



BHGA Newsletter

Fall 2013

Our Mission ~ *The Benton Harbor Girls Association for Learning and Self-Esteem (BHGA) is a non-profit corporation dedicated to enhancing educational opportunities for middle schools girls in the Benton Harbor area. Our goal is to provide an academy for middle-school girls that offers superior education in a safe and nurturing environment.*

From the Desk of the Director

By Patricia Ann Quattrin Ph.D.

Another Year has passed and the Girls Academy is beginning its fourth year. The Staff and Corporate Board could not be happier about the success we see with the girls who come to us: in academics, self-esteem, and social behavior. Ten girls attended this past year, the largest enrollment yet, and nine girls are enrolled thus far for the 2013-2014 school year. If this year follows from previous years, we can expect two or more girls coming. Our Summer Program, *Girls Discover*, was also a big success, with fifteen girls registered, most of whom were new. Clearly, more and more girls are being reached and the Long Range Plans of three to four classrooms with a maximum of fifteen girls in each class appears to be a reachable goal.

Everyone is excited about the new Academy Mistress, Jannie Kiser. She comes with outstanding qualifications, both in her education and her teaching, with two Master's degrees, in Education and in Social Work, and twenty-seven years in the classroom.

Financials also look better with each year. Sponsorships continue to provide the majority of financial support, with new sponsors

stepping forth each year. Fund raisers adequately cover operational expenses and the Academy Building Fund will be invested after the selling of the donated modular building.

All-in-all, the BH Girls Academy is in a good place as the school year begins. What excites all of us most, however, is the growth and development the Staff sees in each girl. The girls become more confident that they can do the work and they do it; they become more respectful to teachers and fellow students; they form a camaraderie with each other that transcends middle school cattiness; they develop a prayer life that is beautiful to behold, as evidenced by one girl's prayer at Morning Assembly this week. Michia thanked the Lord that they all woke up that morning. She prayed for the success of the Academy and her classmates and their families.

Do we experience financial concerns? Yes. Are the girls sometimes difficult to handle? Yes. Is this in many ways a typical Middle School? Yes. Are we succeeding in all the areas that matter to our mission: to enrich and enhance the educational opportunities for middle school girls in Benton Harbor? YES!

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● **Congratulations to Dr. Patricia Quattrin**, winner of the 2013 Priority Health Medicare Senior Impact Award. She was chosen out of almost 100 nominations from across the state of Michigan to receive this award that recognizes senior citizens who improve their communities through volunteer work with a nonprofit organization. Executives from Priority Health and The United Way of Michigan will soon travel to Benton Harbor to present this award to Dr. Patricia, as well as a check for \$1000 to the Benton Harbor Girls Association.
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BHGALS - A Non-Profit 501C3 Corporation

Our New Head Mistress

By Mary Ann Lischer

We are pleased to introduce you to the most recent addition to our staff at the Benton Harbor Girls Academy: Jannie McAfee Kiser, MSW. Jannie will be assuming the Academy mistress position, as Dr. Patricia Quattrin returns to her original role as Director of the Association. Jannie has been a member of the Benton Harbor community for over twenty-five years, and has served the community in many capacities. She is most recently retired from the Benton Harbor schools where she taught for thirteen years. She was also the Director of the Berrien County Council of Children, dealing with the prevention of child abuse. Jannie received a BS in Education from Western Michigan University, an MA in education from Wayne State, and a MSW from Western Michigan, so she comes to us well trained for the position and is enthusiastic about working for the betterment of our girls. She also volunteers as the youth coordinator of her church, and thus has the needed experience and awareness she will need as Academy Mistress. Come by the Academy and say hello and see why we are so delighted to have her on board.

Girls Discover Summer Program

By Carla Trump, teacher

This past summer, Benton Harbor Association held a summer program called Girls Discover. As the 2012-2013 teacher, I was approached to run this program. I, along with my assistant Lena Newkold, held exciting and enriching lessons on Tuesday through Thursday for six weeks. Every day we had tutors from the community come in to read with the girls. The girls were always trying to be the one chosen to read with our guests! It was important to me to expose the girls to interesting science concepts using experiments. Some fun experiments we did were to make



homemade ice cream, rock candy, and butter using chemical reactions. We were very lucky to have Lena as my assistant because, not only was she a great help to us, but she is also an artist. Lena taught the girls how to make beautiful watercolor paintings and ceramic sculptures.

