

GIRLS GROUP INSPIRATION: A CONVERSATION WITH TEEN HASNA (NINA) GHALIB

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Girls Group, an Ann Arbor nonprofit organization, offers support to middle and high school students through programming and mentoring services. The mission of Girls Group is to develop character, leadership, self-confidence and social-consciousness skills in young women. Ann Arbor Family asked the leadership at Girls Group to select one student who displayed outstanding attributes while making an impact in the community. Hasna (Nina) Ghalib, 9th grader at Pioneer High School, was selected. We had the opportunity to interview Nina and learn more about her.

Yatesha Robinson, director of social work & middle school at Girls Group, describes you as strong and articulate. Where does your strength come from? I was born in Baghdad, Iraq, and moved to America in 2008. My mother gives me my strength. My mother worked her entire life to make sure that I would have the privilege of going to school every day. Because of my mother, I live in a world where I am treated equally. She worked really hard so that as a young woman I would have this privilege.

What inspired you to get involved in Girls Group and how has it helped you in your academic and personal life? My counselor in middle school suggested that I join Girls Group. Over time, I have built such great bonds with the mentors that it has become like a second home for me. We learn not only how we can benefit from an academic viewpoint, but from a personal one, too. Girls Group has helped me to understand how we can help out within our community. Being a refugee, it took me a very long time to open up and be outgoing. One of the things that the mentors did was create a safe and open space where I could talk about things I saw and went through that were very deep inside of me. Thanks to joining the organization, the mentors were so helpful and kind and helped me to realize I was not the only person who went through similar situations.

What are your aspirations for your future? I was fortunate enough to meet one of the board members of the Girls Group at our annual fundraiser, Stephanie Jones. Her husband is a cardiothoracic surgeon. I learned through speaking with her that there are a lot of perks in having your future planned out and that you can never start too early. I plan to work toward becoming a cardiothoracic surgeon myself.

What is the most important thing you have learned in Girls Group?

The great thing that Girls Group has taught me is that I don't have to be a shy girl. I have a voice and can do anything in the world. I really have to say that the Girls Group has done something so deep for me. Through this organization, I have a strong support network and a sisterhood. I also want to be a role model to other girls who are in the program and I am grateful because I have an opportunity to do that.