



*NCCD Center for
Girls and Young Women*

Media Advisory

**NCCD CENTER FOR GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN AWARDED GRANT FOR
JACKSONVILLE SCHOOL PROJECT**

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JACKSONVILLE, Florida – The National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) Center for Girls and Young Women has been awarded a four-year Local Funding Partnerships matching grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to partially underwrite *Girl Matters: It's Elementary*. The project is a gender- and culturally-responsive alternative to suspension and expulsion for 5-to-12-year-old girls who present disruptive behaviors in targeted elementary schools in Duval County (Jacksonville, Florida). The Weaver Family Foundation has matched the first year of funding from RWJF.

"For too long, young girls and their needs have been almost invisible. We know that girls and boys do not respond in the same way to most things. That includes how girls 'act out' and may be labeled as troubled or troublesome," says Delores Barr Weaver, Founder and Trustee of the Weaver Family Foundation. *"I am so very pleased that we can leverage local funds with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant to make it possible to address the needs of girls in Jacksonville through Girl Matters: It's Elementary. We hope to see our girls staying in school, learning and growing rather than heading into the juvenile justice system at such a young age."*

The total project budget is \$1,000,000. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation awarded nearly \$500,000, and requires that community funding partners match its investment dollar for dollar. The Weaver Family Foundation has taken lead in the community by matching the RWJF first year commitment. The Center enjoys strong community support and looks forward to working with local funders to match the subsequent three years of funding.

This project reflects the recommendations set forth in the Justice for Girls: Duval County Initiative (JFG) strategic plan. Funded by the Women's Giving Alliance, Jessie Ball duPont Fund and other private donors, the JFG Initiative is led by a committed group of community leaders. (See attached list of Leadership Council members.)

According to Nat Glover, former sheriff of Jacksonville and now Interim President of Edward Waters College, *"As a member of the Leadership Council I see this project as a continuation of our vision for girls in Duval County. Last year 849 girls K-5 received out-of-school suspensions. That number triples in 6th and 7th grade. We think that giving girls the services they need early can reverse that trend."*

The goal of this work is to identify behaviors that shepherd girls into the juvenile justice system and determine points where girls can be prevented from entering, diverted or appropriately referred to services based on individual needs and public safety risks. School failure is the single largest event that begins the cycle of girls becoming involved in the juvenile justice system. Girls who are tardy, who act inappropriately on the school bus, disrupt their class, or perhaps get involved in pushing and shoving may receive an out of school suspension. However, rather than being kept out of school, they would be better helped by: counseling, mentoring, tutoring, connections with community services, referrals to girl serving agencies, home visit with parents, or family support.

Girl Matters™: It's Elementary will begin in the North Shore K-8 and George Washington Carver Elementary schools. This collaborative effort will provide a gender-responsive training curriculum to teach school personnel, project staff, and community partners effective strategies for addressing the factors that cause girls' acting out behaviors. It will also provide direct services to the girls in each of the targeted schools. Project staff and interns from Edward Waters College, Florida State University, Jacksonville University and University of North Florida will provide care management, counseling, crisis intervention, family support services, and referrals based on assessed needs. Girls from PACE Center for Girls of Jacksonville will serve as "teen" mentors to the younger girls.

"Duval County Public Schools' involvement in this project is an innovative opportunity for the schools to work with The Center for Girls and Young Women and community partners to intervene early in the lives of girls who may be at risk," notes Ed Pratt-Dannals, Superintendent of Duval County Public Schools. The project will evaluate the impact of these early interventions by comparing the outcomes with two similar schools that do not provide these services.

Dr. Lawanda Ravoira, Director of the NCCD Center for Girls and Young Women says, *"Local Funding Partnerships (LFP) is one of the most competitive annual grantmaking programs of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The LFP office received 181 strong applications for the 2010 awards and only 10 projects were selected. We greatly appreciate the commitment of our collaborating partners and our local funders to support this project."*

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The NCCD Center for Girls and Young Women is guided by the courageous life experiences of girls and young women in the juvenile and child welfare systems and is the passionate voice for activism to ensure equitable, humane, and gender-appropriate responses to improve outcomes for girls and young women. The Center was launched in Jacksonville, Florida in October 2008. This is the newest division of NCCD and is responding to the growing population of girls in the juvenile justice system. It focuses on advocacy, research, assessment services, staff training and evaluation to address juvenile justice and child welfare systems that are designed for boys and ill-equipped to meet the gender-specific needs of girls and young women.

The National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) is the nation's oldest private organization working to attain responsive and effective criminal justice, juvenile justice, and child welfare systems. For over 100 years, NCCD has been committed to promoting criminal justice strategies that are fair, humane, cost-effective, and uncompromising in public safety. The issues that have defined NCCD since its inception are the need for a separate and humane justice system for children, alternatives to incarceration, and the fundamental connection between social justice and public safety. For more information on NCCD, please visit our website at www.nccd-crc.org.

The Weaver Family Foundation was established by J. Wayne and Delores Barr Weaver in 1990. The Foundation was created with the hope that through such an entity, the Weaver children could continue the philanthropic endeavors initiated by their parents, and provide a vehicle to nurture charitable efforts close to their own hearts. The Weavers also hope their grandchildren will be third generation philanthropists. While the foundation does not seek to obtain unsolicited proposals, the family continues to pursue and support multiple programs in Jacksonville and nationally that follow their passions. Since 1995, the Foundation has contributed over \$21.7 million to agencies in Jacksonville's five-county area

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change.

For more than 35 years the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime. For more information, visit www.rwjf.org.