

be brave, be bold, be gms

The Girls' Middle School 2019 Annual Report





The Girls' Middle School educates girls at a crucial time in life. **We create an inclusive environment where academic growth is nourished.**

A GMS girl discovers her strengths and expresses her voice while respecting the contributions of others.

## A Letter from the Head of School

**R**eflecting on the past year and all we have accomplished, I stand in deep admiration of this extraordinary community. Through the generosity, trust, and energy of each of you, we can celebrate a record-breaking year together.



Throughout these pages, you will see how we continually strive to broaden our perspective. I am delighted to introduce you to the young women serving as our first alums on the GMS Board of Trustees. You will also hear how our Art Department invites students to take risks, develop a growth mindset, and build resilience through the industrial arts.

The commitment, passion, and generosity of this community is truly awe-inspiring. Together we:

- ▶ Raised a record-breaking \$1,519,031 in major gifts, and proceeds from the Annual Scholarship Breakfast, to benefit the Bennett Scholars Program.
- ▶ Supported a record 24% of our student body with financial assistance, including 27 Bennett Scholars, to ensure that a progressive and empowering GMS education is available to every family.

Year after year, this community comes together for the powerful purpose of educating young women in an inclusive and nurturing environment. Thank you for sharing with us your time, talents, and gifts that enable us to continue to innovate, imagine, plan, and dream.

With deep gratitude,  
*Jennifer Ayer*, HEAD OF SCHOOL

- ▶ Raised a record-breaking \$2.3 million for the school and celebrated another year of 100% philanthropic participation by our board, staff, and current families.
- ▶ Raised \$736,583 through The GMS Fund, and other gifts to provide the critical operational support that enriches the experience of every GMS student every day.



# Empowering Girls Through Industrial Arts

A

core component of GMS’s founding vision was the idea that through progressive educational opportunities, our girls “learn to be safe, handy, and hardy.” In their presentation at the 2019 National Coalition of Girls’ Schools (NCGS) Conference in Los Angeles, the GMS Arts and Media team, Torrey Delaplane, Renee Fadiman, and Nori Takada, described how the industrial arts empower students well beyond the studio.

At GMS, students are invited to take physical and emotional risks, discover new ideas, and see how mistakes are opportunities for creative growth. The curriculum emphasizes process over product. Instead of ending a course with a grade, assessment comes in the form of a conversation, where students learn to value critique and their own personal reflection.

## Woodworking | Building Confidence

When a girl enters the GMS Woodshop for the first time she is told: “this is your place.” Students need to feel comfortable and confident in order for them to be empowered to explore and play.

The woodshop gives students the thrilling experience of transforming a powerful and dangerous machine that was once scary into a tool that they can safely control.

Woodworking is not just about the functionality of a finished project. Deep learning comes from the natural struggle of the design and build process. This iterative process requires patience, resilience, and exploring new ways to problem solve.

## Metalworking | Taking Ownership

One of the benefits of teaching metalworking is that most students have never tried it before, which means most students have not convinced themselves that they are not good at it yet. Here again, they work with powerful and scary tools, such as an acetylene torch and molten pewter.

Metalwork naturally forces students to take ownership of and follow a process. Attaining a brilliant



*In metal casting class one year, a student said with a smile, “I can’t believe you’re letting us do this. You know, we’re just kids?” Nori responded: “Just a kid? You’re not just a kid. You’re a GMS girl.”*



# OWN YOUR SPACE. TRY IT. TRY IT AGAIN. PLAY. OBSERVE. BREAK BARRIERS.

shine on metal requires thoughtfully working through the sanding process in a specific order — skip any steps and it will not shine. So, students learn to slow down, take a deep breath, and relax into the work.

## Video Production | Inspiring Courage

In video production, we ask students to put their ideas, passions, and art into a form that can be seen by a global audience. That requires vulnerability and a different kind of courage.

The best way to become a literate consumer of media is to learn how it is constructed. After examining the ways in which media can manipulate and influence as well as communicate and inspire, students decide how they want to use media for positive change.

