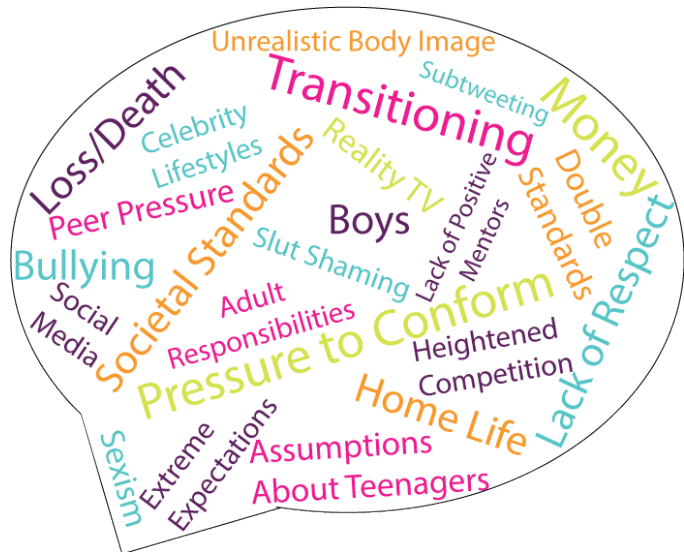




Girls Granting Gets 4-Real

"Middle school is a hard time in a person's life," said Carla Rodriguez, a senior from Oshkosh West High School. "It is a huge transitional time for young kids, and this transition is vital for them to grow into a healthy individual. I would have to say this is the hardest period in a young girl's life and they need help in order to see life's bigger picture."



Ms. Rodriguez participated in this year's Girls Granting Initiative (GGI) along with 14 other girls. They discussed topics from boys and peer pressure to societal standards and sexism. But most of the girls voiced a concern we've been hearing for years: granting dollars need to be focused on the middle school age group.

BEAMING, Inc., Communities at Oshkosh North, Catalpa Health, the Boys and Girls Club of Oshkosh and the Oshkosh YMCA presented potential programs to the GGI that directly addressed middle school issues. After three rounds of voting and a few debates, the GGI chose Catalpa Health's "4-Real" program.

"So often, by the time a parent calls us, they are already in a crisis," said Lisa Kogan-Praska, President and CEO of Catalpa Health. "Our work with the 4-Real program will allow us to truly be proactive and connect with young girls to help them feel more empowered and resilient."

4-Real is an interactive multi-week program for middle school girls that will begin this fall and run for eight weeks, servicing approximately 30 girls once a week during after school hours. Two mental health specialists will guide them through subjects such as healthy relationships, positive body image and social media management.

"Our mission at Catalpa is to help children and their families improve their mental health and wellness," said Kogan-Praska. "The 4-Real program is a perfect fit with the wellness aspect of our mission and we're very excited to launch the program."

The Girls Granting Initiative would not be possible without the support of our donors and the JJ Keller Foundation. If you know of a middle school girl that would be interested in participating in the 4-Real program and would benefit from this class, please let us know by calling 920-426-3993 or contacting Kate Salter at kate@oshkoshareacf.org. ♦

