

Field of Dreams 2024



Determined Nation

Dear Friends,

29 years. It's not one of the "milestone" anniversaries, but it is definitely worth celebrating. As a group that started as a grassroots organization in a storefront back in 1995, the founders of Girls in the Game likely weren't thinking about where they would be in 29 years. Instead they focused on delivering programs that offered opportunities for around 100 girls to learn sports and the lessons that come with it.

Those founders probably never imagined when they held their first Field of Dreams anniversary event in a gym, serving hot dogs to people in running shoes, that 29 years later they would welcome more than 500 guests to the Intercontinental Grand Ballroom on Michigan Avenue. They wouldn't have imagined professional videos, high-caliber honorees, or that, in those 29 years more than 60,000 girls would take part in Girls in the Game programs.

Instead, they focused on the work that was ahead of them with determination. That one word is the very thing that can transform an idea into an action that will change lives. And those lives changed aren't just the ones of the girls who have come through programming. It's the lives of volunteers, Board members, school partners, and staff members. Because it takes all of these people to grow something as long-lasting as Girls in the Game. It takes not just determination, but a Determined Nation.

Today, we eagerly look towards the future and let our ideas guide us. We want to continue to create leaders in our Determined Nation. Through elementary and middle school, high school and beyond, bringing back alumnae to continue to give them opportunities, and looking towards reaching even more girls, Girls in the Game believes in the power of girls. We work tirelessly to let girls and young women know they are supported, they are the future, and one day, they will be the ones taking the reins to reflect the ever-changing needs of girls.

Our stakeholders, the people at the very heart of our Determined Nation, have worked over the past year to develop the road map to help us to grow this nation. This past summer, we entered the first year of our new strategic plan that will intentionally guide our work for the next three years. How do you build a Determined Nation? By focusing on strengthening our team and creating a culture to better serve girls; by looking at our community engagement strategy and focusing efforts on those who need us most; by fostering collaboration with external partners to deepen our impact on girls; and by amplifying girls' voices and allowing their stories to be shared.

We know this work won't end at the end of the three-year plan, but we also know that these steps will help us create an even greater Determined Nation in Chicago and beyond. And with those new leaders being developed in that time, who knows where they will take our lessons, our drive and our belief in girls? We are incredibly proud to be Co-Chairs of tonight's event as well as members of the Board of Directors for Girls in the Game and part of its Determined Nation. On behalf of our amazing planning committee and our Board, thank you all for being here tonight. We also thank all of the participants and families over the years who have believed in our mission and helped to empower girls. We hope that you enjoy the night, find some inspiration in the words that you hear and join our Determined Nation as we enter our next phase.

Thank you,

Crystal Andrews Banks and Norah Larke
2024 Field of Dreams Co-Chairs

2024 Field of Dreams Gala

February 29, 2024

6:00-7:00pm: Cocktail Reception

7:15pm: Program Begins

7:20pm: Welcome to Field of Dreams

7:30pm: Dinner

Salad:

Baby Gem Salad, Marinated Heirloom Tomatoes, Shaved Grana Padano, Focaccia Crouton, Basil Scented Buttermilk Caesar Dressing

Entrée:

Thyme Roasted Chicken, Supreme Organic Parsnip Apple Puree, Wild Mushroom Pan Perdu, Roasted Petite Carrot, Caramelized Honey Thyme Jus

Or

Mushroom Filled Ravioli with Wild Mushrooms, Sauteed Zucchini and Madeira Sauce
(Vegetarian)

Dessert:

Chocolate Hazelnut Mousse Bar with Praline Crunch and Toasted Hazelnuts

7:50-8:45pm: Program

8:00pm: Silent Auction Closes

8:45pm: Thank You & Silent Auction Check-out

A special "High Five" to the amazing Field of Dreams planning committee members for planning another much-anticipated event!