Students produce public service announcements about a topic they care about. They develop facility with cameras, tripods, microphones and editing software. They learn respect for various perspectives. In the process, students build the confidence they need to be bold and they learn that what they have to say is valuable.

We give girls a safe space to take risks, explore, fail, and try again. And they learn the lessons of power and resilience that will last a lifetime.

**Thank you, Torrey, Renee, and Nori!**

*our pioneering spirit*



# spotlight

We sat down with the first three alum members of the GMS Board of Trustees and discussed how their perspective of GMS has changed — and stayed the same — as students, alums, and now trustees.



ALUM TRUSTEE

**DANIELA GONZALEZ**  
GMS Class of 2011

YEARS SERVED ON BOARD  
2017-present

DEGREES  
Stanford University '19,  
joint major in Computer Science and  
English, minor in Spanish

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT  
Software Engineer at Facebook in  
their New York office

**We see you and your fellow alum board trustees as pioneers. In what ways do you see yourself as a pioneer?**

The pioneering spirit is something that GMS instilled in me from the very beginning — that I should not be afraid to be the first. I am the first GMS alum to be a trustee. Before joining the GMS board, I had never before considered being a member of a school board and honestly did not think I was qualified for the role.

I had barely started college and had very little experience in education, fundraising, finance, and real estate. What I did know was that the GMS board could use more diversity and no GMS alum had ever been a trustee. I wanted to give back to the school, so I wrote a letter to the trustees asking them to consider having an alum join the board. GMS in turn, welcomed me with open arms. My time on the board hasn't always been easy — there is a steep learning curve and I have much to work on before I'll be able to contribute as fully as I'd like — but it has been a rewarding experience. I can think of no better way to have such an active role in the school's future.

**As a trustee, we want you to dream big for GMS. Where do you see GMS in six years?**

I see GMS in a more spacious home that allows the school to realize its full potential. I also envision GMS not only having sufficient scholarship funds but also the resources to welcome even more Bennett Scholars and financial aid students into the school.

**Do you have any advice for other GMS-ers?**

Remember that your education — and your experience — is yours and yours only. At GMS, this sort of independence is fostered and encouraged, but at other institutions, it can be easy to lose yourself. Even if something you want to do has never been done before, you can make it happen if you set your mind to it.

When I started college, I knew I wanted to study both computer science and English, which is an unusual combination. I also wanted to study abroad and pursue a minor in Spanish. People told me this was impossible. I was confident that it wasn't, so I figured it out. I had to be my own advisor. It was my responsibility to assure myself that I could succeed and that I belonged in the tech field despite the lack of role models.

Don't wait for other people to tell you that it is okay to do what you want to do. Don't wait for somebody else to do it first. Regardless of what other people tell you, you get to craft your own education.

ALUM TRUSTEE

**KEELY HAVERSTOCK**  
GMS Class of 2006

YEARS SERVED ON BOARD  
2018-present

DEGREES  
Olin College of Engineering '14,  
major in Engineering  
CURRENT EMPLOYMENT  
Software engineer at Upwork, a  
company that provides a marketplace  
for freelance engineers

**We see you and your fellow alum board trustees as pioneers. In what ways do you see yourself and GMS forging new paths?**

I went to Olin College of Engineering, where I was one of 85 students in their ninth graduating class. It is a tiny, hands-on, project-based, school with an entrepreneurial spirit. It felt like an echo of the GMS spirit. In my professional life, I was the first person at my company to work on our Android application, which I started from scratch.

GMS's philosophy of educating the entire girl and our ability to emphasize STEM learning without it feeling competitive is pretty remarkable. I think GMS took the lead on that and other

schools followed. At GMS, it's about the journey. Learning to learn, learning to work together, communication skills — it all becomes ingrained in you.

**What do you find most interesting about GMS board life?**

Board meetings are fascinating. I love having the opportunity to see how the sausage is made. It's eye opening to learn about what goes behind every decision. Hearing the passion that the board members have for this school community is incredibly motivating. It's this great opportunity to learn from people who are talented and intelligent. I'm hoping to contribute as much as I can to this school that means so much to me.

