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## **Leadership Opportunity for Trenton Middle School Girls**

### ***Janssen Supports Blairstown-Girls' Leadership Curriculum***

**Blairstown, NJ** – This Monday through Wednesday, the Princeton Blairstown Center welcomes 9 girls from Rivera Middle School in Trenton for a leadership development program. Originally designed by a Montgomery, NJ Girl Scout troop, the curriculum dares the girls to take on new challenges, connect to their courage and learn more about enjoying and respecting the natural world.

The girls chosen for the first Girls' Leadership experience are 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders chosen by Blairstown's Site Coordinator at Rivera Middle School and school administrators. They selected girls with the leadership potential, dedication and interest to benefit most from the Blairstown experience.

The program developers - 11 Girl Scouts of Troop 60518, aged 10-14 – designed the curriculum in the spring of 2014, designing a leadership program for other girls their age to build self-confidence, communication and teamwork skills through outdoor challenges such as ropes courses and the dam rappel. According to Pam Simpkins, Troop Leader, "Their ideas all began with a focus on core leadership attributes that they believe are important – problem solving, communication, conflict resolution, self-reflection, goal setting and more. They used these attributes to build exciting outdoor adventure programs that will build confidence for girls as they uncover their own strengths and break through perceived limits."

During the program design process, the Girl Scouts did test runs of their programs at the Blairstown Campus, surprising themselves in the process as they did hiking, high-rope challenges, outdoor cooking, gardening, and even rappelling down a 35 foot dam.

According to Tom Arnold, Blairstown Assistant Director, "This unit of the Girls' Leadership Program is called "Connect to Courage" because leaders have to step out in front sometimes to pave the way for the rest of their team. Sometimes, leaders also need help and it takes courage to ask for help from their team. Whether girls are doing activities such as stamp boxing, disc golf or raft building they will need to work together to accomplish their tasks. This program is so much fun that girls won't even realize that they are learning critical leadership skills. By the end of the program, the girls will be transformed in a way that encourages them to step up and lead."

In September 2014, the girls' leadership work was featured on the United Nations' International Day of the Girl (IDG) Summit website from September 1 - September 30<sup>th</sup>. Members of the Girl Scout Troop also attended the Girls Speak Out at the United Nations on Friday, October 10<sup>th</sup>. The Girls Speak Out featured girls' stories of leadership and social change around the world.

The Girls' Leadership Programs received partial sponsorship from Janssen Research & Development, LLC that will enable the Trenton girls who participate in PBC's school-based programs at Rivera Middle



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School to travel to the Blairstown Campus two times during the 2014-2015 school year and participate in a one-day Campus Expedition to Princeton University.

***About PBC***

PBC is an independent nonprofit with a mission to transform the lives of vulnerable young people through integrated experiential and adventure-based programming in schools and at our Blairstown Campus near the Delaware Water Gap. We collaborate with schools, university partners, and community-based agencies to develop in youth deepened self-awareness, responsible decision-making, teamwork, and leadership skills. Our wide variety of year-round, multi-service programs serve over 5,200 students from the Mid-Atlantic states.