Crystal Andrews Banks (The Kraft Heinz Company) and Norah Larke (Wintrust)
2024 Event Co-Chairs

Tanara Boxer | Shannon Coomes | Erin Cullen | Erika Del Guidice | Miral Khairy
Peggy Kusinski | Katie Ramey | Madelyn Ryder



Determined Nation

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2022-23 Program Survey Highlights

Maureen Burns and Amy Bohnert, Ph.D.
Activity Matters Lab
Loyola University Chicago



Knowledge About Nutrition (Elementary)

90% of elementary After School girls maintained or improved their nutrition knowledge composite score.

Self-Awareness, Efficacy and Identity (Elementary)

85% of After School girls maintained or improved their self-awareness, efficacy, and identity composite scores.

Body Positivity (Elementary)

80% of After School girls maintained or improved their body positivity composite scores.

Self-Esteem (Elementary)

77% of After School girls maintained or improved their self-esteem composite scores.

Teens learned to:

Speak up, guide others who need help, and how to shine in a group of people

Teens had the highest reports in measures of:

- Self-Awareness
- Relationships and New Friends
- Leadership
- Enjoyment of Physical Activity

When asked what they enjoyed most, teens mentioned:

The opportunity to speak with powerful women, collaborate with women, and learn communication skills



2022-23 Program Survey Highlights: Teens

Maureen Burns and Amy Bohnert, Ph.D.
Activity Matters Lab
Loyola University Chicago



When asked what they enjoyed most, teens mentioned:

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Teens learned to:

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Teens had the highest reports in measures of:

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- Relationships and New Friends
- Leadership
- Enjoyment of Physical Activity



Mission: At Girls in the Game, every girl finds her voice, discovers her strength and builds confidence through fun and active sports, health and leadership programs.

Vision: Girls in the Game empowers all girls to speak up, stand out, and inspire future generations.

Values:

We nurture the whole girl.

Our programs encourage physical and emotional health and promote active minds, bodies and hearts.

We believe in the power of girls.

Our girl-centered programs create a space for participants to discover and grow their strength and leadership.

We push for equity.

Recognizing the unique structural and institutional barriers that girls of color face, we prioritize girls and communities that need our programs most.



We drive innovation.

We respond to the evolving needs of girls through data-driven practices, taking risks and boldly embracing change.

We stand for inclusivity.

Moving beyond the binary of "girl", we welcome LGBTQ+ youth and gender-expansive participants regardless of gender identity or expression.

We create safe spaces.

Collectively with participants, we design programs where girls are safe to be vulnerable, build resilience, and explore who they are and who they want to be.

Priorities



Strengthen our team

Girls in the Game will champion our staff at every level, creating a culture of growth to better serve girls.

Foster deeper collaboration

We will expand our collaboration with partners to deepen access and reach for under-resourced communities and populations.

Revitalize our community-based strategy

Girls in the Game will evaluate our current community strategy and implement new practices that will allow us to engage the areas that need us most.

Amplify girls' voices

We will use data, our own expertise and girls' perspectives to build greater awareness and support for their needs.

Who We Serve

Who do we serve? Whoever needs us. We work in Chicago (our home base), Baltimore and Bloomington to provide programs in schools, parks and community spaces. However, we prioritize girls of color who have been systematically and historically denied access to both sports and vital services.

Inclusion Policy

Girls in the Game aims to be a positive, supportive environment for girls and gender-expansive youth. **When we say "girls", we mean that we welcome participants regardless of their gender identity and gender expression.** We welcome all those who identify as girls or are exploring their gender identity or expression, regardless of their assigned sex at birth. This applies to both to participants who are already in our program and incoming participants.

We respect a young person's wishes to be called by the name and pronoun they choose and ensure that all participants do the same. We will listen and learn in order to ensure we do not make mistaken assumptions based on outward appearance or performance of gender. We will continue to dedicate ourselves to maintaining a safe, welcoming environment for all participants.

"40% of high schools that predominantly serve students of color have large opportunity gaps for girls in sports, compared with 16 % of heavily white schools."

