

THE BOLICK REPORT



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Carol Kimbriel was a woman who saw a girl whose parents were struggling to make ends meet. When the parents' workday was over, they cleaned an office building in the evenings. Their 13-year-old daughter had to work with them in the evenings.



God moved in Carol's heart, and she offered her home as a second home to their daughter. Until the girl finished high school, she spent several nights a week in Carol's home.

There she did her homework, and she went to youth group with her best friend, Amy, Carol's daughter.

She began to form a vision for her future. Carol gave her important advice about life, but most of all, she taught her to follow Jesus.

And because Carol opened her heart to that little girl, I am writing about the *Talita Cumi Girls' Clubs* project now.

In 2005, serving in Chile, when I realized the limited prospects of young girls living in poverty throughout Latin America, I imagined

the people and the places where they might find mentors, friends, and cultivate their true identities, as brave, loving, hopeful, wise, daughters of God.

And today, throughout Latin America, ***Talita Cumi Girls' Clubs* programs are places where** mature Christian women from local churches gather girls from their communities and teach them how to **walk together towards Christlikeness**, discovering those strengths of the heart that help them become women secure in their identity, with gifts and talents to change their world.

These **strengths of the heart are the virtues**, known in the classical Christian tradition as Faith, Hope, Love, Wisdom, Temperance, Courage, and Justice.

The practice of the virtues, as **habits of character**, can change not only their lives, but the lives of those around them. They teach them how to find friends and to be friends. They teach them what love is, and what it is not.

What began in 2005, or in 1981, is now the program we are piloting in the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Ecuador, and Mexico.

Many of these girls live in dark places, and it takes courage to love in the dark. But seventy-two women are trusting what our early church mothers and fathers knew to be true, that the life of Jesus was a life of virtue, that following Jesus means growing in virtue, and this happens when teaching is accompanied by practice and prayer.

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