



The New York Academy of Medicine  
Office of School Health Programs

***G.I.R.L.S. (Getting into Real Life Science) and Health Professions***

The New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM), Office of School Health Programs is implementing a three-year educational initiative, ***G.I.R.L.S. (Getting into Real Life Science) and Health Professions***, designed to increase the participation of historically underrepresented minority women (African-American, Hispanic, and Native American) in careers in the sciences, medicine, health and allied health professions. The program will build on the work of NYAM initiatives including *The Junior Fellows Program* and *The Scholars Program* and school-based *Comprehensive Health Education* by expanding, intensifying, and deepening the educational experiences provided to girls.

The *G.I.R.L.S.* program is designed to provide a wide range of after-school learning opportunities including academic support and enrichment needed to thrive in high school, college, graduate school, and in the sciences, medicine, health and allied health professions. The program will offer girls opportunities for hands-on exploration of a variety of health careers and positive interaction and mentoring experiences with minority women scientists, physicians, and health professionals. *G.I.R.L.S.* will provide young women with educational experiences to promote resilience, 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills, and health skills development. Dynamic opportunities to practice non-academic competencies such as leadership, creativity, responsibility, curiosity, problem-solving, higher order thinking, reasoning, and public speaking skills are integrated into all program activities.

Beginning in grade 7, the *G.I.R.L.S.* program will expand, enrich, and deepen the opportunities provided to girls and build their capacity to successfully participate in the Academy's *Junior Fellows Program* in grade 8 and *Scholars Program* in grade 9. Building on NYAM's work in comprehensive health education, the program will provide the girls with seminars on health issues with focused attention to eating habits, physical activity, peer pressure for risk behaviors, concepts of beauty, body image, sexuality issues, and dating violence, and prevalent health concerns including asthma.

The program will offer educational opportunities about health careers for the girls in tandem with their mothers, caregivers, or other women in their lives who can serve as allies and support their academic, career, personal, and health goals. Mothers and women of influence in the lives of the girls will participate in the health education component together with the girls as appropriate.

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