**Share your thoughts on GMS's diversity and inclusion.**

As an 11-year-old I didn't think about it as much, now as an adult I'm more aware. Being one of the only female engineers at the company I work at has certainly made me more aware. It's different at GMS—everyone was friends with everyone. You had a close friend group, but then you also were friends with everyone in the class, too. It was different in high school. The groups are separate and it's visible.

It's about the journey



**Is there anything that happened at GMS that inspired or led you to where you are now?**

Definitely. Taking computer science at GMS set me on the path to becoming a software engineer. Before GMS, I liked playing on the computer but it didn't occur to me that computer science was something a person could do. And then at GMS I loved it. I was working on a project with a classmate and I remember that every 10 minutes I would turn to her and say, "This is so fun!"

Oh, and I still surf! I go to the beach with friends whenever I can.

**Do you have any advice for other GMS-ers?**

Everyone can teach you something. Someone older than you, younger than you, someone better than you at something and someone less good than you at something. When people forget that, they miss great learning opportunities. They may miss great friendship opportunities.

**In 2011, 8th grade Algebra teacher Esther Selk spoke these words to Daniela at graduation:** Dani, The cheerleader of mathematics. I will miss the gasp of excitement of a Dani Epiphany — the vision of your hand thrust eagerly into the air. You have boundless energy for trying new problems, for helping others, for doing math. You are phenomenally organized and astonishingly motivated — what a combination. You are a storyteller, an explorer, a scientist. You are a mover. And a shaker. I could say, "Watch out High School, here comes Dani!" But really, "Watch out WORLD!"

**In 2006, PE teacher Matt Cole spoke these words to Keely at her graduation:** Keely, You never cease to amaze me. You are an intelligent, talented, kind, helpful, and creative thinker. You are the 1st name added to the new GMS Athletics Super Stars, as one of the few who play all three sports, all three years, at GMS. You coached the 6th grade basketball team, surfed, earned 2nd place in the street skateboarding contest, and even dropped in switch on the GMS Super Mini Ramp. I don't know if anyone can ever live up to the bar you have set. I'm confident you'll succeed in whatever you decide to do, and I can't wait to watch.





ALUM TRUSTEE

**MADAHÍ CORNEJO**  
GMS Class of 2007

YEARS SERVED ON BOARD  
2019-present

DEGREES  
San Jose State University '16, major in  
Political Science, minor in Spanish

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT  
Legislative Aid with Supervisor  
Warren Slocum (San Mateo County)

**We see you and your fellow alum board trustees as pioneers. What compelled you to join GMS as a board member?**

This is my first experience on a board and I'm going to learn a lot. Any time that GMS asks for something or whatever the school needs, unless I physically cannot do it, I am always going to say yes. The school gave me so much, how am I going to say no?

**How do you see GMS as forging new paths in middle school education? What is most compelling about GMS today?**

The school is connecting with Bennett Scholars after they have graduated from GMS — that's new. When I was a student, GMS did a great job of taking care of me in the present. But now, GMS does a good job of taking care of students' past, present, and future. It no longer feels like you get into GMS and your life is from 6th to 8th grade. Now, the school asks what your life was like before GMS. And after you live the GMS life for 3 years, the school is ready to help you with your life after GMS.

**How is the experience of GMS the same or different as a board member than as a student and alum?**

I didn't have any worries as a student. Everything was peaches and cream. Everyone was united. The school was running and strong and had programs that seemed like they would never go away. Now, as a board member, we are thinking about how many students we have the capacity to accept. We're concerned about paying teachers enough. There are conversations about all sorts of transitions and decisions. As a GMS student you don't worry about the school, but as a board member, you

see all of the challenges and need to help figure them out.

