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Mainely Girls

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MAINELY GIRLS

The Source of Information For and About Maine Girls!

Mission:

Mainely Girls, a state-wide, non-profit organization, was founded in 1996 with a two part mission: to work with rural communities to assist them in focusing on girls' needs in a preventative, proactive and positive manner, and to work on the state level to bring about positive change for girls.

Mainely Girls Editorial Board

Sarah Andrews
Elizabeth Banwell
Debbie Handy
Alexandra Merrill
Mary Orear
Lucy Williams

Mainely Girls is grateful for the support of
Bonnie Rukin Miller
which makes
this newsletter
possible.

Eight years ago, in the winter of 1994, as planning for the first Camden girls' conference began, girls indicated that they wanted a session about anorexia and bulimia. A Conference board member, herself a doctor, approached several of her colleagues at the local hospital who dismissed her request by telling her that there were few girls in our area with these problems, and they were merely misbehaving. The registration brochure for that first conference shows that we didn't address disordered eating.

Truth? I can't find the file for 1995, but the program for 1996 is quite revealing. We paid Dr. Catherine Steiner-Adair, the director of education, outreach and prevention for the Harvard Eating Disorders Center, what was, for us, a whopping honorarium to present a 90 minute keynote titled "Sustaining Voice, Vision and Courage: The Challenge of Growing Up Female in the '90's." Her presentation focused on cultural messages that undermine girls' healthy self-esteem, interfere with healthy eating and contribute to eating disorders.

As the years passed, the problem grew, and in the spring of 1999 the community became aware that many girls at both the high school and the middle school were in serious danger. At that point, someone suggested that interested parties meet, and twenty-five women from the educational and health care communities filled the room, along with mothers and other youth workers, on a late spring evening in a hot, stuffy, cramped school room.

What came into being is The Midcoast Disordered Eating Task Force - a grassroots organization established to address the devastating problem of disordered eating in our community. Representatives from area schools, hospitals, counselors, and concerned individuals strive to raise awareness, educate, and strengthen support for individuals and families affected by disordered eating.

Twenty months later, this group has a lot to be proud of. Leadership evolved, a series of regularly scheduled meetings was established, a meeting site was offered, communication organized, agendas drawn up, and minutes sent out. Once organized, this is a timeline of what they accomplished:

November 1999—Two task force members gave keynote addresses about disordered eating at the Mainely Girls' fundraising luncheon for the annual girls' conference.

November 1999—"Condition Identified: Disordered Eating... Now What Do We Do?" was a full day presentation by Dr. Catherine Steiner-Adair for health care professionals. (Over 100 participants attended.) Dr. Steiner-

Adair also delivered a luncheon address to area doctors at the hospital.

January 2000—Protocol for Dealing with Students with Disordered Eating was approved by the School Board.

January 2000—A survey was conducted of all area family physicians and pediatricians to find out who is comfortable with diagnosis and treating patients with disordered eating. A list was established.

(continued on next page)

From DENIAL to ACTION

A Community Addresses Disordered Eating, Intervention & Prevention



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Maine Women's Fund
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Ms. Foundation
Orchard Foundation
United Way

From Denial to Action (continued from previous page)

January 2000—A survey was conducted of all area therapists to determine who is qualified, experienced and willing to work with disordered eating clients. A list was established.

January 2000—A survey was conducted of all area dietitians interested in working with this population. A list was generated.

March 2000—The above lists were distributed to all area school nurses and guidance counselors, physicians, therapists and dietitians.

March 2000—A performance of *The Thin Line*, a play about disordered eating written and directed by Cathy Plourde, was given at the annual Camden Girls' Conference.

March 2000—A medical and a nutritional protocol were developed.

April 2000—A support group for therapists who work with disordered patients was organized.

April 2000—*The Ripple Effect*, a support group for those who care about people with disordered eating, was organized and offered.

September 2000—Mother-daughter book clubs for 5th and 6th grade girls were started to promote communication in a preventative manner.

November 2000—High school Peers Group gave a theatre presentation for middle school students and families.

December 2000—A support group for high school girls with disordered eating and co-facilitated by two area therapists was organized by a high school girl in Camden and funded by the Maine Community Foundation, with Mainly Girls serving as the fiscal sponsor.

Throughout this collaborative effort, we've learned

a tremendous amount about the condition itself, the causes of disordered eating, about prevention, and about treatment. We now have available a comprehensive resource list of trained, experienced and willing health care professionals who wish to work with disordered eating clients. Dr. Steiner-Adair's insistence that successful treatment requires a team approach has changed the way clients are helped in our area; there is far more coordination of efforts and better communication among caregivers. Offering a local group for high school girls has provided support for more girls while saving others the four hour round trip drive to Portland's Mercy Hospital, previously the closest support group available to them.

Though the Task Force is taking a well earned three month break, there will be much more to do, especially along the lines of prevention and early intervention, when they reconvene. School climate, the health curriculum, and cafeteria offerings should be considered. Dr. Steiner-Adair has a preventative curriculum for 5th and 6th graders that we want to preview and consider implementing in the schools. A task force member has discussed writing a weekly column for the local newspaper. And, we want to find some method of evaluating if our efforts have been effective.

After twenty months our community is still deeply concerned about the number of young people struggling with disordered eating, but there is now greater local awareness, understanding, and support available to those involved with disordered eating. We are sharing the Task Force's story, hoping that the efforts of "The Little Group That Did" might serve as a possible model for other communities that are also struggling with this issue.

