

News Release

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New Non Profit Determined to Stay Alive

Charlissea Ross first came to Cinnamongirl, Incorporated in November 2004. She was in the 8th grade, having difficulty getting along with teachers and peers and making average grades. She wanted very much to play sports, yet was discouraged from trying out for the fear of failing.

After being in the CGI program, meeting high level women and learning how to be courageous in one's goals in life, Charlissea began making big changes in her life. She was placed in an Advanced Placement math class, tried out for the JV girls softball at her school and accepted a special invitation to be a Jr. Mentor for CGI.

As a result, Ms. Charlissea Ross is carrying a 3.2 GPA and is a major contributor to her softball team. Charlissea has also committed to taking care of herself and has lost over 25 pounds. The younger Cinnamongirls look up to Charlissea because of the changes she has made in her life.

Cinnamongirl, Incorporated is an Oakland based mentoring program whose mission is to empower and inspire at-risk girls to realize their highest personal and professional aspirations. Started by Reneé Richard-Smith in 2003, CGI works with girls to help them grow into **proud, confident, courageous** women, who achieve excellence in all facets of their lives.

However in spite of executing innovative programs with great success, CGI, like numerous other young organizations, still experiences enormous odds during its first years of operating, a time when funding is needed most. "It doesn't matter how great and effective one's program is, only that you have been around for 8-10 years—the one characteristic CGI lacks," Richard-Smith says.

To secure funding for the 2006-2007 program year CGI will be holding a number of fundraisers, starting with a Bowl-a-thon on April 30th at Albany Bowl at 540 San Pablo Avenue. Sponsors can donate a flat rate to the organization or participate in the Bowl-a-thon. Cost of admission is \$15 which includes shoes and two rounds of bowling. Please call 510 531-4740 if you are interested in participating in the Bowl-a-thon

Upcoming fundraisers that CGI is planning include a Mega fundraiser on July 21st with the support SF DA Kamala Harris and a Ladies Tea in the fall. Visit Cinnamongirl.org for more information.

About Cinnamongirl, Inc.

Cinnamongirl, Inc. is a 501 C (3) mentoring organization for girls, ages 12-14 residing in Oakland, California. **The organization** is working with schools and community-based organizations to identify the young women that will benefit most significantly.

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