

*****NEWS RELEASE*****

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FEBRUARY IS NATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY MONTH

***American Heritage Girls* addresses social and emotional concerns with new ‘Free to Grow’ program**

AHG founder: ‘We at AHG are dedicated to caring for and encouraging girls in all aspects, including mental health’

CINCINNATI, Ohio — As schools across the country continue to resume in-person learning after fractured virtual education, many teachers and school districts [report a significant rise in mental health concerns](#) of students. Recent studies show that the pandemic exacerbated an already growing crisis in youth mental health, and in the third quarter of 2020, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Children’s Hospital Association and the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry [declared an emergency in child and adolescent mental health](#).

In light of such a serious mental health crisis for children, *American Heritage Girls* (AHG, www.americanheritagegirls.org), one of the largest Christian, scout-type organizations in the world, is proud to announce the launch of their new “Free to Grow” program taking place February 7 through February 11. The innovative program is designed to help girls condition their socio-emotional skills with topics such as identifying false narratives, decision-making, fighting anxiety, building up confidence and learning to accept who they are as daughters of Christ.

AHG Founder and Executive Director Patti Garibay stated, “We at AHG are dedicated to caring for and encouraging girls in all aspects of development, including mental health. The ‘Free to Grow’ program provides ways for Troops, girls and their families to address socio-emotional topics that affect all ages, and each activity throughout the week ties in with an AHG Badge, Sports Pin or Patch Program.”

The program leads girls through activities and Bible verses designed to address key aspects of social and emotional health. These activities can be done individually, with a parent or guardian, or with their entire Troop. At the end of the week, girls who participate earn their “Free to Grow” patch to commemorate their accomplishment.

Garibay commented, “As girls walk through activities and discussions throughout the week, they will discover how the Lord created them with a heart, mind and soul to live freely and stand resiliently against negative emotions and social pressures so they may be a light in the darkness!”

American Heritage Girls was founded in 1995 by a group of parents who wanted this faith-based, scout-type character development program for their daughters. At *AHG*, girls ages five to 18 meet together as [a single Troop](#) at the same time and then break out into Units by Levels. This gives *AHG* girls the important social experience of interacting with friends and godly mentors of various ages; members also learn leadership skills within a group setting. *AHG* Troops are located in [local communities](#) across the nation. If none exists in a given area, families can bring the *AHG* Program to their own area. An *American Heritage Girls* Troop Development Coach is available to provide resources to potential Charter Organizations and other families to form [a new Troop](#). To hear more about the purpose, mission, and vision of *AHG* from *Founder and Executive Director Patti Garibay*, [click here](#).

Today, there are [Troops](#) in all 50 states and girls being served in 15 countries around the globe. Girls can join a Troop at any time; if a Troop is not available nearby, they can become a [Trailblazer](#) and enjoy the *AHG* program alongside their parent. A variety of Christian denominations are also represented as [Charter Organizations](#) for Troops. Thousands of volunteer members across the country are helping girls grow in their faith, cultivate a heart for service, enjoy the great outdoors, and have more fun than they can imagine.

The “*Raising Godly Girls*” radio feature and [Raising Godly Girls blog](#) shares guidance and biblically based advice on many key topics affecting girls today—including the prevalence of bullying and cyberbullying. It gives parents, educators, and faith community leaders a set of tools, resources, and Scripture-based advice to assist in raising girls after God’s own heart. The “*Raising Godly Girls Minute*” with [Patti Garibay](#) airs on 900+ Christian radio stations across the country.

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To schedule interviews with spokespersons from *American Heritage Girls*, contact Media@HamiltonStrategies.com, Beth Harrison, 610.584.1096 ext. 105, or Deborah Hamilton, ext. 102.

To inquire about airing the “*Raising Godly Girls Minute*” with [Patti Garibay](#), contact [Michael Hamilton](#), 610.584.1096, ext. 101.