

BY [NIKKI](#) ON OCTOBER 7, 2012 IN [BLOG](#)

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Maryland Women's Heritage Center to Host First International Day of the Girl Celebration

Local girls who led U.S. campaign for new United Nations Day will help kick off new girls rights day

Baltimore –The first International Day of the Girl is will be celebrated on Saturday, October 13th from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the **Maryland Women's Heritage Center** as part of Free Fall Baltimore. The United Nations has established a global girls' rights day that will be celebrated on October 11 each year. While nearly 100 cities in the U.S. have recognized this day, Maryland was the first state to declare October 11 the Day of the Girl. House Delegate Elizabeth Bobo will present this official proclamation, written by School Girls Unite and signed by Gov. Martin O'Malley. It promises to be a historic celebration for this new commemorative day that started right here in Maryland.

[Girl Scouts](#) of Central Maryland also will participate in the celebration on October 13. Two sisters, who made presentations to the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus in Washington, will speak about their Girl Scout Gold Award projects which are aimed at helping Burmese-Chin refugees acclimate to American life.

Joanne Conelley, who helped launch School Girls Unite as a seventh grader in 2004 and now serves as co-founder of the Day of the Girl campaign while a student at American University, says "We have dreams to achieve, and we're tired of having society standing in our way. This historic Day of the Girl is a powerful way to get acquainted with local government and politics, and empower girls to make their voices heard."

Thirteen-year-old Marisa of School Girls Unite said, "After officially making October 11 the Day of the Girl, I feel very accomplished and filled with pride because it took a lot of teamwork to make this big change!" In addition to meeting these young activists, this celebration will feature inspiring activities all organized by School Girls Unite, including Global Equality Now, a video game show produced by



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Hammond Middle School students in Ellicott City. Another booth will focus on one in seven girls worldwide who become child brides and seek signatures on a letter urging Secretary Hillary Clinton to develop a comprehensive strategy to end this human rights crisis. School Girls from Harper's Choice Middle School in Columbia will have a hands-on activity to shatter stereotypes of girls in the media. The photo booth run by Oakland Mills Middle School students in Columbia will invite people to complete statements such as "Why A Day..." and these pictures will be made into a movie to be shown right before a raffle with prizes including a Day of the Girl t-shirt designed by two sisters and School Girls Unite's book, Girls Gone Activist! How to Change the World through Education.

[School Girls Unite](#) played a critical role in the establishment of the International Day of the Girl. A multicultural, multi-generational organization based in Maryland, School Girls Unite led a successful campaign to mobilize U.S. support. During 2011, students ran petition drives, sought endorsements, and met with government officials at the White House and U.S. State Department to galvanize support an annual girls' rights day. Since 2004, School Girls and its sister organization in Mali, West Africa, have been relentless advocates for the rights of every girl in the world to go to school, frequently meeting with Members of Congress and parliamentarians in Bamako. These young activists have written 10 action-oriented reports on local and global gender injustice including negative media images, Title IX, girls' dropout crisis, child marriage and gender-based violence along with the Day of the Girl Toolkit that are available on their website: www.DayoftheGirl.org.

For more information, please visit www.SchoolGirlsUnite.org and www.DayoftheGirl.org or contact Wendy Lesko at wendy@DayoftheGirl.org. For directions and parking for this free event at Maryland Women's Heritage Center in Baltimore, refer to <http://www.mdwomensheritagecenter.org/directions>.