



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Giovanna Taormina - (707) 794-9477 | gtaormina@girlscircle.com

Bridgeport Training in October Teaches Adults How to Facilitate Cutting-Edge Support Groups for Girls

Research Based Model Shows Significant Increases in Girls Self-Efficacy, Attachment to School, Decreases in Alcohol Use, Self-Harming Behavior

Bridgeport, CT.... Girls Circle Association, the leading U.S. developer of gender-responsive, research based support programs for adolescent girls, is now registering participants to attend its two-day Facilitator Training workshop from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Oct. 18th & 19th, at University of Bridgeport, Social Room, 126 Park Ave., Bridgeport, CT 06604. The event is being hosted by The Center for Women & Families of Eastern Fairfield County, Inc. To register for the training program, call 707-794-9477, or visit www.girlscircle.com.

Attendees will learn to implement the widely-acclaimed Girls Circle model, a proven method of promoting positive social growth and development among girls.

Developed in 1994, Girls Circle is a structured support group for girls age 9 through 18 that offers skills to counteract negative social pressures and foster personal growth. It offers a social framework in which girls can openly discuss risky social behaviors, while learning to improve their self-image and interpersonal relationships. Founders Beth Hossfeld, MFT, and Giovanna Taormina formed the Cotati-based nonprofit Girls Circle Association in 1997, providing training and materials for those serving girls.

Rated “a promising approach” by the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Girls Circle provides a setting in which small groups meet two hours weekly for eight to 12 weeks or more. The Girls Circle program is currently being utilized by the Sonoma County Probation Dept. as the gender-responsive model for its Circles Across Sonoma program. Now in its third year, the Circles Across Sonoma program has had a significant positive impact on the teenage girls who have completed the program. These girls report increased trust in their facilitators and a greater ability to communicate their concerns to adults. Girls Circle also is utilized around the world by over 5,000 schools, juvenile justice, mental health, child welfare, public health and youth serving organizations. National studies have recognized Girls Circle’s success as follows:

- Decrease in self-harming behavior, such as alcohol and drug use
- Increased attachment to school

- Increased self-efficacy
- Improved body image
- Increased sense of self-sufficiency

About Girls Circle

As mothers with a passionate vision to foster healthy relationships and choices within their daughters and other girls' lives, founders Giovanna Taormina and Beth Hossfeld, MFT, created the first Girls Circle group. Recognizing the impact of their first Girls Circle and responding to the needs in their communities and beyond, they launched training programs in 1997 that have helped more than 5,000 organizations across the nation successfully implement the model. Over the past 11 years, the Girls Circle approach has been implemented with girls across every socioeconomic, geographical, ethnic, religious population, and sexual orientation. The strengths based, skill-building approach creates a safe space to address risky behaviors, build on protective factors, and improve relationships in a format that interests and engages girls. Direct service providers attend trainings or can purchase the materials in order to implement this sustainable model within their current programming mix. Additionally, the model is endorsed by the U.S. Dept of Justice as "a promising approach" and is recommended in their Model Programs Guide. For more information, visit www.girlscircle.com.

About The Center for Women & Families of Eastern Fairfield County

The Center for Women and Families of Eastern Fairfield County, Inc. (CWF) is dedicated to strengthening women and families and to eliminating violence and abuse through education, intervention, advocacy, and community collaboration.

With roots in the greater Bridgeport community dating to 1895, The Center for Women and Families of Eastern Fairfield County has a long tradition of providing high quality support and services to women and families.

Each year, their staff:

- Teaches more than 7,000 children and teens about preventing bullying, building healthy relationships, and preventing dating violence.
- Trains more than 3,000 adults to prevent abuse and help victims.
- Answers over 2,000 crisis calls on 24-hour crisis hotlines.
- Assists with the civil and criminal court processes for more than 3,000 survivors of domestic violence.
- Responds to over 300 survivors of sexual assault and their families.
- Provides a safe home for more than 100 women and their children fleeing domestic violence.
- Coordinates the investigations of over 100 cases of child sexual and severe physical abuse and develops service plans for the young survivors and their families.

Today, CWF serves residents of Bridgeport, Easton, Fairfield, Monroe, Stratford, and Trumbull.

###