

Women Of Achievement

The New Generation Of Young Women Leaders *Study Defines Skills Needed To Fulfill High Aspirations*

(NAPSA)—How do today's young women see themselves and their futures? A recent student-designed survey from an innovative high school came up with some intriguing revelations.

Compared with high school boys, high school girls are significantly more likely to see themselves as leaders, are just as likely to say they would run for U.S. president, and have higher college aspirations than their boy counterparts.

Susan Schulz, editor-in-chief of *CosmoGIRL!*, says, "Girls embrace our mantra, 'Born to Lead,' because this is the first generation of girls who grew up playing alongside boys on the soccer field, stealing the ball and scoring goals. Now that these girls are teens, their goals include working their way to the corner office, including the Oval Office."

The national, online survey of over 1,500 teens, designed by Miss Hall's School, an all-girl high school, also found that more than 70 percent of girls versus 50 percent of boys desire a job where they can help others and make the world a better place. Head of School Jeannie Norris says, "Teen women are rejecting the old-style, top-down models of leadership and are embracing a new style, one that utilizes teamwork to solve problems."

A significant finding of the study, however, pointed to a "leadership gap." In responding to real-life leadership dilemmas, girls do not always follow through on what they know to be best when friendships are involved. For example, a girl might not vote for the better candidate in an election if her best friend is running in opposition. Inhibiting girls' decision making is the priority they give to personal relationships.



Twenty percent of teenage girls say they're thinking of running for president.

One of the major implications of the study is that girls need to be taught the skills that allow them to work through difficulty *while* staying in relationships with peers. Historically, girls' high aspirations for leadership in high school do not translate into significant increases in numbers of women in the top echelon in any sector. Norris says, "In order for young women to sustain their ability to lead beyond high school and into their adult lives, they must become comfortable with assuming authority and resolving interpersonal conflicts in a way that holds true to their values."

Another significant finding is that girls who are comfortable with their personal authority—i.e., girls who self-identify as leaders—are more likely to act on their values. Norris says, "Girls who have the inner confidence to claim that they are leaders seem to be freer to do what they know is right." Self-identified leaders also tend to do better in school, bring an activist approach to problem solving, and hold higher aspirations for their futures.

Students at Miss Hall's School created the survey in partnership with The White House Project and *CosmoGIRL!* magazine. For more information and educational tips, call Norris at (413) 443-6401 or visit www.misshalls.org.