

# GIRLS AT BAT PROGRAM REPORT 2019





***Our daughter has grown up surrounded by baseball but often felt/was left out of her teams because they were dominated by boys. This has been an amazing and supportive experience for her!!***

**- Girls At Bat Parent**

**1,300**

**Athletes participated  
in 8 week  
Girls At Bat programs**

# Program Map

Girls from the following communities participated in the Girls At Bat program in 2019:



**2019 Partners**

- Batchewana First Nation, Ontario
- Brampton, Ontario
- Calgary, Alberta
- Charlottown, Prince Edward Island
- Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
- Edmonton, Alberta
- Eel Ground First Nation, New Brunswick
- Fort MacKay First Nation, Alberta
- Fort McMurray, Alberta
- Kamloops, British Columbia

- Milton and Acton, Ontario
- Municipality of Colchester County, Nova Scotia
- North Simcoe, Ontario
- Scarborough, Ontario
- Surrey, British Columbia
- Toronto, Ontario
- Truro, Nova Scotia
- Winnipeg, Manitoba

**1,300** Athletes participated in 8 week Girls At Bat programs

**192** Coaches trained

**15** Communities across the country

**7** Coach trainings facilitated

**10** Athlete clinics led

**4** Culminating celebrations hosted

## What is Girls At Bat?

Girls At Bat (GAB) is a girls-only softball/baseball program that uses baseball as a tool to enhance social and emotional skills of athletes, focusing on the four primary goals of increased connection, courage, leadership and love of sport. The program is designed using significant research focused on motivation and girls in sport. Jays Care Foundation developed the curriculum with the help of Plan International Canada and has piloted adapted versions of it for the last three years with grass-root organizations, schools and associations across the country. The program has proven to have tremendous results when it comes to increasing female participation rates and reversing the growing issue of low retention in girls-only sport programs:



**Enhance coaching skills and tactics that more effectively engage girls**



**Increase the number of girls engaging regularly in sport**



**Reduce the growing drop out rates of girls in sport**

## What is the Impact of the Program?

Throughout this summer we collected data from athletes, coaches, teachers, and parents through surveys and interviews. Here is a snapshot of the impact Girls At Bat is having:

**She never really participated in sports. This is her 2nd year at Girls At Bat. She wants to join basketball and volleyball too. I feel it's because of the good experience she has had at Girls At Bat.**

**- GAB Parent**



**100%**  
of girls reported feeling proud of themselves and their accomplishments throughout the program



**The biggest accomplishment in GAB this year was having youth who had never played sports be able to try and are now joining sports leagues - even one youth is joining a mixed baseball league.**

**- GAB Coach**



**98.5%**  
of Girls At Bat coaches reported learning new strategies to enhance positive connections between their athletes through the training.



**99%**  
of parents reported that their child was welcomed into the Girls At Bat community



**What I liked most about Girls At Bat was the coaches and how they were with us. They were extremely patient with us and always made activities fun.**

**- GAB Athlete**



## Why Does Girls At Bat Exist?

Normal has become bleak. Statistics show that 41% of girls between ages 3 and 17 don't participate in sports, and 84% of adult women don't participate in sports at all. We know that if a girl hasn't participated in sport by age 10, there is only a 10% chance that she will be physically active as an adult. Research on what motivates girls has demonstrated that we can curb these trends if we change the way we engage girls in sports programs.

Girls At Bat is designed to change the way girls are coached, prioritize the creation of safe spaces and fostering a sense of belonging so they want to join and stay in sport and recreation programs for life.



**DID YOU KNOW?** By the age of 14, girls are 1.5 times more likely to drop out of sport than boys. (Girls in Sport Study, Gatorade, 2017)



**DID YOU KNOW?** In Canada and globally, 5 to 19 year old girls say lack of enjoyment, feeling they are not good enough to play and an increase in family and intrapersonal stress were the most common reasons for dropping out of sport. (CAAWS, 2018)



**DID YOU KNOW?** 26% of 5-17 year old girls average 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity everyday vs. 48% of 5-17 year old boys. (Stats Canada, 2015)

## How Does the Program Work?

Girls At Bat is tailored to best fit the needs of the three most common pathways for girls to engage in sport:



**1. THROUGH GRASSROOTS AND COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS:** Jays Care partners with grassroots, not-for-profit organizations and communities to run the Girls At Bat program with girls they serve. Staff receive comprehensive training, resources and equipment to run an 8 week program either at an introductory level or offering opportunities for more formalized game and practices.



**2. THROUGH BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL ASSOCIATIONS:** Jays Care works with established baseball or softball leagues/associations to support coach development through training, resource creation and program support visits or clinics. The goal is to equip coaches with tools and strategies to better engage girls on their teams to increase retention and promote further female participation in sport.



**3. THROUGH SCHOOLS:** In 2020, Jays Care is thrilled to offer training, resource development, and end of season celebrations for schools across the country to implement Girls At Bat. This easy to run program is designed to equip teachers with the skills and confidence to offer 8 consecutive weeks of programming for girls in their respective schools.

