oasis staff and girls. In the graduation ceremony that followed, each girl received a program completion certificate and a gift. **"Sisterly Love"** concluded with a celebratory reception in the lobby, as girls, families, and friends enjoyed reflecting on the performance and the participants' accomplishments.

"Sisterly Love" was the first time Oasis For Girls has held a collaborative event showcasing all of its summer programs. Given its undeniable success, "It won't be the last!" said Jessica Van Tuyl. "It was a great opportunity to demonstrate how each program had explored the central theme of love through different artistic media, as well as to bring all of the girls and their families together to celebrate their hard work."

As we wrap up summer programming and prepare for the fall, we would like to take a moment to send a huge "Thank you!" to *Brava! for Women in the Arts* for all their support in collaborating with Oasis' Arts Apprenticeship program, and for providing the Brava Theater Center for "Sisterly Love". In short, we couldn't have done it without them!

Come Celebrate Oasis' 10 Year Anniversary!

We're 10 Years Old!!!

Join us to celebrate our **10 Year Anniversary** providing crucial Arts & Arts Education, Life Skills Education, and Leadership Development programming for Bay Area young women!

Enjoy our beautiful new space, performances and artwork by Oasis girls, and refreshments!

Tuesday, October 13th at 6 pm
245 11th Street, 3rd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 701-7991

Join Us for SWANK's Sixth Annual Holiday Party!

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

Join us on December 4, 2009, from 7-11 PM, at the Payne Mansion, 1409 Sutter Street in San Francisco.

From the Payne Mansion'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 that begins at 8 PM.

To reserve your ticket now, go to http://www.swankbypowwow.org/ .

Upcoming Events

Monday, September 14th - RISE applications due
Monday, October 5th - RISE begins
Tuesday, October 6th - Girl 2 Girl begins at ISA
Tuesday, October 13th @ 6 pm - 10th Anniversary/Open House Celebration
Monday, October 26th @ 7 pm- Family Nite

Special Notice - New Hours
Beginning Monday, September 7th, Oasis will be open Mondays and Tuesdays from 11:00 AM to 7:00 PM, and Wednesdays from 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM. We will be closed Thursdays and Fridays. (Please note, Girl 2 Girl will be held off-site on Tuesdays and Thursdays at ISA).