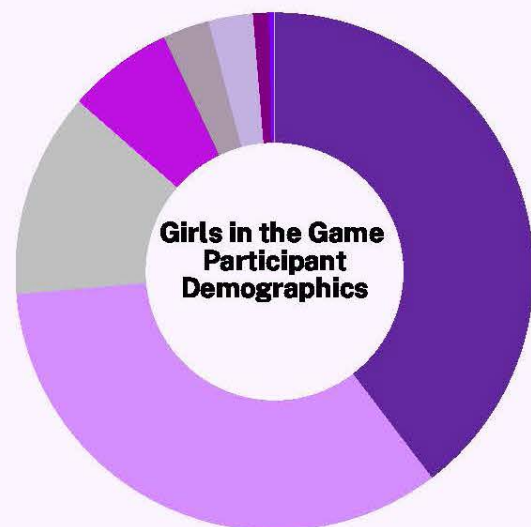
(Finishing Last: Girls of Color and High School Sports, National Women's Law Center, 2015)

In Girls in the Game's asset map survey of 116 organizations on the West Side of Chicago, only 2.6% were dedicated to serving girls.

(What Girls Need Now, 2021)

"Black girls are perceived to be more independent, more knowledgeable about sex, and less in need of protection."

(American Civil Liberties Union, 2021)



- Black or African American (39.66%)
- Hispanic/Latina (33.97%)
- Prefer Not to Identify (12.8%)
- White (6.6%)
- Two or More Races (2.89%)
- Asian (2.77%)
- Other (1.02%)
- American Indian or Alaskan Native (0.26%)
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (0.03%)



Sarah Adam

Sarah Adam, a rising star in the sport of wheelchair rugby, is making history in the tough sport known as “Murder Ball.” With aspirations to become the first woman to compete in wheelchair rugby at the Paralympic Games for Team USA, Adams has already secured her spot on the 2024 USA Wheelchair Rugby Training Squad. She was lauded as one of the top breakout performers on the Road to Paris in 2023.

At the 2023 Parapan American Games, Adam not only became the first woman ever to claim gold in wheelchair rugby at the Parapan American Games, but she was one of the top athletes on the court as well. She scored second-highest point total of the tournament, and helped guarantee Team USA a coveted spot at the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games. Adding to her accolades, Adam played a crucial role in her team earning the silver medal at the 2022 Wheelchair Rugby World Championship, further solidifying her standing as a formidable force in the sport.

Beyond her athletic endeavors, Adam also works as a professor of Occupational Therapy at Saint Louis University in Missouri.

Adam’s journey in wheelchair rugby began in 2013 when, as an able-bodied volunteer at a regional para sport event, she was introduced to the sport that would later become her passion. A former softball player in high school and at Augustana College, Adam’s life took an unexpected turn in 2016 when she was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis while pursuing her graduate studies at Washington University in St. Louis



Curtis Granderson

Curtis Granderson, aka “Grandyman”, is a former MLB outfielder and philanthropic leader for several non-profit organizations – the Grand Kids Foundation, Grand Giving and Chicago Baseball & Educational Academy. While the three-time MLB All-Star and Roberto Clemente Award winner played in many cities throughout his career, he was born and raised in Chicago and it’s the city he calls home. His passion for fostering deeper community connections in Chicago, while working to diversify the sport, is paving the way for more young kids to learn and grow through baseball.

In 2007, Curtis established the Grand Kids Foundation, which aids in positive youth development through education, physical fitness and nutrition initiatives. In 2013, the organization launched an annual food insecurity campaign and fundraiser, GRAND GIVING (grandgiving.org), which has helped supply over 40 million meals to families in need through partnerships with the Greater Chicago Food Depository and the Northern Illinois Food Bank.

In 2014, the University of Illinois at Chicago alum donated \$5 million to UIC for enhancements to the athletic training facilities and baseball field, where the stadium was re-named Curtis Granderson Stadium. His dedication to providing thousands of inner-city kids the opportunity to play ball on a college campus is now made possible through the Chicago Baseball & Educational Academy (cbeauic.org) - a Grand Kids Foundation partner.

In 2020, after a 16-year career, Curtis retired from the game, but remains connected to the sport currently serving as a color commentator for TBS Baseball and as the President of The Players Alliance, a non-profit comprised of 150 current and former MLB players united to create increased opportunities, inclusion and diversity in the sport of professional baseball.

To learn more about Curtis Granderson and his philanthropic efforts, visit CurtisGrandersonFoundation.org (launching April 2024).



