The history of modern girlhood is entwined with anxieties about cultural norms and cultural change that are foundational to "girlhood" and "girl culture." This essay sketches a history of discourses on girls, girlhood and girl culture as the necessary genealogical context for a subsequent discussion of the field of contemporary girl studies. It begins with historical perspectives on the 'girl of the period' from the nineteenth century, through the "girl of yesterday," the "it girl" to the post World War I period that coalesced the cultural conditions necessary for the teenager to take on iconic status. The second half of the article considers girlhood studies today—and in particular its interest in locating, describing and problematizing girls' voice and girls' agency. In a world increasingly perceived as "global," these are powerful starting points for thinking about what constitutes "girl studies" (or "girlhood studies" or "girl culture studies") today.
Today was our Girls, Media & You final celebration! We decorated Alumni Hall with all of our artifacts from the class. The lovely Miss Stephanie and Miss Jaime were our emcees for the night. When I first signed up for Girlhood, Society, and Girl Culture, I chose it because it was one of the options for my Women’s Studies minor, and because I am interested in working with adolescent girls with behavioral disorders. I thought this class would give me some understanding of how girls think and operate within modern Western culture, and that a little bit of experience with the age group I want to work with would be good for a resume.