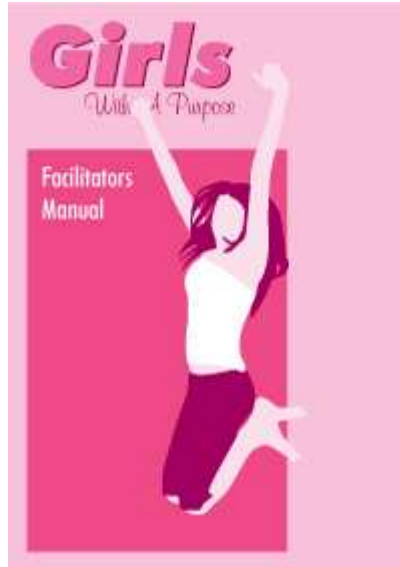


# GIRLS WITH A PURPOSE



## 2009 MEDIA KIT



### Media Enquiries

Contact: Ruth Knight

Telephone: (07) 5500 4211

Mobile: 0412 526 264

Email: [admin@lifehouse.org.au](mailto:admin@lifehouse.org.au)

[www.lifehouse.org.au/gwap](http://www.lifehouse.org.au/gwap)



**Ambassador for Girls With A Purpose**

07 3036 5218 or 0410 172 224

[www.cosima.net.au](http://www.cosima.net.au)

# Girls With A Purpose

## Developing self worth, a positive identity and purpose in young women

A snapshot of recent reports and news headlines tells quite a disturbing story for teenage girls.

Body image, drugs and family conflict are the top three issues of concern among young people, according to Mission Australia's seventh 'National survey of young Australians', released on 25 November 2008. More than 45,000 young Australians aged 11 to 24 took part in this year's survey.<sup>i</sup>

The Herald Sun reports one in five teenage girls deliberately access pornography on the internet which is encouraging them to engage in explicit sex<sup>ii</sup>.

Teenage girls are also more than three times as likely as boys to drink alcohol, reports The Age<sup>iii</sup> and The Courier Mail told us that the most common victims of crime in Queensland were teenage girls who are sexually assaulted<sup>iv</sup>.

The facts are alarming and the need to help teenage girls make better choices is critical.

Lifeline Project, a Gold Coast charity, knows only too well that adolescence can be difficult and even a frightening time for many girls, which is why there are launching their program "**Girls With A Purpose**" nationally to help address these concerns.

### About

*Girls With a Purpose* is a program to help young women develop self worth, a positive identity and sense of purpose.

Over a ten week period, the program discusses some of the most important issues facing young women today; relationships, sexual health, violence and abuse, self-esteem, beauty, help-seeking, goal planning, and communication.

Through healthy discussions, games and activities and opportunities for team work, the small group of girls, usually between 13 – 17 years, is led on a positive journey of self-discovery.

### Cosima De Vito: Ambassador for Girls With A Purpose



Singer, songwriter **Cosima De Vito**, needs no introduction to the Australian public. A much loved contestant on the first season of Australian Idol, she developed a massive national following that led her to a number one single and becoming a Platinum selling album.

Cosima is the ambassador for *Girls With A Purpose* and relates to the ups and downs of the teenage-girl world.

*"My teenage years were the best years of my life, carefree and without a worry. I can say that now, but at the time I was also plagued with insecurities. If a program like this existed when I was young I would have definitely enrolled. The ten week program helps to develop self worth, build friendships and purpose in young women. It's time to enjoy the best years of your life and above all remember you are a princess!"*

**Agent, Shane Tyler Greaves**  
**07 3036 5218 or 0410 172 224**  
**www.cosima.net.au**

## **Program Background**

Lifehouse Project Inc., ([www.lifehouse.org.au](http://www.lifehouse.org.au)) a community organisation based on the Gold Coast, has found that young women between the ages of 13-17 years often experience low self-worth and a lack of purpose.

Low self-worth in adolescence can contribute to teenage pregnancy, disengagement from school, drug and alcohol abuse, self-harming behaviours, homelessness and unhealthy relationships.

*Girls With a Purpose* was developed in response to these findings, as a preventative program specifically for young women.

The content of the program is based on the 40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents identified by the Search Institute, a non-profit organisation which supports the healthy development of children and adolescents ([www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org)).

These developmental assets indicate what young people need to be healthy, caring and responsible. The Search Institute suggests that the more assets a young person gains, the more likely they are to have success at school, and the less likely they are to engage in high-risk behaviours.

Using strength-based games, activities and discussions, the *Girls With A Purpose* program develops the participants' assets to help them gain a positive identity and a sense of purpose.

## **FAQ**

### **How long has the program been running?**

The program has been running since 1995. The Qld Gambling Community Benefit Fund provided funding in 2006 to enable the program to be printed into a Manual and sold to schools, youth groups and community organisations working with teenage girls.

