

YWCA's EDGE: Girls' Empowerment Program

The **EDGE** helps elementary, middle and high school girls develop competency through technological, media and leadership projects to build self-esteem and future economic self-sufficiency. Mentoring relationships play a key role in the implementation of each EDGE project.

Community Needs

The EDGE Empowerment Program addresses the growing number of challenges that girls and teens face such as:

- Many girls have difficulty with self-esteem and leadership confidence in the areas of technology and other traditionally male-dominated career paths.
- Teen parents are less likely to complete their education.
- Female and Latino students showed significantly **higher risks** including intentional self injury, feeling sad and hopeless for two weeks in a row or more, considering attempting suicide. Boulder students, particularly Latino students, scored high in several risk behavior categories: tobacco use, alcohol use, marijuana use, sexual behaviors, and harassment for ethnic origin. (Source: *2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey* for Boulder Valley School District published by Boulder County Public Health).

Benefits

- Participants, ages 7-18, increase their skills and positive self-efficacy, learn to utilize their leadership traits, and focus on educational and career attainment.
- Girls progress from "I Know What I Want" to "I Can Say What I Want" to "I Can Get What I Want"
- Provide opportunities from which girls will gain technical proficiency and increased self-confidence in a competitive environment.
- Increase knowledge of Internet usage and computer skills by providing experiential programs.
- Assist parenting teens to attain educational goals.
- Latinas receive support during the transition from 8th grade through high school freshman orientation to gain increased access and understanding of school resources, and increased resiliency to stay in school.

Program Evaluation

- Goals and Objectives: Attainment of goals and objectives are used to measure program success.
- Qualitative Evaluations: Program participants complete evaluations. These are designed to measure personal growth and satisfaction with the programs.
- Quantitative Measurements: Participants take a pre/post test or complete a survey measuring participant's knowledge and skill level.
- Successful Production: Writing, journalism, and computer projects are measured by the successful production of a project.