

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: Kristina Kind

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**ALAMEDA –**

Dear Editor:

I am writing in response to Lauren H. Moyer’s letter to the editor published on May 30, 2013. In her letter, Ms. Moyer reacts to gender disparity in an engineering competition recently won by 6 boys (“Nea Students Engineer Victory,” May 23) by suggesting that a community wide “change of perspective” needs to occur in order to ensure that girls and young women are competitive and successful in their futures. Although she focused on the recent engineering competition, she is referencing a bigger issue that women are still misrepresented in positions of power, leadership, and even pay.

Children do grow up receiving messages based on gender that place limits on who they are or can become, on how they are to behave, on what they do, and how much they can hope to achieve. We all need to be cognizant of these messages and give children, both boys and girls, safe environments, experiences, and relationships that give them the space and support to sort through the messages and heed those that best enable them to explore all options and achieve their highest potential.

Here in Alameda, Girls Inc. of the Island City is helping girls to achieve by taking an approach that places the responsibility for apparent gender discrimination primarily on the barriers, not on girls. We assume that girls are potentially interested in many areas and provide opportunities for girls to explore interests and develop skills in nontraditional areas. We provide programming in a girl-only environment with a pro-girl focus, working with girls to gain the tools and skills that will empower them to live and succeed in an inequitable world and assert their rights. Examples include learning between girls and adult role models and mentors; providing public speaking and leadership opportunities; and by setting a tone proclaiming that girls are *strong, smart, and bold*. Long before Sheryl Sanberg’s book, we have taught thousands of girls for almost 50 years to “lean In”.

We are grateful for the many people in Alameda who believe in our girls’ potentials and support us in our vision for an equitable society.

Sincerely,

Karen D. Kenney  
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Girls Inc. of the Island City  
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*Girls Inc. of the Island City is an affiliate of the national organization Girls Inc. Since 1964, Girls Inc. of the Island City has provided the only program in Alameda designed specifically for girls. Our programs “fill in the gap” on issues that parents and schools do not always have the time or resources to cover. We provide more than 25,000 hours of programming each year to girls ages 6 to 18. At Girls Inc. of the Island City, girls and teens are challenged to explore science, math and computers, sports and health, friendships and conflict resolution, as well as to examine how money is earned and invested, and to ask questions about and take leadership roles in the world.*

*We also offer a licensed childcare service called Alameda Island Kids for both girls and boys at seven elementary schools around Alameda, including Bay Farm, Earhart, Edison, Franklin, Lum, Otis, and Paden. For more information about Alameda Island Kids, call (510) 521-1743 ext. 202 or visit our website at [www.girlsincislandcity.org](http://www.girlsincislandcity.org).*

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