Children’s charity launches #GirlsAllowed campaign with heartfelt messages from women to girls

Wednesday 4 October, 2023

Girls Friendly Society, a charity known as GFS by the girls they support, are marking International Day of the Girl with a campaign called #GirlsAllowed that asks women to reflect on what they wish they had been allowed to do or be. The campaign has already received an overwhelming response, with hundreds of heartfelt entries
that provide a candid glimpse into the everyday struggles and enduring impact of gender stereotyping on women.

“I wish I was allowed to be myself, weirdness and all. Instead of feeling like I needed to behave and look a certain way to be liked or fit in.” Kate

“I wish I were allowed to be bossy. Growing up, I was always told to stop being "bossy"- it was rude. I think my bossiness could have been cultivated into leadership skills that would have served me later on.” Katya

#GirlsAllowed also asks women to share empowering messages for girls today. The heartfelt messages are being handwritten into origami hearts and given to girls at GFS groups as part of their International Day of the Girl celebration. The online message board is being flooded with an outpouring of love and encouragement from women to girls.

“Be mighty and fearless. Find the joy in your heart. Trust your dreams, whatever they are - they are yours.” Dawn

“You are here, so you are important. You are you, and that is enough.” Claire

GFS urgently needs more women to add messages to the virtual message board, ensuring that every GFS girl receives a personal message of empowerment and encouragement.

GFS’s CEO, Laura Sercombe said *“International Day of the Girl is an important day of the year for the charity. Girls as young as six are telling us that they are unable to be themselves. This impacts their relationships, harms their well-being, damages their confidence and limits their access to opportunities.*

At GFS we give girls the skills and experiences they need to overcome these barriers and grow up confident, happy and able to follow whatever path they choose.

We have been supporting girls for nearly 150 years, and we will continue to for however long girls need us.”

To find out more

To donate to GFS go to gfs.org.uk

To add to the message board go to gfs.kudoboard.com/boards/bVpjhuxo/girlsallowed

Watch a 3-minute video to hear from the girls themselves.

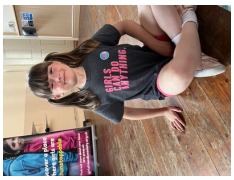
Call us on **07710 085398** or email us at lauraj@girlsfriendlysociety.org.uk

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Editor’s notes:

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International Day of the Girl is a United Nations' day of observance held every year on 11 October and recognises girls' rights and the unique challenges girls face around the world.

GFS (Girls Friendly Society)

Girls as young as six are telling us they are not able to be themselves.

At GFS we are on a mission to create a world where all girls and young women can thrive. Our groups help girls build their confidence in safe places where they learn to be themselves and be proud of who they are. We achieve this through early intervention, working with girls aged 5-12 years, to prevent the degradation in confidence and self-esteem that comes around age 11, rather than trying to reverse it during the teenage years and beyond.

GFS is a feminist charity that has spent almost 150 years supporting girls and young women. We focus our work on girls in the most deprived areas of England and Wales, where we know girls' futures are disproportionately disadvantaged.

We run volunteer-led weekly groups with a unique girl-centric programme that develops skills for life in a fun and creative way. In each programme session, girls work towards one of six GFS-girl statements:

- "I can speak up about things that matter to me"
- "I am proud of who I am"
- "I try again if I have a setback"
- "I can try new or unfamiliar things"
- "I believe I can achieve my hopes and dreams"
- "I can enjoy friendships with all kinds of people"

GFS girl in Liverpool*: "It's good coming to GFS because you can learn how to trust others, and know that you are perfect just the way you are."*

Parent South Wales: *"She was previously in a behavioural plan at school. Since attending GFS she has been able to control how she behaves and is able to talk about why she's upset and resolve problems before they escalate".*

Image captions

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Image 1: The London GFS girls at a rugby taster session at Saracens in May

Image 2: A GFS girl in London talking with a volunteer

Image 3: A GFS girl at a Liverpool group

Image 4: An origami heart with a personal message for a GFS girl

Image 5: Laura Sercome (CEO) with GFS girls in Liverpool

Image 6: The virtual message board with messages from women to girls as part of the #GirlsAllowed campaign

Company Contact:

Girls Friendly Society in England & Wales

T. +447341226778
E. david@girlsfriendlysociety.org.uk
W. https://girlsfriendlysociety.org.uk/

Additional Contact(s):
Lor Jones

View Online

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