Girls Holla Back! is a **FREE** Intergenerational HIV/AIDS and substance abuse prevention program for African American girls ages 12—17 and their adult female caregiver.

This gender & culturally specific program seeks to prevent and reduce the onset of substance abuse and the transmission of HIV/AIDS among African American females in high-risk communities in the St. Louis, MO-IL metropolitan statistical area.

Our mission is to empower African American females to take responsibility for their own health and wellness and to strengthen communication between the generations.

Participants engage in educational prevention workshops complemented with fun-filled culturally specific communications and bonding activities such as dance, storytelling, poetry, and beauty day. They also benefit from the expertise of guest speakers, peer support groups, and free on-site behavioral health counseling.

More than half of females across all races with HIV contracted it through heterosexual contact.

HIV and AIDS continue to disproportionately affect African Americans around the St. Louis region. Across Missouri and Illinois counties tracked in the data shown in this publication, African Americans comprise 19% of the overall population but have the highest prevalence of HIV disease (704.7 cases of HIV per 100,000) (Data and graphs for Figures 1 and 2 prepared by the City of St. Louis Department of Health, Center for Health Information, Research and Planning; used by permission).

**What did caregivers like best about the program?**

- “Getting the facts and learning to communicate with my daughter”
- “The eye-opening statistics/awareness!”
- “Sisterhood, it taught me to be more open for conversation with my children about sex and drugs”

**What did girls say they learned from the program?**

- “Protecting Yourself”
- “Realizing how drugs and alcohol can hurt you”
- “You learn about ways to say no!”
Risk for African American Women and Girls. The race disparity is even greater when looking at HIV/AIDS prevalence only among females (Fig. 1).

Risk for young people. Incidence of new HIV cases is equally high in 2013 for the 13-24 age group as the 25-44 age group (see Figure 2).

In Missouri counties, proportion of HIV incidence increased among 13-24 year olds from 2010 (34.9% of new cases were in 13-24 year age group) and 2013 (42.8% of new cases in this age group).

Girls Holla Back! is increasing knowledge about HIV and AIDS, how it is transmitted, and how to prevent contracting it. The first 5 cohorts served under our current grant (2010-2015) were evaluated for changes in knowledge from Baseline to Exit among youth and adults. The results indicate that knowledge significantly increased for both youth and adults (Table 1). Knowledge increases remained significant at a 3-month follow-up assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Variable</th>
<th>Baseline score</th>
<th>Exit score</th>
<th>Significance test (N=90 youth; N=74 adults)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIV Knowledge, Youth (# correct out of 9)</td>
<td>M=5.7 (SD=2.3)</td>
<td>M=6.8 (SD=2.2)</td>
<td>t(85)=-4.8, p&lt;.001**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV Knowledge, Adults (# correct out of 6)</td>
<td>M=5.1 (SD=0.9)</td>
<td>M=5.7 (SD=0.6)</td>
<td>t(70)=-6.6, p&lt;.001**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Girls Holla Back! Outcomes Update
Girls Holla Back! is also increasing the frequency of communication between girls and their caregivers about growing up, sex, and health, and increasing how comfortable girls and caregivers report that they feel when talking with each other about these topics. Frequency of and comfort with communication increase significantly at exit compared to baseline, and the difference is maintained at the 3-month follow-up (Fig. 3 and 4). For youth, the increase is greatest at the 3-month follow-up point.
Girls Holla Back!

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