

Influential Women Profiles Toya M. Russell Phillips, MBA: Founder And CEO Of Girls Of Excellence, Inc.

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Empowering the Next Generation of Young Women Through Mentorship, Advocacy, and Nearly Three Decades of Nonprofit Leadership

Toya M. Russell Phillips, MBA, is a dynamic nonprofit leader, community advocate, and mentor dedicated to empowering underserved populations and creating opportunities for young women to thrive. As the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Girls of Excellence, Inc., Toya has built a transformative mentoring organization that serves hundreds of girls throughout the Atlanta metropolitan area, providing them with the guidance, confidence, and life skills needed to succeed.



With nearly three decades of experience in nonprofit leadership, Toya has developed a career centered on service, advocacy, and community transformation. Her mission is deeply connected to her own lived experiences growing up without consistent access to mentorship, resources, and support systems. Those experiences shaped her commitment to ensuring that young girls have access to trusted mentors, meaningful opportunities, and the tools necessary to navigate personal, academic, and professional challenges.

Drawing from her background in business management, Toya brings extensive expertise in organizational leadership, program operations, fundraising, community partnerships, and strategic development. Through Girls of Excellence, Inc., she has successfully managed initiatives focused on youth development, family services, and community engagement. Her responsibilities include overseeing mentor coordination, building school partnerships, managing

financial operations, evaluating program effectiveness, and developing strategies that expand the organization's reach and impact.

Beyond her leadership at Girls of Excellence, Toya is also the Co-Founder of The Girls Cooperative, a coalition dedicated to increasing awareness, resources, and support for organizations serving girls. Through this work and her involvement in national mentoring efforts, she continues to advocate for policies and initiatives that strengthen opportunities for young people and elevate the importance of mentorship.

At the heart of Toya's work is a belief that every young person deserves a village of support. She is passionate about meeting girls where they are and providing more than academic or career guidance. Through year-round mentoring, leadership camps, service projects, and community initiatives, Girls of Excellence offers social-emotional support, practical life skills, and opportunities for personal growth.

Toya believes mentorship has the power to change the trajectory of a young person's life. By creating spaces where girls can develop confidence, discover their strengths, and build meaningful relationships, she continues to inspire the next generation of capable, compassionate, and empowered women.

Toya attributes her success to faith, dedication, commitment, courage, and confidence. She credits the strong women who have influenced her life for helping shape her belief in herself and her ability to pursue opportunities without fear. Through experience, she has learned that rejection is not failure but rather an opportunity for growth and redirection.

To Toya, a "no" represents the next opportunity rather than the end of the journey. She believes success comes from continuing to show up, celebrating progress, and recognizing the work behind every accomplishment. Each challenge and achievement has strengthened her resilience, confidence, and determination to keep moving forward.

The best career advice Toya has received is to never limit herself and to simply pursue opportunities with confidence. A mentor who successfully led large organizations encouraged her to recognize her own value, find her place, and trust that her experiences and skills were enough to create meaningful impact.

For young women entering the nonprofit and community service fields, Toya encourages preparation, optimism, creativity, and perseverance. She emphasizes that meaningful work requires dedication, flexibility, and a willingness to take on many responsibilities. While awards, recognition, grants, and achievements are valuable, she believes the greatest reward comes from seeing the personal transformation of those being served.

For Toya, the most powerful moments are hearing a young person share that a program, mentor, or opportunity helped change their life. Witnessing confidence, hope, and growth in the

girls she serves represents the true measure of success.

She recognizes that funding remains one of the greatest challenges facing nonprofit organizations today. However, she also sees an opportunity to create stronger connections between education, mental health resources, and social-emotional support. Toya believes young people benefit most when systems work together rather than operate separately, and she advocates for programming that supports the whole person.

Another ongoing challenge is recruiting dedicated mentors who are passionate about investing in youth. Toya emphasizes that mentors are essential to the success of community programs and that finding individuals willing to make a lasting commitment remains critical.

The values that guide Toya in both her professional and personal life are integrity, trust, respect, and support. She believes integrity is the foundation of meaningful leadership because it represents doing what is right even when no one is watching. For Toya, integrity influences how people build trust, treat others, and make decisions that benefit the greater good.

Through her leadership, advocacy, and commitment to mentorship, Toya M. Russell Phillips continues to create pathways for young women to succeed. Her work with Girls of Excellence, Inc. reflects a lifelong dedication to building stronger communities and ensuring that every girl has the opportunity, confidence, and support to reach her full potential.

Learn More about Toya M. Russell Phillips:

Through her Influential Women profile, <https://influentialwomen.com/connect/toya-russellphillips>

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