



## **NEWS**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **“AN EVENING IN BLOOM” BENEFITS NONPROFIT’S MISSION TO GROW STRONG, SMART, AND BOLD GIRLS**

*Girls Inc. of Carpinteria fetes longtime supporters **Ed & Win Van Wingerden** and  
Girls Inc. alumna **Graciela Rodriguez**;  
Guests enjoy glamorous evening of dining, dancing and raising funds for organization*

**CARPINTERIA – October 22, 2014** — [Girls Inc. of Carpinteria](#)’s 2<sup>nd</sup> annual fundraiser, *An Evening in Bloom*, brought together nearly 250 people on Saturday, October 18<sup>th</sup> at Westerlay Orchids in Carpinteria for a glamorous evening filled with beautiful orchids, generous supporters, and heartwarming stories.

The gala honored local flower-growers with deep roots in community involvement, **Ed Van Wingerden**, owner of Ever-Bloom, and brother **Win Van Wingerden**, owner of Maximum Nursery and an honorary member of Girls Inc. of Carpinteria’s board of trustees. The honorees are both longtime supporters of Girls Inc. of Carpinteria and also served as auctioneers for the event.

“Each year, our fall fundraiser recognizes people in the community who have made a powerful impact on the lives of young girls, and reminds us why it is important that we each do our part as well,” said **Victoria Juarez**, executive director of Girls Inc. of Carpinteria. “Ed and Win are outstanding supporters who are dedicated to our mission to grow healthy, educated and independent girls. We thank them for all they have done and continue to do for Girls Inc. of Carpinteria.”

All proceeds supported the organization’s mission to empower girls and women to achieve personal, social, economic and political success and cultivate confident, successful girls. Girls Inc. of Carpinteria currently serves more than 700 girls each year through a variety of programs, motivating them to take risks and master physical, intellectual and emotional challenges.

Guests were greeted with a red carpet entrance followed by a cocktail reception, dinner buffet, live and silent auctions, and dancing to **The Rincon’s** later in the evening, in a unique setting among long rows of stunning orchids.

This year’s event co-chairs were **Donna Baird** of Baird Wealth Strategy Group and **Stefanie Herrington**, an estate planning attorney at Bartlett & Herrington in Carpinteria. Carpinteria Unified School board president **Andy Sheaffer** served as Master of Ceremonies.

**Ruthie Tremmel**, former executive director of Girls Inc. of Carpinteria, introduced Ed and Win Van Wingerden and presented the honorees with plaques of recognition. The brothers were honored to be longtime supporters of the organization.

Girls Inc. of Carpinteria board president **Clyde Freeman** recognized **Mary Crowley**, former president of

the board of trustees who served for seven years with the organization. She was presented with a certificate of recognition and Freeman graciously thanked her for the many years of leadership and dedication.

**Graciela Rodriguez**, a first grade teacher at the Adelante Charter School in Santa Barbara and Girls Inc. alum, shared her story about how the organization helped her discover her potential and opened her eyes to endless possibilities, crediting Girls Inc. for being her lifeline.

"It wasn't until I received counseling and got involved in Girls Inc. of Carpinteria's teen programs that my life changed dramatically," said Rodriguez, who shared her struggles with body image as a teenager and her fight with anorexia and bulimia. "Girls Inc. challenged me to make something positive out of my struggle and gave me the opportunity to do so."

Rodriguez has been part of the Girls Inc. family for 30 years, as a member, employee, and currently a member of the Girls Inc. National Latina Advisory Board. She holds a master's degree in multiple-subject education and special education. Rodriguez said she feels blessed for the opportunity she has to inspire young children to pursue their dreams and believe that anything is possible, just as Girls Inc. did for her.

"I wanted to share this with all of you to thank you on behalf of girls everywhere for everything you do," Rodriguez said to the crowd. "As you think about the future of girls and the future of Girls Inc., please remember that the seeds you plant blossom into generations of strong, smart, and bold women. I am a product of Girls Inc."

#### **About Girls Inc. of Carpinteria**

Girls Inc. of Carpinteria is a member of Girls Incorporated®, a nonprofit organization that inspires all girls to be strong, smart, and bold. With local roots dating to 1864 and national status since 1945, Girls Inc. has responded to the changing needs of girls through research-based programs and public education efforts that empower girls to understand, value, and assert their rights. We provide programs for girls 5 to 18 years old that focus on science, math, and technology; health and sexuality; economic and financial literacy; sports skills; leadership and advocacy; and media literacy. To learn more, become a volunteer or offer support, please visit [www.girlsinc-carp.org/](http://www.girlsinc-carp.org/).

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