



# The Arts & Spirituality Center

## The Art of Growing Up: Fact Sheet

The Art of Growing Up, a program of the Arts & Spirituality Center, is a positive and life-affirming rite of passage for urban, adolescent girls, ages 10-14. Through creativity and introspection inspired by coming of age traditions from around the world, the *Art of Growing Up* encourages girls to connect with each other and their communities while equipping them for their futures.

### Program Objectives

- Empower girls to make healthy and informed choices while navigating their contexts and cultures
- Affirm girls' identities, strengthening their sense of self and unlocking their unique spark of creativity and power
- Foster responsibility and connection to family and community
- Encourage a critical and multicultural approach to life and learning
- Build artistic and expressive skills
- Provide opportunities for girls engage in different art forms and avenues of creative expression, which may become an ongoing outlet and/or a life-long passion

### Program Activities

- **In multi-week, two-hour sessions** issues such as self-esteem, identity, and body image are explored, **equipping girls to** appreciate their individual gifts, each other and their place in the broader world
- The **program curriculum connects** blends timeless, global coming of age traditions with some of the contemporary "rites of passage" girls may be more familiar with such as Bar/Bat Mitzvah, Quinceañera, or Sweet Sixteen
- As the girls move through the program they work together **to create their own rite of passage ceremony** that welcomes program's participants into the young adult community, instilling in them a sense of pride and belonging
- **Ongoing exhibits of Art of Growing Up work with our** partners that have included Luna Bar, The Girl Scouts of Greater Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania Women's Center



### Program Origins

Believing strongly in the power of art to teach, affirm and empower youth, Julia Katz Terry, creator and director of The Art of Growing Up, has spent her career studying and adapting rites of passage from around the world in ways that impact modern youth. Her quest has taken her all over the world. In doing so, she believes that youth who encounter such rites begin to understand that *they* can shape their future, their health and the trajectories of the communities in which they live.

- **Nationally, 40% of girls are highly self-confident and that older girls had less self-esteem than younger ones\*.**
- **According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, national suicide rates among girls ages 10-14 were up 67% from 2008 to 2009 (CDC)**
- **In a recent NYU study, more than a quarter of girls begin dieting at age 10; by 15, girls are twice as likely to be depressed as boys and gifted girls between fifth and ninth grade, perceiving "smarts aren't sexy," hide their accomplishments**
- **In Philadelphia, girls transitioning from adolescence into adulthood face heightened challenges and are often classified as "at-risk" for crime, violence and negative behavior**
- **The Arts & Spirituality Center believes these young women are also "at-risk for greatness," and offers them The Art of Growing Up as a positive, supportive rite of passage that leads girls to make choices for a thriving, sustainable life.**

\*SOURCE: Commonwealth Fund

**For more information on implementing the Art of Growing Up, contact Janelle Harris ([janelle@artsandspirituality.org](mailto:janelle@artsandspirituality.org) or +1 215.386.7705).**