**Share your thoughts on GMS's diversity and inclusion.**

When I was a student, I thought GMS did a good job celebrating different cultures. When I was a student, there could have been more conversations about what it means to be a minority. Sometimes GMS gets stuck in a bubble. And inside the bubble is great, but it's not reality. It's not what actually goes on outside of GMS. We need to be mindful of the diversity of experiences.

**Do you have any advice for other GMS-ers?**

When you are at GMS you don't realize how great it is. You think it's normal to have teachers who connect and care about you and make everything available to you. So take the time to appreciate the trips and the attention and the friendships you create at GMS. You will be in touch with at least one person from your GMS circle for the rest of your life.

Carrie Coltman, Chair of the Governance Committee, shares her perspective on having GMS alums serve on the Board of Trustees.

**Perspective on GMS Alum Trustees**

**Why did the board decide to invite alum trustees to serve?**

It is important to broaden the perspective of the board by expanding those who serve on it. We strive to have a diverse board, which includes gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic background, and life experiences. Our graduates are such exceptional young women, we would be remiss in not asking a few to join. Our first alum trustee wrote a letter requesting to join. You have got to love that GMS initiative!

**What do the alum trustees bring to the board?**

Our three alum trustees bring diverse backgrounds and a young, fresh perspective. From local politics to technology companies, their ideas and experiences enrich the conversation and challenge our current thinking.

**What are you most excited about the alums taking away from this experience?**

The ability to see board governance in action and view GMS from a new perspective. I'm excited that they'll be exposed to seasoned business leaders from a variety of fields working together with a shared love of GMS.



**Join us March 19, 2020 for the Annual Scholarship Breakfast. Meet our distinguished Alumna Speaker, Tania Montoya-Block, Class of 2002.**

After graduating from The Girls' Middle School in 2002 and then Castilleja High School, Tania Montoya-Block attended the University of California, Merced. There she founded the UC Merced Law Clinic before graduating in the top 4% of her class with a Bachelor of Arts in Economics. After university, Tania worked at the Alameda Health System as a Quality Analyst where she served as a data and regulatory consultant on Federal Agency requirements.

Tania is now a Juris Doctor Candidate in her second year at UC Davis School of Law, King Hall. Passionate about the intersection of law and healthcare, she is the President of the King Hall Health Law Association. Tania has served as an editor of the Business Law Journal, and is a recipient of the Outstanding Oral Argument Award in Legal Research and Writing at UC Davis School of Law, King Hall. This summer, she is excited to join the team at Foley & Lardner in Los Angeles as a Summer Associate in their healthcare law practice group. When she is not busy with her law work and studies, Tania enjoys traveling the world, singing her heart out at karaoke, and taking her dogs to the beach with her husband Elliot Block.

**In 2007, Spanish teacher and advisor Maria Arons, spoke these words to Madahí at graduation:** Your excitement for life is contagious, and your perseverance and resilience are inspiring. I have always been impressed by your ability to rebound from setbacks with a positive attitude. Your excitement to learn new things is a wonderful quality that will serve you well. Your dedication has produced many caring examples of writing which convey your love for your family. Madahí, you are an enthusiastic, intelligent, and creative young woman. I wish you all the best as you embark on this new phase in your life. Congratulations!





## the year in images

At GMS we mark the progress of the school year through adventures, celebrations, and explorations. Dancing at El Día de los Muertos assembly, climbing at Pinnacles National Park, pitching investors at Entrepreneurial Night, and reaffirming our values together at the Annual Scholarship Breakfast, these are the **experiences that nurture, challenge, and inspire.**





