

# YWCA To Host Free Girls Circle Programs This Summer

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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ALTON – The YWCA of Southwestern Illinois will once again host Free Girls Circle programs at its location at 304 E. Third Street, Alton. This program focuses on the promotion of growth within the youth, families, and the community.

"The program places emphasis on generating, re-establishing, and encouraging the continuance of healthy relationships," YWCA of Southwestern Illinois Executive Director Dorothy Hummel said. "The topics that are discussed relate to everyday issues that girls may have experienced or will possibly encounter in the future. This program consists of a knowledgeable facilitator that is equipped in providing guidance and preparing the girls with useful information for shaping their future."

For many years, girls have been faced with discrimination, put down because of their physical appearances, challenged emotionally, and judged on their choices and opinions by society, Hummel said.

"The 'Being a Girl' unit highlights the advantages of being a girl," she said. "The purpose of this unit is to allow girls the opportunity to recognize and accept the differences between themselves and other girls. This gives the girls the opportunity to express their feelings through open discussions and form positive friendships that revolve around trust. The program helps girls build character and gives them a powerful voice allowing them to stand up for themselves."

Over the course of eight weeks, a group of girls of similar age and development (between ages 10-13) meets with a facilitator for a couple of hours to take turns talking and listening to one another about their concerns and interests. The Gurls Circle model has been used by several groups including schools, health education, positive youth development, boys and girls club, athletics, economic literacy, and many other programs where girls come together.

The YWCA is offering two groups of up to 12 middle school-aged girls (10-13) the opportunity to participate in an 8-week session of Girls Circle focusing on “Being a Girl”.

"Our trained facilitator for both sessions will be Makailya Pickrell, B.S.," Hummel said. "Participants will meet from 4 to 5:30 p.m. either every Wednesday or every Thursday starting June 1, 2022, at YWCA. 304 E. Third Street, Alton, IL."

Transportation is provided as needed if the participant has no other transportation available. The girls will receive healthy snacks and drinks, and time for activities related to the topic.

Girls who participate are asked to make a commitment to themselves, the group, and the community to respect themselves and others as they express their thoughts and feelings, Hummel said.

The YWCA Girls Circle facilitator looks forward to connecting with local families through the Girls Circle Program.

To register for this program, go to <https://forms.gle/FLEQLw2GYtmvJc299> . For more information, please contact YWCA at 618-465-7774 or email [info@altonywca.com](mailto:info@altonywca.com).

*Established in 1918, YWCA Southwestern Illinois tailors programs to meet the unique needs of our communities, as aligned with three key national platforms: racial justice and civil rights, empowerment and economic advancement of women and girls, and health and safety of women and girls.*

*YWCA Southwestern Illinois is proudly sponsored by First Light Home Care, Morrissey Contracting Company, Inc., and Phillips 66 Wood River Refinery.*

