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Sentinel

805.845.1673 | 133 EAST DE LA GUERRA STREET | NO.182 | SANTA BARBARA

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## Girl About Town\*



with **Julie Bifano** Ms Bifano is drawn to micro-fiction and is currently writing her first novel – *The Grace Below*. She has a B.A. in English with an emphasis in writing from the University of San Francisco and a M.F.A. in Creative Writing, also from the University of San Francisco. More of Julie's stories and poetry can be viewed on her website [juliebifano.com](http://juliebifano.com).

## Girls Inc. Presents Women of Inspiration



Carrie Lundquist, Susan Robek, and Carol Palladini represent one of the honorees, the Women's Fund of Santa Barbara.

The sun beamed down in Carpinteria during the Girls Inc. Women of Inspiration luncheon. Women and men gathered together to celebrate honorees **Cynder Sinclair**, a nonprofit leader and current CEO of NonprofitKinect with more than four decades of work; and **Rebecca Costa Smith** and **Lindsey Connolly**, founders of Destined for Grace, an organization that provides aid and educational opportunities to children in Haiti, and The Women's Fund of Santa Barbara, a collective volunteer donor group that enables women to combine their dollars to provide grants.

Lively hosts **Ana Delgado** and **Maria Zamora** took the stage and recapped their involvement with Girls Inc. Both girls are positively influenced by a program called Eureka! This program encourages girls to explore STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields and trains them to engage in the job market. They both plan on attending college and continuing to be a positive role model for girls everywhere. Ana and Maria are only two examples of the more than 700 girls, ages 15-18, who are served by Girls Inc. of Carpinteria through a plethora of programs that motivate girls to master physical, intellectual, and emotional challenges.

Keynote inspirational speaker **Alix Generous** took the stage. Misdiagnosed



Girls Inc. Board of Trustees member Stefanie Herrington with Randy Weiss, representing one of the event sponsors, Union Bank.

as a child, Alix went through her childhood feeling misunderstood and isolated. She is now a 21-year-old with Asperger Syndrome, attending college, giving inspirational TED talks about her triumphs, and even presenting her scientific work to the United Nations. **Victoria Juarez**, executive director of Girls Inc., expressed, "Alix is a tremendous role model for not only women but also people who are living with challenges. She is a true star and her story proves that when we invest in our youth, we enable them to do big things – and in turn, the



Amanda Lyon, Anthony Castillo, and Jamie Collins gather together, delighted to celebrate women of inspiration.



Inspirational speaker Alix Generous poses with her best friend, Renee Koppelman, and Stefanie Herrington.



Lori Murray, Patricia Alper, and Antoinette Chartier love to celebrate inspirational women in our community.

community is stronger for it."

I took note as Alix stated, "Listen to your inner compass and your core. Everyone has it. The problems we have don't define us. It's how you cope." Alix was also humorous in parts of her speech, quoting the film *What About Bob?* "There are two types of people: those who like Neil Diamond, and those who don't."

A standing ovation was well-deserved as she concluded her speech. Looking around the auditorium surrounded by inspiring women, I realized the immense impact Girls Inc. has on so many women's lives, including my own.

For additional information on Girls Inc. of Santa Barbara visit [www.girlsincsb.org/](http://www.girlsincsb.org/).

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