## Celebrating Unstoppable Coaches

Girls At Bat wouldn't be possible without incredibly motivated and dedicated coaches, teachers and volunteers. This year we celebrated 3 phenomenal coaches who are changing the face of the game:



Left to right: Kelsey Poitras, Shanice Perrot, Brittany Carlisle

### UNSTOPPABLE **KELSEY POITRAS & SHANICE PERROT**

Kelsey Poitras and Shanice Perrot worked tirelessly to build a robust Girls At Bat program at the Canadian Native Friendship Centre in Edmonton. They went above and beyond to involve girls in their local Indigenous community that might not otherwise participate in sport. When their program filled up within two days, they offered another two days of programming, unwilling to turn anyone away. They recognized the importance of parent and family participation and found creative ways to involve families such as hosting a fun water day and encouraging parent and family participation in games. This successful family integration was evident at the wrap up celebration when whole families – grandmas, cousins, uncles, and aunts showed up to support the Girls At Bat athletes and take part in the fun. Now, there is excitement from other local Indigenous organizations to join next year and continue growing Girls At Bat within Edmonton.

### UNSTOPPABLE **BRITTANY CARLISLE**

Brittany put her heart into the management of the Girls Inc. Halton GAB program. This year Girls Inc. Halton ran an inter-organizational league that had over 70 athletes participate, with 4 teams playing in 2 different locations weekly in the Halton area. She was the league's convener, volunteer organizer, equipment manager, head of communications all the while modeling and demonstrating best coaching practices on and off the field. Brittany took an active approach to ensuring the program was always engaging and dynamic – adjusting the rules of the game when girls became more advanced, finding opportunities to incorporate youth voice while also making sure to utilize parent feedback – even sending out a mid season survey to all families. Brittany was willing to do it all in order to create the best experience possible for her athletes.

# Moving Forward

Over the course of the past three years of piloting Girls At Bat, many coaches who are also teachers have encouraged Jays Care to bring the program to more schools across the country. Given that phys-ed class and intra-mural school sport programs are the two most wide-reaching opportunities for girls to engage in sport, and acknowledging that 90% girls are opting out of optional phys-ed classes in high school in Canada, Jays Care is committed to supporting schools. In 2020, we will be offering far more opportunities for teachers and school administrative staff to access Girls At Bat trainings and program resources.

**Interested in starting Girls At Bat in your school? Here's how to get started:**



## STEP 1

Schools interested in the program register by emailing [Bhanesha.ollek@bluejays.com](mailto:Bhanesha.ollek@bluejays.com)



## STEP 2

Two school staff attend the teacher training. This is a one day dynamic training that help teachers increase their understanding and confidence in how to run the program as well as how to coach girls using researched methodologies that have proven to attract girls, motivate them and retain them. Teachers leave the training with a Girls At Bat program manual as well as a "Culture Kit" that helps them set the tone, build practices and structure games.



## STEP 3

Schools receive a baseball equipment kit for girls to use in the program. This equipment kit can be an indoor or an outdoor kit and is shipped directly to their school.



## STEP 4

Trained school staff run practices and games for a minimum of eight weeks using the Girls At Bat methodology.



## STEP 5

Teachers complete an end-of-program assessment tool and are invited to bring up to two teams to the annual Girls At Bat Jamboree. This is a one day tournament style event that celebrates the girls' accomplishments and introduces them to a variety of other sport options that exist in the area.



# Girls At Bat in Schools Frequently Asked Questions

## Who is the Girls At Bat school program for?

Girls At Bat is for anyone identifying as a girl – of all skills and abilities – in grades 5-7.

## Who is running the program in schools?

Teachers! We ask that each school selects at least 2 teachers to become Girls At Bat coaches and run the program. This includes coming to a one day comprehensive training.

## How frequently would I run Girls At Bat?

2 days a week for a minimum of 8 consecutive weeks. This includes one practice and one scrimmage per week.

## When would I run Girls At Bat?

Girls At Bat is designed to be easily run either at lunch, after or before school.

## How many girls need to sign up?

Teachers can run the program for a small group (9-12 girls) or a big group (up to 120 girls). In larger schools, older students can take on the role of Assistant Coach to support teams and culture building.

## What are schools asked to provide?

- Indoor or outdoor space for the duration of the program
- Program communication and promotion to parents/staff
- Chaperones for girls to attend the end-of-program Jamboree
- Handout/complete athlete and coach surveys
- Completion of an end of program report

## How can I find out more?

If you are interested in learning more about Girls At Bat please contact:

**Bhanesha Ollek, [Bhanesha.ollek@bluejays.com](mailto:Bhanesha.ollek@bluejays.com)**



## Thank you to everyone who made Girls At Bat 2019 possible:

Baseball BC  
Batchewana First Nation  
Boys and Girls Club of North Simcoe  
Brampton Girls Softball Association  
Calgary Immigrant Women's Association  
Canadian Girls Baseball  
Canadian Native Friendship Centre  
Girls Inc. Halton

Girls Inc. Northern Alberta  
Municipality of Colchester County Recreation  
Natoaganeg School  
Plan International Canada  
Rawlings  
West Scarborough Neighbourhood Community Centre  
Women's Network PEI