# roll of donors 2018 - 2019

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Olivia Arthur ‘15  
Keith Augustine ‘19  
Emma Beckman ‘10  
Jamie Bindon ‘10  
Stephanie Campa ‘11  
Sophie Croen ‘02  
Carolyn Cuykendall ‘01  
Gabriela Dubovoy ‘20  
Kylie Dulin ‘02  
Natasha Flowers ‘08  
Maria Garcia ‘03  
Aline Garcia Sanchez ‘17  
Leslie Garcia Sanchez ‘18  
Alden Glassey ‘13  
Christina Godinez ‘10  
Edith Gomez ‘07  
Daniela Gonzalez ‘11  
Adriana Hardwicke ‘10  
Keely Haverstock ‘06  
Brooke Hudacek ‘20  
Caitrin Hughes ‘08  
Clea Kuo ‘18  
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Sasha Mironov ‘05  
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Smriti Pramanick ‘10  
Clarissa Shieh ‘19  
Jennifer Trollman ‘03  
Rachel Uyeda ‘10  
Emma Williams ‘18  
Natasha Yen ‘17  
Sadie Young ‘21  
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## Alum Parents

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Ivan & Shana Ernest  
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Andria Fenner  
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Don Chung & Heelan Kim  
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Daniela Gonzalez ‘11  
Keely Haverstock ‘06  
Allison Littlefield ‘03  
Shantya Martinez-Arriaga ‘04

Alison McLaughlin ‘11  
Sasha Mironov ‘05  
Jennifer Trollman ‘03  
Natasha Yen ‘17  
Cassandra Zawilski ‘04







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Our deepest gratitude to our 2018-2019 volunteers.  
Your talent, time, and energy provide an invaluable service to the entire GMS community.

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Arpan Nandani  
Amanda Reed  
Kaushik Roy

6th Grade Outdoor Adventure BBQ

Rachel Cleary  
Kristine Webb

6th Grade Outdoor Adventure Breakfast

Betsy Chen  
John Moyoli

6th/7th Grade Pool Party

Amanda Boyce  
Ann Osborne

7th Grade Class Representatives

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7th/8th Grade Breakfast

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Scott Hartley

Athletics Spiritwear

Tavi Alcheck

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Ann Osborne

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Seema Chetty  
Rachel Cleary  
Hannah Lu

Día de Los Muertos

Nancy Cordova  
Melissa Hopkins  
Ligia Murillo  
Sara Kopit-Olsen

End of Year Teacher Luncheon

Rafia Chaudhry  
Aline Yu

Entrepreneurial Holiday Boutique

Brette Hudacek

Entrepreneurial Night

Lucinda Brommersma  
Maria Gorelik-Kaplan  
Tracy Zhu

Family Ice Skating Night

Tavi Alcheck

First Day Parent Coffee

Carole Alvarado  
Rafia Chaudry  
Brette Hudacek

Holiday Staff Appreciation Luncheon

Zahra Kassam  
Meghan Scott

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Karla Berry  
Marci McCue

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Caroline Burkhardt

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A distinguished group of educators and visionaries who support our mission and provide inspiration.

Kathleen Bennett, Founder  
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Kathy Kwan  
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Denise Pope, PhD

The Founding Mothers Legacy Circle

named in honor of Barbara Bayardo, Kathleen Bennett, Janice Brody, Emily France, Margot Rawlins, Marya Shahinian, Ruth Sherer, and Carol Young Holt

At last spring’s Annual Scholarship Breakfast, Kathleen Bennett proudly introduced our legacy circle in honor of the women whose keen foresight and deep generosity made GMS possible: “These talented, visionary, risk-taking women are each profoundly dedicated to creating opportunities for young women. Seven more responsible, dedicated, idealistic people you will never meet.”

Planned giving and estate gifts allow The Girls’ Middle School to dream big and think strategically about the school’s future. We hope you will consider becoming a legacy donor and join us in thanking those who already have.