### **How many girls have participated so far?**

Forty girls have participated in five programs on the Gold Coast facilitated by Lifehouse Project. It is estimated that another one thousand girls have participated in programs around the country.

### **Who can run the program?**

The program is being facilitated by schools, churches, youth groups and community organisations. Experienced teachers and youth workers can deliver the program.

### **What are the aims of the program?**

The program aims to give teenage girls improved communication and interpersonal skills; it increases their social competencies and helps to give them a sense of purpose in life and confidence about their future.

### **How do I find out more about the program?**

Go to [www.lifehouse.org.au/gwap](http://www.lifehouse.org.au/gwap)

## Endorsements

- **Kim Scott, Youth Support Coordinator** in Biloela says

*"Facilitating 'Girls with a Purpose Program' has been a great and rewarding experience. I believe this program should be offered to all girls from 12 – 16 years. Believing that your dreams can come true if you pursue them and that we all have a purpose and destiny in life is very empowering. I thoroughly recommend this program."*

- **Jessica Hinchy** is a youth worker with **Intercept Youth and Family Service** in Caboolture. She ran the program in late 2008 and saw first-hand the change in her girls group.

*"Girls With A Purpose is a program that has real outcomes - you really do see results. I loved seeing the girls actually learn and watch them have these 'light bulb' moments. The program is really enjoyable, very interactive and a fun way to teach girls about serious topics. I've been inundated with requests to run the program again."*

- **Scisco Career Pathways** youth worker **Stephanie Mizzi** has seen girls make some positive changes in their life after going through the program.

*"One of the girls I worked with decided to make a fresh start. She was only 14 years old, but was unhappy at her current school and decided she could do better elsewhere. She gained the confidence to do some research, convince her parent she needed to move schools and is now doing really well. She's much happier and proud of having taken action. Many young girls don't believe they can be strong, assertive, intelligent and say 'no' when necessary, while still being accepted, feminine and girly. Girls With A Purpose empowers them to research their options and make positive choices, based on what they need and want, not what others dictate."*

## Quotes collected from participants

Seventeen year old Tara Youngberry completed the program at Pacific Pines State High School. She loved the activities and learnt a lot about herself. Tara believes the program gave her heaps of confidence and helped her realise that *"I am great just the way I am"*.

Although Tara found school difficult she has now finished Year 10 at TAFE and is about to start an apprenticeship as a chef.

Other girls in the program have commented:

T (15yrs): *"I'm not so depressed anymore and I am very grateful about this program- it has saved me."*

J (14yrs): *"I have learnt how to be my own person."*

K (15yrs): *"It was fun and I liked communicating, I have had the best experience."*

J (14yrs): *"I am now more confident and open-minded."*

T (15yrs): *"I can respect myself. I am one of a kind."*

S (14yrs): *"The relationships session helped me to see the special relationships I have in life and how much people care for me."*

## **Program Author, Ruth Knight**

Ruth Knight is an experienced youth worker having worked with teenagers for over fifteen years in both the UK and Australia. She is an Associate Fellow with the Australian Institute of Management and has a Masters of Business from Queensland University of Technology. Ruth works as a consultant and trainer.

Ruth Knight has managed youth housing services, a family mediation service and various education projects. Ruth has an expert knowledge of the risks youth face, and she is passionate about mentoring and supporting young people through their adolescence. Ruth was awarded the Centenary Medal by the Australian Government for her work with homeless youth.

*Ruth says, "It is critical that young people have the opportunity to participate in the Girls With A Purpose program! We have to urgently address the disturbing depression and youth suicide statistics. The current levels of school dropout, youth homelessness and domestic violence is evidence that we all stand to benefit from talking honestly with teenagers about what concerns them, and instilling the values of acceptance, self-esteem, confidence and love!"*

With the support of Cosima De Vito and dedicated youth workers across the world, Ruth hopes that millions of girls will form new friendships and gain confidence by participating in the *Girls With A Purpose* program.

## **Program Material**

The program is a flexible step by step guide allowing facilitators to use the content in their own school or community setting.

The Facilitators Manual contains 11 session plans with over 80 suggested games and activities with 25 handouts, evaluation forms and a Certificate of Attendance provided on the included CD Rom.

The program can be purchased for \$220, including postage.

## **Media Enquiries**

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## **Graphics Available on Request**

1. Girls With A Purpose Facilitator Manual Cover
2. Lifehouse Project logo
3. Cosima DeVito pictures

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i National Survey of Young Australians 2008, available at [www.missionaustalia.com.au](http://www.missionaustalia.com.au)

ii "Teen girls copy cyber sex acts, teen psychologist says", Herald Sun, December 28, 2007

iii "Alcohol abuse putting teenage girls at risk", The Age, April 27, 2008

iv "Sex assaults on teenage girls dominate crime statistics", The Courier Mail, November 13, 2008