

The YWCA of the City of New York Hosts Potential to Power© Girls Symposium To Ignite Social Action On Issues Facing 21st Century Girls In New York City

New York, NY (June 4, 2014) – The YWCA of the City of New York today announced that nearly two hundred New York City high school girls took over John Jay College in New York City for the City of New York’s inaugural Potential to Power© Girls Symposium on June 2, 2014. Fifty five women leaders from diverse backgrounds also attended this event designed to amplify girls’ voices among women advocates, to begin development of a comprehensive New York City Girls agenda, and to create a network of influential women and organizations well-positioned to advance policy and opportunities for the next generation of women in school, career and life.

The symposium united intergenerational and multiracial voices to promote understanding and social action on critical issues facing 21st Century Girls in New York City. In the absence of adult speakers, girls took center stage and shared their insights about the issues that are most prevalent for their generation. At the top of their list were body image perception, racial and gender identity formation, gender equity at school and home, and sexual harassment. The girls also shared their aspirations with influential women across government, business, and nonprofit sectors, and these women leaders will now be trusted to carry the girls’ aspirations and critiques into their respective industries.

“We asked girls and organizations that work with girls to step boldly into ‘now.’ Potential speaks to who they might become - it is a possibility, not a guarantee,” said Danielle Moss Lee, CEO of the YWCA of New York City. “Power speaks to who these girls are now, in this moment, as they boldly and unapologetically bring their full selves to school, to their communities, and to the world. We made it clear to girls in New York City, you are valid now, you matter now, and you have power now - in essence, you are power... not potential.”

Potential to Power was a day of inspiration and empowerment, during which the YWCA of the City of New York honored existing gender equity efforts and established a foundation for the ongoing conversation that must take place to inform an increase in attention, public discourse and funding on gender equity in New York City and across the nation. The YWCA of the City of New York plans to follow up these important conversations with a girls’ impact report and a set of policy recommendations for the De Blasio administration and other institutions that are part of girls’ lives this fall.

YWCA is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. For more information, please visit www.ywcanyc.org.