Marianne Markowitz

Marianne Markowitz is the President and Chief Executive Officer of First Women's Bank, the only Bank in the country formed to close the gender lending gap and support the women's economy.

Previously, Marianne served as Acting Administrator for the US Small Business Administration nationally, as Regional Administrator for SBA's Midwest Region V and as an interim Cabinet Member in the Obama administration. Most recently, Marianne was Managing Director at CIBC Bank USA, and before her time at the SBA, Marianne served as the CFO for the Obama for America 2008 presidential campaign and spent more than 17 years in finance and risk management roles for leading global institutions in the U.S., U.K., and Switzerland. Marianne received a bachelor's degree from the University of Missouri and an MBA from DePaul University. Marianne currently serves on the boards of FWB Financial, Inc and First Women's Bank. Previously she served on the Lycée Francaise de Chicago, Family Farmed, Obama for America boards. She is a member of the Milken Executive Circle, the Chicago Economic Club, International Women's Forum (Chicago), The Chicago Club and in 2023 was a recipient of Crain's Chicago Women of Note Award and the 2023 Athena Award.



Jennifer Lynne Williams

Jennifer Lynne Williams is a distinguished sports leader known for her transformative impact. On May 2021, she was proudly announced as the Chief Development Officer for the USA Basketball Foundation, a role that exemplifies her commitment to cultivating a culture of excellence and progress within the realm of basketball. In this capacity, she drives the comprehensive growth of the USA Basketball Foundation, pioneering an inclusive fundraising platform. Her efforts support diverse national team programs spotlighting women and fostering social responsibility.

Notably, on July 20, 2022, Williams etched history by securing a monumental \$3.5 million donation from the Tull Family Foundation. This landmark contribution stands as the largest gift to the USA Basketball Foundation since its inception in 2019, marking her prowess in resource mobilization.

With a distinguished career marked by groundbreaking achievements, Williams has consistently elevated the organizations she's been a part of. Named as the Director for Intercollegiate Athletics at Alabama State University (ASU) on October 10, 2018, she had previously served as the university's Interim Athletic Director and Deputy Athletic Director, driving remarkable success during her tenure. While serving at ASU, the Hornets experienced an unprecedented 43 Southwestern Athletic Conference championships, three consecutive commissioner cups, and two conference academic awards for the highest GPA, all under her leadership.

Williams' journey also saw her contribute significantly to North Carolina A&T State University where she served as the Associate Athletic Director for Development and Executive Director for the Aggie Athletic Foundation from 2012 to 2016. Her pivotal role oversaw all giving initiatives for athletics, and she was instrumental in the institution receiving recognition as a model booster organization by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE).



Special Thanks

Girls in the Game would like to thank the following individuals and organizations whose efforts helped contribute to the success of this evening as well as helping us to create Determined Nation over the past 29 years. Your continued support has allowed Girls in the Game to continue to help girls to discover their strength and become changemakers, wherever their lives take them.

Thank you to the amazing 2024 Field of Dreams Event Co-Chairs and Committee who made this event come to life! Your positivity, creativity and dedication make each of you a pleasure to work with. Thank you for spending close to a year of your lives to plan this night. Your passion is evident and you are truly inspirational.

Co-Chair: Crystal Andrews Banks, The Kraft Heinz Company

Co-Chair: Norah Larke, Wintrust

Committee Members:

Tanara Boxer | Shannon Coomes | Erin Cullen | Erika Del Guidice | Miral Khairy
Peggy Kusinski | Katie Ramey | Madelyn Ryder

Girls in the Game Board, Auxiliary Board, Staff, Interns, and Volunteers who help Girls in the Game achieve its goals every year. Thank you all for your guidance and dedication. Our work isn't possible without each of you.

Our sponsors and silent auction donors for their commitment to our organization. Your support has allowed us to help girls to stay in the game and make an impact on the future of tens of thousands of girls over the years.

Each of you have played a crucial role in helping us to build Determined Nation with every new year.

We look forward to seeing all of you in the coming year!



The Hall of Fame

What is the Hall of Fame?

