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INITIATIVES

Canadian Women's Foundation / Fondation canadienne des femmes

www.canadianwomen.org

Investing in the Dreams of Girls

All girls deserve the opportunity to grow up in safety, free from violence, and to become economically self-sufficient and strong contributors to society. But for far too many girls in Canada, that seems to be an unattainable dream. Canadian Women's Foundation commissioned research into the needs of girls across the country and the programs available to girls. What we found both surprised us and strengthened our commitment to build the resiliency and leadership skills of girls from coast to coast.

Girls in Canada have many more opportunities today than they did two decades ago. However, while girls tend to start out their lives better than boys in school and in forming friendships, many girls face a serious loss of self esteem as they approach early adolescence. Starting at around grade 6, girls report lower self esteem and less happiness than boys. This can set them up for a variety of potentially serious problems in adolescence.

With this in mind, Canadian Women's Foundation has launched the pilot phase of a new Girls Fund that will support programs working with girls at the critical ages from 9 through 13. Our vision is to support girls in Canada to develop the resiliency to move successfully through life. Through grants, research, and work to strengthen and connect organizations serving girls, we will help our girls reach their full potential. It is by investing in programs for girls today that we can truly build up the power of tomorrow's women.

To make a donation to the new Girls Fund at Canadian Women's Foundation, please contact Kristin Pass at 1-866-293-4483 ext. 226.

Sources:

- (1) Boyce, Young People in Canada, 2004
- (2) McCreary Centre Society, The Girls' Report, 2001
- (3) Boyce, The Canadian Youth Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS Study, 2003
- (4) Statistics Canada, Family Violence in Canada, 2004

« The challenges that a 14-year-old girl faced 20 years ago are the challenges faced by nine-year-old girls today. »

Dr. Blye Frank, Director, Faculty Development,
Dalhousie University, Halifax



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