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Girls in Leadership Change the World

Here at IWA, we believe leaders [create extraordinary solutions which make the world special](#). We are passionate about empowering young women to lead and serve as the bold, authentic, servant leaders of tomorrow. Drawing on the inspiration of St John Paul II, we recognize that each woman is endowed with a “[feminine genius](#)” by which she offers a unique contribution to the world.

Recent studies and polls continue to identify gender gaps in leadership roles for women. As of 2008, while women made up 46.5% of the work force and 51% of managerial jobs, women with CEO, COO and EVP titles [only remained at 7% of the population](#) of U.S. executives. Cheryl Sandberg’s 2017 “[Women in the Workplace](#)” study shockingly found that as progress in gender equality is stalling, roughly 50% of men and one third of women don’t find the above statistic troubling. Furthermore, a [2015 Catalyst study](#) revealed that only 5% of the S&P 500 index had female CEOs. It’s clear that while more women are graduating college and finding success in their careers, the divide in male/female top leadership positions persists.

We at IWA believe we can fill that gap.

Research continues to prove the unique advantage women in leadership have on the profitability of an organization. In 2012, a [Credit Suisse study](#) demonstrated that companies with at least one woman on the board had higher return on investment than those without. Similarly, a [2007 Catalyst study](#) found that Fortune 500 companies with more women on the board saw a return on equity that increased 53%, profit margins by 42% and return on invested capital by

66%. Not only do female leaders increase profits, but they also offer benefits for employees. During the Great Recession of 2008-2012, female CEOs were less likely to lay off staff ([14% vs. 6%](#)). While retaining staff can lower short term profits, this leadership technique has proven to preserve employee morale and ultimately reduce later long term hiring and training costs.

As the above statistics prove, girls have the power to provide an advantage in a highly competitive market. St Edith Stein famously wrote, “no woman is just a woman.” By this she harkens back to the “feminine genius,” reminding us that women have been gifted the ability to look holistically at another person, empathizing with them and acting on a first instinct to serve. Forbes contributor Glenn Llopis discusses this idea, noting that women leaders are constantly seeking ways to make a positive contribution and maintain a “[circular vision that enables them to be well rounded people](#).” He argues that women possess often undervalued leadership traits such as being opportunity driven, strategic and passionate. Bob Sherwin similarly wrote a piece for Business Insider outlining “[Why Women are More Effective Leaders than Men](#).” Through his data analysis, Sherwin refutes the assumption that women excel at typically nurturing competencies such as motivation and relationship building, proving rather that they demonstrate a more positive contribution in taking initiative, displaying honesty and integrity and driving for results.

“These competencies highlight that women were seen as more effective in getting things done, being role models and delivering results. These skills describe leaders who take on difficult challenges, ensure that people act with integrity, and who simply achieve challenging results.” - Bob Sherwin

Each IWA graduate is formed to become leaders who will fill the gender gap and prove the value of female leadership. Through three curricular Leadership courses, Leading with Character, Leading with Service and Leading with Business, IWA leaders are given opportunities to build their leadership competencies in an all female environment.

What's so special about an all female environment? 100% of all leadership positions here at IWA are filled by girls! Furthermore, research demonstrates that girls in all female schools are [three times more likely to consider a career in engineering, score 28 points higher on their mean SAT scores and report higher academic self confidence](#). Additionally, intentional leadership programs in schools have proven to help girls [positively identify with calling themselves leaders](#), radically shattering their preconceived perceptions of leaders as “bossy” or “strong willed.”

Doctor of the Church, St Catherine of Siena is known for saying, “Be who God meant you to be, and you will set the world on fire.” Here at IWA, we create an educational environment to become the leader you are meant to be. Your task: [Change the world!](#)
