GENDER DISPARITY
FROM HOLLYWOOD TO HOME

"Media has the power to educate, to shape people's thoughts. It also has an incredible power when you get to see someone who's like you on screen." -Shonda Rhimes

[*This Changes Everything* Documentary](#)

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Images are so powerful that they affect real life. The media has taught us that women should not focus on their desires, their needs, or their fears. Women in television and movies are portrayed as sidekicks, especially non-white females. Girls are not seeing themselves portrayed on the screen which can be devastating. 80% of the media consumed worldwide is created in the United States, and is responsible for exporting a pretty negative view of women. The reason we do not have complexity in shows and films is because the perspective

is aimed at men's interests. Geena Davis researched male versus female roles on the screen, and in all children's movies and television shows male characters were more prevalent, and received more speaking and screen time. Now more than ever women want inclusion.

The movie *League of their Own* was one of the first movies directed at giving women the opportunity to see themselves in different roles. Of the top 100 grossing films of 2018, 85% of writers were male. Since the 1800s the hero has been a white male who has to defend his right to his manhood while the women are in orbit around the men. Women have been hired to be the writer just for the female part to fill in the gaps, and yet are still questioned about their decisions. In films and television women are seen for their bodies, clothes, and eyes, going through life thinking that the way their body is shaped matters more to the world than what they are thinking about. Young girls tend to internalize the representations of women on screen. They think that it's more important to be seen through a man's eyes than it is to determine what they desire or want. Of the 100 top-grossing films of 2018, only 11 were women from an underrepresented racial/ethnic group in a lead or co-lead role. The movie *Brave* is an example of the impact media has on young girls. After *Brave* and *The Hunger Games* were released the number of girls taking archery classes rose 105%. Director Kimberly Pierce won an Academy Award for her first film, but it still took her nine years to get her next film. People in power for years have tried to divide power with women in film and television, which is influencing the thoughts and ideas younger children have. Girls are shown fewer career options on screen, and in G-rated films female characters are three times more likely to be shown in sexually revealing clothing than male characters.

Part of sexism and racism is being told to stay where you are, to not speak up. I feel after watching this documentary that it is even more important to truly listen to my students, their families, and the people I work with. Women are making more of an impact in television and film, and portraying themselves in multiple roles that younger girls can look up to. I want to take that mindset into the classroom and show all of my students what they are capable of and that there are no limitations to what they can do. When choosing reading material, images, or video clips to share with my students I will be proactive in not being discriminatory towards females, and representing them in ways that show their values and stories. It is evident that the power of what children see gets into their DNA of what becomes possible for them when they grow up. The images I show in class will positively influence how my students treat each other, how policy is formed, and how ideas are built.