



## H.O.T. G.I.R.L.S. Helping Our Teen Girls In Real Life Situations

The mission of H.O.T. G.I.R.L.S. is to improve the health and lives of young Black women and girls by providing culturally relevant and age appropriate, girl-centered information and programming, inspired by hip hop and youth culture.

HOTGIRLS was originally founded by Dr. Carla Stokes in 2001 while she was enrolled as a doctoral student at the University of Michigan. A hip hop generation scholar-activist, Dr. Carla thought of the acronym "Helping Our Teen Girls In Real Life Situations" (HOTGIRLS) while listening to the rap song, "I Need a Hot Girl" by the Hot Boys.

Dr. Carla states, "Our work is both timely and necessary;

particularly in light of recent concerns about the influence of denigrating representations of women in the mass media and commercialized hip hop in the lives of Black youth. As we grow and obtain additional funding, we hope to reach more young women and girls by expanding our FIREGRL Club model throughout the United States."

Currently, HOTGIRLS educates young women and girls in the Atlanta metropolitan area about sexuality, dating violence, body image, media literacy, and other health and social justice issues through a variety of delivery formats.

Dr. Stokes believes that street harassment and violence against

women are two of the major concerns today, believing street harassment is an important issue because it is part of the larger problem of violence against women and girls. "Whether walking down the street or going to school," she states, "girls are disrespected so much that they think this behavior is normal."

HOTGIRLS will soon launch its new and improved website FIREGRL.com for girls. Dr. Stokes states, "Coming from the girls themselves, we focus on teaching girls about images and how they can create their own media, for example websites and songs."