



EVERYDAY HERO

# Raising Our Girls

Black women who understand the importance of supporting and encouraging the next generation of leaders

**A GRIM REALITY FACES BLACK GIRLS TODAY: RISING HIGH** school dropout rates, teen pregnancy, abuse, obesity, and high rates of sexually transmitted diseases but several organizations run by women are committing their efforts and resources to helping young girls fully step into the power of their womanhood and forge lives of their own imagining.

**The Evolver House**  
Founder & Executive Director:  
**Cheryl Ann Wadlington**

Started in 2004, Evolver House has two programs designed to offer girls the tools needed to make positive choices. During the 12-week Evolver Personal Development Program, girls attend empowerment workshops and programs that impart skills, training, and insights to bolster self-esteem and promote emotional, mental, and social wellness. The Evolver Workforce Development Program equips



teens with essential skills for obtaining and keeping a job. The goal is to illustrate to at-risk girls what greatness looks like and how to achieve it. “Today’s girl generation is the largest in history,” says Wadlington, “and we must respond to its needs because every girl deserves the opportunity to be successful.”

**Why It Started:** The societal issues affecting black girls in Philadelphia, catapulted Wadlington into action. She solicited the help of educators, friends, and colleagues to conceptualize and design a dynamic curriculum that would engage and educate girls who are in crisis or at risk.

**Who It Targets:** Girls of color ages 13 to 18 in Philadelphia who are experiencing social and emotional challenges

**Projects/Achievements:** The program boasts a 100% high school graduation rate; since its inception, 700 girls have graduated; 95% pursue post-secondary education or career training. For more information, visit [www.evolverhouse.org](http://www.evolverhouse.org).

## A Sisterhood of Support

### **Black Women for Black Girls Giving Circle**

Founders: **Angela Hollis, Stephanie Palmer, Rev. Kanyere Eaton Dennis, and Valerie Oliver-Durrah**

The organization comprises a giving circle of philanthropic black women who combine their knowledge, networking, and resources in support of organizations committed to inspiring, encouraging, and empowering black girls ages 13 to 18, who are at-risk or in crisis in New York City.

[www.blackwomenforblackgirls.org](http://www.blackwomenforblackgirls.org)

### **Girls Who Rule the World**

Founder: **Marjorie Elaine Harvey**

One hundred girls between the ages of 13 and 18 are selected from the metro Atlanta area for the annual Girls Who Rule the World Mentoring Weekend, which focuses on positive self-image, responsible personal conduct, and self-respect.

[www.girlswhoruletheworld.org](http://www.girlswhoruletheworld.org)

### **Black Girls Rock**

Founder: **Beverly Bond**

Black Girls Rock evolved into a youth empowerment and mentoring organization that introduces music, poetry, and theater to girls from 12 to 17.

[www.blackgirlsrockinc.com](http://www.blackgirlsrockinc.com)

### **The Center for Healthy Families**

Founder and Board Chair: **Donna James**

The Center for Healthy Families in Columbus, Ohio, provides community support and advocacy to pregnant and parenting girls and their children.

[www.centerforhealthyfamilies.org](http://www.centerforhealthyfamilies.org)

### **GirlSpirit WomenSong Inc./Harriet’s Heart**

Founder: **Pamela Salaam**

In 2000, Salaam adopted 19 ninth-grade girls (representing Harriet Tubman’s 19 courageous trips) for a four-year program through the successful completion of high school. The first group graduated in 2009, earned acceptances to a variety of reputable universities, and are now mentoring the new generation of “hearts.”

[www.salaamartsandinspiration.com/HarrietsHeart](http://www.salaamartsandinspiration.com/HarrietsHeart)

### **Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls**

Founder: **Oprah Winfrey**

The academy provides educational opportunities for academically exemplary South African girls with leadership potential in grades 8 to 12.

[www.owl.co.za](http://www.owl.co.za)

### **Black Girls Code**

Founder: **Kimberly Bryant**

Created in 2011 in San Francisco, Black Girls Code enables girls of color between the ages of 7 and 17 to take the lead in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.

[www.blackgirlscode.com](http://www.blackgirlscode.com).

—Denise Campbell