

# COASTAL VIEW NEWS

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This year's Women of Inspiration honorees were, from left, Susan Robeck, Carol Paladini and Carrie Lundquist of the Women's Fund of Santa Barbara, Rebecca Costa Smith and Lindsey Connolly of Destined for Grace, Girls Inc. Executive Director Victoria Juarez and Cynder Sinclair of Nonprofit Kinect.

## Women of Inspiration enjoys record attendance

A sea of supporters filled the Girls Inc. of Carpinteria gymnasium on May 19 to help improve the lives of local girls and honor local women. The annual Women of Inspiration luncheon boasted record attendance, and organizers hope that record fundraising will result as well, giving local girls even greater opportunities to cultivate their smarts, strength and boldness.

Stunning the crowd with her heartfelt, unfiltered message was inspirational speaker Alix Generous. The 21-year-old woman whose Asperger's went undiagnosed as a child and who was misdiagnosed with various mental illnesses and learning disabilities, shared her unique perspective on the world. As a teen, she said, she lumped everyone into two categories: normal and not. Through years of treatment, she came to recognize her own gifts and to see that everyone struggles with who they are and how they fit in.

Now Generous is working toward a degree in neuroscience and has spoken at the United Nations and traveled the world. "Your problems and your past don't define you," she told the audience, "but how you deal with them does."

Girls Inc. Executive Director Victoria

Juarez told the crowd that while Generous is already making her mark, members of Girls Inc. of Carpinteria are also bound for greatness. "Someday these girls are going to change the world," she said.

Under Juarez's leadership, the local organization has shifted its focus toward a college-bound program called Eureka!, which engages girls in science, technology, engineering and math while giving them the support needed to be successful in college and their careers.

Ana Delgado and Maria Zamora, two Carpinteria High School freshmen who are enrolled in the Eureka! program, emceed the luncheon. Poised and confident in front of the massive crowd, the girls reported on progress made by women around the world and locally in the last year. Twenty-two nations are led by female presidents; Paris has its first female mayor; and the CHS girls tennis team won back-to-back league and CIF titles.

Santa Barbara area women are annually honored at the Women of Inspiration luncheon for their accomplishments and leadership. This year's Carpinteria

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Inspirational speaker Alix Generous, center, with Girls Inc. of Carpinteria members and event hosts Maria Zamora, left, and Ana Delgado.

## Women of Inspiration

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honorees were Rebecca Costa Smith and Lindsey Connolly, two young women who founded the Carpinteria-based organization Destined for Grace. Destined for Grace operates thrift stores in the Santa Barbara area to raise funds for a school in Haiti that serves impoverished children.

The Women's Fund of Santa Barbara was honored for its role in providing funding to organizations serving local women and children. The 600-member group has awarded \$4.7 million since it started 10 years ago. Eureka! is the beneficiary of a Women's Fund grant.

The third honoree, Cynder Sinclair, worked for 12 years as the CEO of the tri-county Girl Scouts and as the CEO of Santa Barbara Neighborhood Clinics before launching Nonprofit Kinect last year. Her business provides consulting services for all kinds of nonprofits.

—Lea Boyd