Once a week, we were able to participate in First Tee, a free golfing program for youth in and near Benton Harbor. The girls learned the mechanics of golfing, as well as valuable character skills, such as meet and greet. We had a great time this summer with all the amazing learning opportunities available to us.

Benton Harbor Girls Academy Goes Hollywood

By Cathleen Hanau Ph.D.

Benton Harbor Girls Academy will be holding its annual Auction Fundraiser on Saturday, October 5, from 7:00 pm to 11:00 pm in the Oak Room at The Citadel in the heart of the Benton Harbor Arts District. We are all looking forward to a fun evening of Hollywood style entertainment with music, trivia, heavy hors d'oeuvres, a cash bar, and so much more.

Of course, we can't forget the silent and live auctions too. Some of the items that will be up for bid include a dinner for four at Tabor Hill Winery, dinners at the Ideal Place in the Benton Harbor Arts District, Notre Dame Football tickets, fine jewelry, hand crafted woodwork items, baskets of homemade goodies, gift certificates for local businesses, and many other items.

Tickets to this event are \$25, and all proceeds will benefit the Benton Harbor Girls Academy (BHGA), a middle school that is dedicated to enriching the educational opportunities for girls in grades 4 through 8 from the inter-city and Benton Harbor area. The programs at BHGA empower girls with the strength, confidence, academic and social skills, and critical thinking necessary to allow each girl to reach her fullest potential. Exceptional academic and personal development programs are offered in a nurturing and safe environment to prepare girls for success in high school, college, and their community.

A Day in the Classroom at BHGA

By Sr. Mary Anne Dalton Ph.D

I spent my first classroom volunteer day at BHGA on Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2013. When I first saw the girls, I noticed the tremendous diversity among them in size, smile,



personality, and attitudes. Immediately Ms. Carla Trump, the teacher of the girls, said to me, "These girls are a great group." I was glad to be getting to know them.

I stayed all day and saw many types of learning going on. Journals and discussion started the day. Math class focused on connections between division and multiplication with a touch of the commutative property. I observed lots of practice on this math process. The teacher encouraged the girls, "If you don't understand it at first, you will eventually get it with practice." The lesson ended with an informal self-assessment: thumbs up if you think you understand this; thumbs sideways if you are a little unsure of some parts; thumbs down if you don't think you get it at all.

The Social Studies lesson revolved around the Pledge of Allegiance on this tragic anniversary day of 9/11. Vocabulary terms of the Pledge were listed on the board. Each term was discussed through the use of synonyms, such as a pledge is like a promise. The girls were then asked to write their own Pledge of Allegiance or Promise in their own words. When one student asked, "Who wrote the Pledge of Allegiance?" Ms. Trump said, "This is a good task for our Googler of the Day, De'Janna." The Googler of the day was one of several tasks assigned to the girls each day and posted on the Jobs Chart.

The girls allowed me to read their Pledges. Here are some excerpts from some of the girls' thoughts:

I am promising justice, loyalty, and liberty. (Kendra)

I promise loyalty to my community. (Jacqueline).

I promise loyalty under God. (Lakoya)

We of the United States are under God...We have glory. Amen.

(Da'Janna)

My nation needs help and I will help it succeed. (Michia)

As a retired teacher, I had the opportunity to be teacher to the girls during enrichment time. I had written on cards five questions for the girls to consider with a partner on what they knew about the tragic 9/11 events. I told them if they did not know the answers, that was OK as we were going to learn more on this.

I found that these young women were quite informed about the 9/11 events regarding Who, What, Why, How, and When. Then we moved into "So now what--Did they think peace was possible between enemies?"

I also introduced two stories that had to do with enemies in World War II and the Vietnam War crossing over to each other because they found something in common on a human level and for a short time, at least, came to understand each other. I asked the girls to think for a bit and then express one thing that struck them in this lesson. One student mentioned that she learned if enemies could understand each other better, they might not be enemies. I thought: With insights like this, there is hope for the next generation.

