

A busy month for Island Girls Inc.

GET out your pencils, pens and Post-its. When you flip the wall calendar to May, you will want to mark the date for at least one local Girls Inc. activity.

"This May is a big month for Girls Inc. of the Island City," said Kristin Butler, development director.

In addition to a big lineup of events and program registration dates, May marks the beginning of executive director Romy Amos' retirement after nearly 12 years with the organization.

"The Women of the 21st Century" speaker series on May 9 will feature KGO business reporter Lynn Jimenez discussing the importance of women's economic literacy. The event includes a presentation by girls participating in "She's on the Money," a Girls Inc. program teaching money management



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and economics.

The speaker series is the outreach arm for the newly formed Women of the 21st Century Club. Club members pay an annual fee and agree to serve as ambassadors for Girls Inc. of the Island City. They encourage their peers to make donations or become club members as well.

When Butler asked what the women sought in return, their only request was to receive regular updates on Girls Inc. activities. Club members want to know their time and money make a difference for girls.

"It's a heart thing," says Butler. "Women give in a way that is less connected to perks and more tied to the issues they're passionate

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Island Girls Inc. have busy May

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about."

Women of the 21st Century Club hosts six speaker events each year. Past topics have included violence against women and leadership. July's subject will be "Women and Girls in Science, Math and Technology." Non-members are welcome to attend.

"We want to raise funds, but we also want to raise awareness of our programs," says Butler.

The largest fundraiser for Girls Inc. of the Island City is its Celebration of Excellence Luncheon. The sixth annual luncheon begins at 11 a.m. May 14 at the Oakland Airport Hilton. Tickets must be purchased by May 9.

Each year, the luncheon honors women and youth in the community. This year's honorees include Ana-Marie Jones, executive director of Collaborating Agencies Responding to Disasters, and Gretel Gates, a longtime Alameda community advocate.

Gates is known for her work with the Mayor's Committee of the Homeless Shelter, the American Heart Association in Alameda, Meals on Wheels and the Temple Israel Sisterhood, among others. Five finalists for the Youth Award, recognizing girls providing community service and meeting Girls Inc. principles, will be presented, with the winner named at the luncheon.

Noel Cisneros, KRON-TV East Bay bureau chief and an Alameda resident, will lead the ceremonies. Gilda Gonzales, CEO of Oakland's Unity Council and former chief of staff to Oakland Mayor Jerry Brown, will be keynote speaker.

Butler is proud that the girls of Girls Inc. play an important role too. They research

speakers' backgrounds, write introduction scripts and present awards. Girls also learn luncheon etiquette so they feel confident at the event.

Girls 6 to 16 can take part in Girls Inc. of the Island City programs this summer. Registration begins May 21. Details of the many programs offered are found at the group's revamped Web site, www.girlsincislandcity.org.

The group also operates activity centers open this summer to both girls and boys at seven Alameda schools (Bay Farm, Earhart, Edison, Franklin, Lum, Otis and Paden). Check www.girlsincislandcity.org for enrollment information.

How to attend

The Women of the 21st Century Club Speaker Event is at 6:30 p.m. May 9 at Immanuel Lutheran Church, 1910 Santa Clara Ave. Tickets will be sold at the door. For more information or to become a club member, contact Butler at 521-1743.

The Sixth Annual Girls Inc. of the Island City Celebration of Excellence Luncheon is at 11 a.m. May 14 at the Oakland Airport Hilton. For tickets, call 521-1743. ANG Newspapers and the Alameda-Times Star are media sponsors. Other sponsorship opportunities are still available. Contact Butler, 521-1743, before May 11 to be listed as a sponsor in the luncheon program.

Mentoring and speaking opportunities are available for women throughout the year. Call 521-1743 to volunteer.

Call Suzanne T. Storar at 523-6641 or e-mail STStorar@aol.com with information about Alameda's interesting people, places or events.