The Girls in the Game Hall of Fame aims to honor Girls in the Game donors for their generous support through rewards and recognition at set giving levels. With personal outreach and increasing incentives that grow with gift size, the Hall of Fame celebrates donors as critical members of the Girls in the Game community.

Hall of Fame Benefits

Joining the Hall of Fame includes perks such as name recognition in our annual report, a letter from programming, a tour of our programs, and invitations to special events depending on your level of giving. Hall of Fame levels start at \$250.

The Hall of Fame will relaunch in March 2024. Will you join us?

A Special Thank You to Last Year's Top Donors

Blue Kelly (\$10,000 level)

Anna Haghgooie (\$5,000 level)





GIRLS IN THE GAME

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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

BRANDON JOHNSON
MAYOR

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, founded in 1995, Girls in the Game provides and promotes sports and fitness opportunities, nutrition & health education, and leadership development programs that have helped and empowered over 45,000 girls and women; and

WHEREAS, Girls in the Game is dedicated to serving girls in diverse communities throughout Chicagoland by helping to ensure that girls from every community enjoy equal opportunities to participate in constructive activities and improve their health; and

WHEREAS, Girls in the Game provides girls with formative experiences that encourage them to make positive changes and choices regarding their health, leadership potential, and self-esteem; and

WHEREAS, Girls in the Game also offers innovative year-round programming that addresses the whole girl through involved curriculum and energetic team-building; and

WHEREAS, for 29 years, Girls in the Game has broken down barriers that young women face in sports and fitness programs, and in life, while also empowering girls and young women by providing them with a range of pertinent skills and lessons they can take off the court and field to apply to life and society; and

WHEREAS, this year, Girls in the Game will mark its 29th Anniversary, and host their highly anticipated fundraiser event "The Field of Dreams" Gala on February 29, 2024 to recognize the girls in the program, and raise vital funding that will directly support the sports and fitness, health education, and leadership programs that Girls in the Game provides to over 3,800 girls each year:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BRANDON JOHNSON, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO, do hereby proclaim February 29, 2024 to be GIRLS IN THE GAME DAY IN CHICAGO in recognition of the many important and beneficial programs that they provide to our City's young women, and encourage all residents to support this organization that impacts our city and our future.

Dated this 29th day of February, 2024.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brandon Johnson".

Mayor

Girls in the Game thanks our Board

Shahara Byford - Board Vice Chair

Byford Construction, Inc.

Anna Haghgooie - Vice Chair

Valtruis

LaKeisha Marsh - Secretary

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Akerman proudly supports Girls in the Game for its life changing mission to educate girls about their inherent strength, empower them with skills and confidence, and set them on a path of success in all facets of life.

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**29th Anniversary
Field of Dreams Gala**

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LIFE**

*Congratulations
to the
2024 Champions!*

*Sarah Adams
Team USA Wheelchair Rugby*

*Curtis Granderson
MLB Legend*

*Marianne Markowitz
President/Founder of First
Women's Bank*

*Jennifer Lynne Williams
Director of Development for
USA Basketball Foundation*

**#DeterminedNation
#GirlPower**



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back and say I MADE IT"

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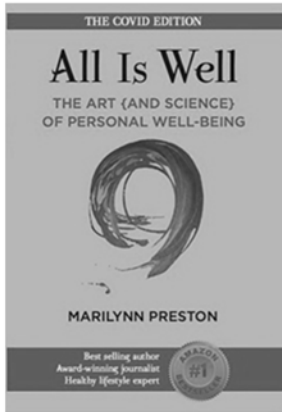
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CONGRATULATIONS to Girls in the Game on 29 years of hosting Field of Dreams



Marilynn Preston, Founding Chair

Wow. Longevity matters. And so does self-care.

That's why Girls in the Game embraces the Self Care Project, to link body and mind with breath and bravado so our #DeterminedNation can survive and thrive.

When our coaches teach girls skills that help them feel safe and calm inside, they can better handle the anxiety and uncertainty in their outside lives.

Breath training. Yoga and mindfulness. Journaling. And so much more...

Visit

www.girlsinthegame.org/alliswell

For details about our innovative Self Care Project.

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