Outdoors time before lunch was facilitated by Viola Henderson. The girls focused again on playing baseball and seemed to enjoy running around. Lunch consisted of sandwiches and chips prepared by a lunch volunteer, Chiquita Kyles.

PLAY BALL!

By Viola Henderson

The Benton Harbor Girls Academy is organizing a softball team so that we can compete with other schools. As members of the team, our girls will learn sportsmanship, leadership, responsibility, and how to become team players. These are some of the skills they need to become successful in the future. This is our first year, so we are just learning the basic skills, such as pitching, catching, batting and running. We have a new fifth grade girl this year, Josephine. She has played two years on a softball team, and I think she will be a great asset to our team. As the academy's secretary, I am someone who truly cares about the well-being and success of our girls. Softball provides another activity to help our girls reach their full potential.

Late-Day Coordinator

By Mary Anne Lischer

Another terrific addition to our BHGA staff is Samantha Jordan, who joins us as the Academy's Late-Day Coordinator. Samantha grew up in Benton Harbor and graduated from Benton Harbor High School, and holds a Bachelor of Arts and Sciences from Western Michigan University, and a Masters in New Media Journalism from Full Sail University. She served her internship at Walt Disney World in Orlando, FL, and has since served in several capacities in Public Relations and Communications, including with the SW Michigan Community Action Agency and WUBU MIX 106.3 FM radio in South Bend. She also is an active volunteer with the Make A Wish Foundation, The NAACP, and the Boys and Girls Club.

After a very busy first week on the job, it is quite apparent to us that she is a great fit for our school, as she has taken to the students and they to her. She has a natural ability to communicate with the girls, and has already organized a field trip to Jollay Orchards where the girls learned a bit about the importance of agriculture and composting, saw how the cider is actually made, and then picked apples to take home. They also were able to feed the farm animals. A very successful day! The girls agreed it was great fun. Feel free to stop by after school to meet and welcome Samantha.

Estrogen in the Classroom

By Carla Trump, teacher

When people ask me where I work, they always do a double take when I say that I teach at an all-girls academy.

"Only girls?" they ask.

"Yes."

"No boys?"

"Nope."

"Wow... God Bless you."

Their eyes get even bigger when I tell them that last year was my first year teaching. I never thought about the negative connotations of working only with girls when I accepted this position. Now, people I meet are quick to supply me with examples. Attitudes. Bickering. Cliques. PERIODS! Yes, these things do exist. But what about the positives of working with young ladies? I say young ladies because that is what they are to me. We work on manners and etiquette. We work on being refined. We talk about our bodies and how they work. I answer questions that most girls would be horrified to ask in a classroom that contained boys. We embrace our femininity while celebrating our differences. I choose literature to read with the girls that contain strong female leads.

The list of how we celebrate being an all girls school could go on. The bottom line is that these girls learn and grow better being in a classroom with only females. For the most part, we all love it. That's not to say that we have days when our cycles meet up and, to quote one of my 6th graders, "There's too much estrogen up in here!" A challenge? Most definitely. Is there any place I would rather be starting my teaching career in? No there isn't.



Pictured are the Academy girls and Miss Carla at the end of the year field trip to the DeSable African-American Museum in Chicago.



Dr. Quattrin receiving a check for \$6500 from Amy Dirlam, the Women's Service League representative. The check is the amount of money the WSL raised at their Benefit Ball in February for the BHGALS building fund.



Singing Christmas carols at Orchard Grove.



Academy girls participating in the Girls on the Run program.



Academy Girls attending the Chris Mann Concert, September 14th at the Mendal Center.

Hig hlights of the Year



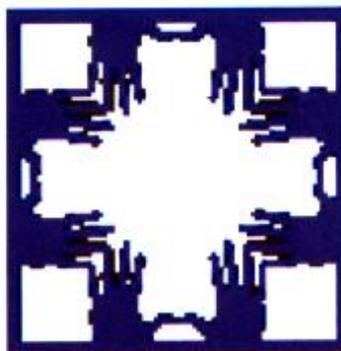
A day at the beach during the school year as a reward for accumulating over two-hundred good behavior points.

Benton Harbor Girls Association
for Learning & Self-esteem
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