

For Immediate Release

The Women's Fund  
of Central Ohio

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**ONE GIRL, THE FIRST COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF GIRLS IN CENTRAL OHIO, SHEDS LIGHT ON THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF MORE THAN 200,000 GIRLS IN THE REGION.**

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*Research commissioned by The Women's Fund of Central Ohio presents the status of girls in Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Licking, Madison, Pickaway, and Union counties.*

Columbus, OH (February 9, 2009) — Commissioned by The Women's Fund of Central Ohio and carried out by Community Research Partners (CRP), *One Girl: The Status of Girls in Central Ohio* tells the story of more than 200,000 girls living in the region. The report will debut at the Social Change Exchange event on Tuesday Feb. 10, where the public, policy-makers, and nonprofit and education leaders will come together to discuss how best to help this important demographic.

"We found that girls face a variety of challenges, from poverty to teen pregnancy to depression," said Nichole E. Dunn, President and CEO of The Women's Fund. "At the same time, they are amazingly resilient. To help girls become successful women, we need to help them overcome these challenges."

The report comes on the heels of a 2004 study commissioned by The Women's Fund and The Columbus Foundation, *Count on Her! The Status of Women and Girls in Central Ohio*. Following the recommendations made in that report, *One Girl* turns its attention to understanding the available data on the region's girls. It is the first comprehensive study on girls and women under 18 in the seven-county central Ohio area. In addition to informing policy-makers and nonprofits about the unique needs of girls in central Ohio, *One Girl* will serve as a benchmark for progress and a basis for future research.

"The *One Girl* report is just the beginning of our work," said Carol Andreae, Chair of Strategic Grantmaking for The Fund. "The data we gathered has given us a great foundation to start with, and we look forward to uncovering the girls' stories behind this data."

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A girl born in central Ohio is more likely to be a minority than the adults around her. She is three times more likely to be living in poverty than in 2000. If she is under age 5, and cared for by a single mother, her family is more likely to be in poverty than not.

There are about half as many spaces available at registered child care facilities as there are children in central Ohio. Even if her family can find child care, they may not be able to afford it – the average cost of daycare for two children is about \$340 per week.

Once she enters school, she is just as likely to do well in math as her male classmates, and will consistently perform better on reading tests. However, she still does not perform as well as boys in science.

Becoming an adolescent will bring her many new challenges. She might suffer from depression. There is a greater than one in five chance she has thought of hurting herself, a one in six chance that she has considered suicide, and a one in 10 chance that she has attempted suicide in the past year.

Two out of her three best friends will be trying to lose weight, whether or not they actually are overweight. If she or any of her friends become sexually active, they are only slightly more likely than not to use a condom. If she lives in Franklin County, the chance that she will give birth is 38 percent higher than the state average, and the chance that she will have an abortion is 32 percent higher.

Despite being at higher risk for depression and low self-esteem, she can succeed both in and out of the classroom. She's probably involved in volunteer and extracurricular activities – six out of every 10 girls are – and at 18, she is more likely to graduate high school than the average boy, and to do so with honors.

“As we complete the portrait of girls in central Ohio, The Women’s Fund will hold “Listening Conversations” and ask the real experts – girls themselves – what motivates them and what they need to succeed,” Dunn added. “This will uniquely position us to determine how to invest targeted dollars in the organizations and projects that will have a measurable impact upon girls in the central Ohio community.”

*One Girl: The Status of Girls in Central Ohio* executive summary and full report are available on the web site of The Women's Fund of Central Ohio, [www.womensfundcentralohio.org](http://www.womensfundcentralohio.org).

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**About The Women's Fund of Central Ohio:**

The Women's Fund of Central Ohio is a public foundation that promotes social change by growing women's philanthropy and making grants to programs that expand opportunities for women and girls. Our mission is to transform lives by mobilizing the collective power and passion of women working together. The Fund serves Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Licking, Madison, Pickaway, and Union counties, giving voice and visibility to the more than 800,000 women and girls in central Ohio. Learn more about The Women's Fund of Central Ohio at [www.womensfundcentralohio.org](http://www.womensfundcentralohio.org).

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