

This is Why EWLC Supports PACE CENTER for Girls: *An 'Innovation Hub' to Instruct & Mentor At-Risk Girls*

Since 2002, the PACE Center for Girls Broward has provided at-risk middle and high school girls from across Broward a girl-centered culture celebrating their potential through academics, social services, and mentorship.

After 16 years – a half-dozen in their current location – administrators decided it was time for a renovation to elevate the experience.

A months-long, three-phase make-over is bringing a new feel to the campus, and renewed vigor to the organization, said Aggie Pappas, PACE regional executive director.

Classrooms were gutted and lighting was replaced. New bathrooms were added to the 22,800-square-foot center. New modular classroom furniture will allow for more collaborative instruction and interaction. New technology will include large, touch-screen TVs that interact with each student's computer, allowing more targeted, gender-responsive instruction in the "STEAM" disciplines, or science, technology, engineering, art, and math.

Administrative and counselling offices also were renovated. The new space will serve the PACE Reach Counseling Center, which offers therapeutic and counseling services to girls not wanting to enroll in the academic program.



Aggie Pappas



Mary Marx

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"We're not just changing the floors, walls, and lights. The whole mood and atmosphere is being renovated," said Pappas, noting how the new designs will encourage greater engagement and preparation for professional life. It's a process Pappas calls "adulting" the girls of PACE.

"We've put in a lot of thought figuring out what the milieu needs to be to prepare them with the ability to succeed in workplace and college," Pappas said.

"Soft skills, goal setting, collaboration. The things that every employer wants in every employee."

Through its long-time partner with Extraordinary Women Leading Change and its "Young Women Mentorship for Leading Change" committee, EWLC movement founder Giselle Cheminand and Board members have mentored PACE students to become strong women leaders. Together with academics and social engagement, the young women of

PACE see the possibilities in themselves and aspire to a brighter future.

"Through this relationship, they've given the girls more keen insight and played a big role bridging school and work and adulting our girls," Pappas said. "In order for our girls to have goals, they have to be shown. So through the work that the board and EWLC has done, these role models really help us bridge that gap."

The renovations are funded through a capital campaign that includes contributions from private donors and grants from the Leo Goodwin Foundation and Starbucks.

Broward is one of 19 centers throughout Florida and is part of a program nationally recognized as one of the most effective for helping at-risk girls realize brighter and more productive futures. Broward also is a model of innovation and success, said Mary Marx, CEO, PACE Center for Girls, Inc.

"For many years, PACE Broward has served as the innovation hub for the entire PACE organization," Marx said. "The capital improvement project at the Broward center uses the physical space to further enhance gender-responsive educational and counseling services for girls. These innovations will help serve as a model for other Centers as we expand our footprint in Florida and nationally."

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