NUMBER OF  
SPORTS TEAMS

20

5 Soccer  
5 Basketball  
5 Volleyball  
2 Softball  
1 Cross Country  
1 Swim  
1 Track

ALUMNAE  
TO DATE

960

STUDENTS PARTICIPATING  
IN THE MUSICAL

74

INTERSESSION  
COURSES OFFERED

47

STUDENTS RECEIVING FINANCIAL AID  
OR ARE BENNETT SCHOLARS

24%

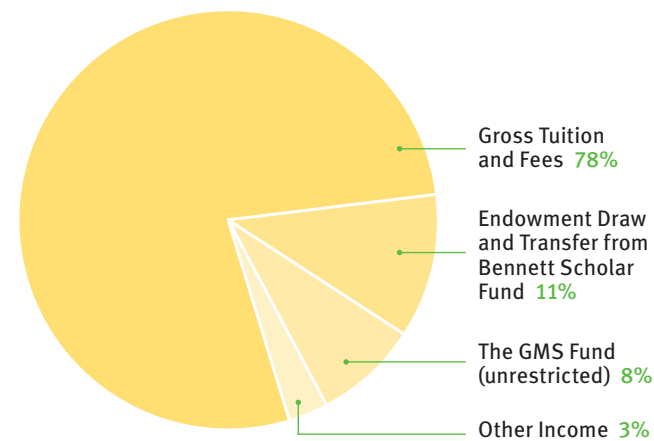
HOMETOWNS  
REPRESENTED

25

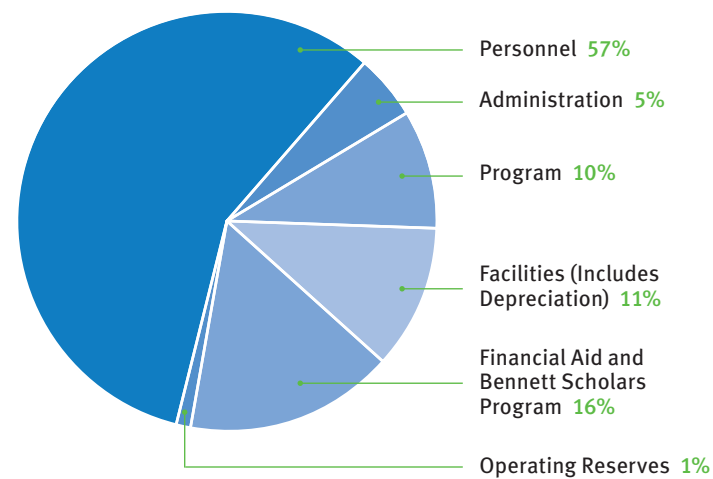
## Financial Data Fiscal Year 2018-2019

(FY19 Audited)

### OPERATING INCOME \$8,580,273



### OPERATING EXPENSES \$8,264,548



### SOURCES OF DONATION INCOME \$2,338,854



The GMS Fund 35%  
Scholarship Breakfast 11%  
Legacy Giving 13%  
Other Solicitations 41%

### USES OF DONATION INCOME \$2,338,854



Support of Operating Expenses 31%  
Bennett Scholar Program 65%  
Other Restricted Uses 4%

## Next up

Researchers from Stanford University's Virtual Human Interaction Lab visited GMS to study immersive learning experiences using virtual reality (VR) technology.

Students were shown films or experienced a virtual world that deals with the consequences of climate change and ocean acidification. Researchers are examining the role VR might play in future classrooms. All eighth graders were invited to participate in the 2018-2019 study. We are thrilled that this partnership between the GMS Science Department and the Virtual Human Interaction Lab will expand in the 2019-20 school year when students from all three grades will have the opportunity to participate.







## THE GIRLS' MIDDLE SCHOOL

3400 West Bayshore Road

Palo Alto, CA 94303



# save the date

**Thursday, March 19, 2020**

**Crowne Plaza Hotel, Palo Alto | 8:00 – 9:30 am**

The Girls' Middle School is thrilled to welcome Senator Barbara Boxer as the keynote speaker for the 2020 Annual Scholarship Breakfast celebrating the Bennett Scholars Program.

A forceful advocate for families, children, consumers, the environment and her State of California, Barbara Boxer became a United States Senator in January 1993 after ten years of service in the House of Representatives and six years on the Marin County Board of Supervisors. In January 2017, she stepped down after four terms in the Senate.

Senator Boxer was a senior member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, where she chaired the first subcommittee ever to focus on global women's issues.



**Please join us!**  
[girlsms.org/breakfast](https://girlsms.org/breakfast)