

# GIRLS' GOVERNMENT

A SPECIAL CIVICS PROGRAM FOR GRADE 8 GIRLS



In 2008, MPP Cheri DiNovo created the Girls' Government program as a non-partisan, multi-party supported civics engagement activity.

Cheri partnered initially with Equal Voice Toronto and now with the EVE Society to ensure the growth of the program to reach every riding in the province of Ontario, engage every interested school and its grade 8 girls and to match them to their local MPPs.

The program introduces the girls to the machinery of advocacy and public policy via the political process of their Ridings.

It teaches them about public affairs and issues that matter to them personally or to their community.

It shows them how to have a "voice."

They will witness first-hand the inner workings of the Ontario Legislature, meet the Premier and other senior Cabinet Ministers, Opposition Critics from both sides of the House and see their MPP in action.

They will learn how to build a case for stakeholder support, generate interest via media in the form of a Letter to the Editor and a mini press conference.

It's an empowering, educational and enjoyable program that could just change their lives.

Download the full resource at <http://www.evesociety.com/girls-government>.



MPP Cheri DiNovo with one of the grade 8 girls from her Parkdale- High Park riding participating in a Girls' Government Queen's Park Day press conference.

## GIRLS' GOVERNMENT LESSON PLAN: GETTING STARTED

### HOMework REVIEW

**For Teachers:** Girls can be asked to identify a woman politician – Canadian or Ontarian – who they identify with as someone who made or is making a difference on an important issue.

### WOMEN POLITICAL LEADERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The girls should have that woman politician identified and be ready to present her story at the first meeting on the group with the local MPP. They should have her picture, her riding, when she was first elected, the issue or issues that provoked her to run for political office and what made her story so compelling that the girl chose her as a woman political champion. *See Activity Sheet #1.*

### ADVOCACY TOPICS OF INTEREST

The teacher may decide to have the girls also attend the first meeting with the MPP with possible topics also identified. We leave the assignments and meeting homework up to the teacher and girls to determine.

It can be helpful to advancing the program if the girls come to that first meeting with some sense of ideas and issues that matter to them so they can relate to the upcoming assignment of identifying a topic, preparing to become advocates on that topic and to appeal to provincial elected officials to act on their issue. *See Activity Sheet #2.*

# DID YOU KNOW?

The teacher might want to share with the girls some Canadian facts and stats on women in politics/government for further context.

**Did You Know?** Canadian suffrage went on for almost 100 years in Canada. Federally women did not get the right to vote until 1917.

**Did You Know?** The first federal election women voted in was in 1921.

**Did You Know?** The first woman elected to be an MP in Canada was Agnes Macphail. She was a strong activist for penal reform and founded the Elizabeth Fry Society of Canada

**Did You Know?** The first woman Senator in Canada was Cairine Wilson. She was appointed in 1930. It was 23 years before another woman Senator was appointed. Wilson was also Canada's first woman delegate to the United Nations.

## GIRLS' GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY SHEET #1

# MY POLITICAL HEROINE

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Due:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Activity:** The purpose of Girls' Government is to make you think about how government and the political system work and the systemic barriers to gender parity in provincial Legislatures, the Canadian Parliament and municipal council chambers. Women struggled for over 100 years to get the vote in Canada. The first woman elected to the Canadian Parliament as an MP was Agnes Macphail in 1921. The first woman Premier in Ontario was Kathleen Wynne in 2014.

**Name a Canadian woman politician you most admire. (Include at least 3 points as to why you chose her.)**

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**What was her most significant contribution?**

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**How did her political career open doors for other women?**

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**GIRLS' GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY SHEET #2**

**MY ISSUE(S)**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Due:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Activity:** The purpose of Girls' Government is to give you the opportunity to become an advocate on a political or public policy issue that is important to you. Take some time and think about what concerns you, angers you or confuses you that is having or could have an impact in Ontario or Canada as a whole. Is there anything government or elected officials should be doing differently? Please come up with two proposals for issues that your Girl's Government could address and be prepared to present your ideas to the group (5-minute presentation).

**ISSUE PROPOSAL #1**

**Name:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Why is this issue important? (Include at least 3 points)**

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**ISSUE PROPOSAL # 2**

**Name:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Why is this issue important? (Include at least 3 points)**

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