Second Gathering About Girls

Friday, October 27th Mainly Girls and the Women's Resource Center at the University of Maine at Orono collaborated to host this second annual event, this year held at the University of Maine Hutchinson Center in Belfast. People who work with girls, as well as girls who have already distinguished themselves as leaders and/or activists, gathered together to recognize the importance of the work we are all doing, to learn more about our work for and with girls, and to take advantage of this unique networking opportunity. Over 75 girls and women attended. The following two articles review a couple of the five projects presented that day.

Girls' Relationships: "The Girl Fighting Project"

This year The Women's Resource Center at the University of Maine at Orono is working on a project with visiting scholar Lyn Mikel Brown and funded by the American Association of University Women's Educational Foundation. The project is designed to better understand girls' friendships as either supportive and/or destructive. Understanding the nature of girls' friendships can help Maine girls resist the pressures to conform to or be ostracized by those they most want to impress.

We know that girls depend on close, intimate

friendships to get them through life. The trust and support of these relationships provide girls with emotional and psychological safety nets: with their friends behind them, girls will do and say things that are remarkably creative and brave. With their friends at their back they will stand on principle, rebuke a school bully, report sexual harassment, or develop a new idea to fight stereotypes.

However, girls are also excruciatingly tough on other girls. They talk behind each others' backs, they tease one another, they police each others' clothing and body size, and they fight over real and imagined relationships with boys. Girls promote a strict conformity to group norms and rules, reinforce gender and racial stereotypes, and in this way hold each other back through threats of exclusion and rejection.

Beginning as early as age three, four or five, through their comments and behavior, girls set the standard about how other girls' bodies should look, how other girls should feel, who is popular and who is not.

Lyn Brown asserts that today's cartoons and the media teach girls to see each other as petty, catty, deceitful, and untrustworthy. Repeatedly she finds a token girl in an otherwise all boy cast, noting that

the girl has no other girlfriends: follows the boys' journey. TV programs are still based on the assumption that girls will watch boys but boys won't watch girls. (A specific example is the new PBS show "Between the Lions." The show that is supposed to help children learn how to read is clearly focused on the male audience, having in its cast about one minor female character.)

Lyn also looks at children's popular literature. Nancy Drew novels used to revolve around what Nancy did, but in 1959 a sudden change occurs and from then on Nancy is saved by boys and concerned about how she looks. In today's Harry Potter books there is one strong girl surrounded by other passive, bland, dull girls. The one strong girl joins boys in male-bonding and dismisses the other girls. Lyn believes this is the basis of girl-fighting.

Even in the Girl Power movement girls need either to be like boys (tom boys) or desirable to boys (the girlie girl). Regardless, it not really about who the girls are – their own identities; it's about who the girls are in relationship to boys.

What are the images bombarding the "older girls?" The average reader for *Seventeen Magazine* is 12 years old, and "Friends" is one of the most watched shows among twelve year old girls. Lyn asks, "Where are the other images where girls can see themselves being taken seriously?" Without them, the girls slowly buy into the internalized oppression. They learn to be media-produced versions of girls.

Lyn sees this as the classic divide and conquer strategy. If we divide girls against each other, maybe everyone will be so busy watching them act out against each other that no one will notice what the reality is for girls. It is easier and safer and ultimately more profitable, in a sexist climate, for girls to take out their fears and anxieties and anger on other girls rather than on boys.

But, when we get girls together, they realize they're not the only ones who feel a certain way. And then they can find ways to resist the media's defining of them and try to find a way to define themselves.

As Lyn Brown says, "We need to look at this relational underground so that we can recognize how and why girls participate in divide and conquer strategies that keep them from organizing with other girls on their own behalf."

Good Girl vs. Slut: Can We Create another Option?

Mary Madden, now a Ph.D candidate at UMO, with a background in Family Planning, has developed and taught sexuality programs in schools for many years. Her work led to the realization that sexuality education is failing to address something vitally important: the standards of behavior among girls.

Focusing her research in this area, Mary enlisted some college students to bridge the age gap and act as translators in conversations with groups of teenage girls. When analyzing these conversations, Mary has observed class differences: while girls from working class and poor families talk openly about their romantic and sexual relationships, in higher socio-economic groups there is a silencing around talk of sexuality.

At the Gathering she illustrated this by breaking up the adult workshop participants into four small groups to address three questions:

- 1) What were the rules of romantic relationships when you were a teenager?
- 2) What role did sex play?
- 3) What did you have to do to be considered a good girl?

After spirited discussions, the groups reported back and agreed that class definitely impacted people's answers to these questions; girls' actions were interpreted differently by various socio-economic groups. There were also different rules for the different

generations. However, on the whole some of the requirements for being a good girl were:

She didn't initiate sex.

She needed to control her desire, to be in charge of stopping, and to take responsibility.

She knew that being in a relationship made having sex all right, regardless of the length of the relationship. (Sometimes the relationship was negotiated around the sexual act.)

Participants agreed that the rules today are harder to figure out as they had less defined perimeters.

Following this activity Mary discussed the research she is currently doing with groups of high school junior and senior girls. The girls are from different locations, backgrounds, and social classes around the state. Within the group she conducts her work by asking questions, and though it is hard with her Family Planning background, she does not impose her knowledge or beliefs onto the girls. Instead she listens, facilitates, and learns from the girls.

Mary introduced the stories of three girls. The first, Andrea, came from a strict, controlling family who put her on birth control when she was in the 8th grade (as a safety net) and told her not to have sex. She is critical towards others and is worried about how other people view her. Andrea wants to completely deny her sexuality and doesn't even participate in any type of flirting. When Andrea entered the group she was strongly opposed to having sex until she was out of high school; however, she is currently involved in a sexual relationship. Near the end of the project she announced she had become pregnant within three months of starting this sexual relationship when her physician changed her birth control pills. Andrea was outraged because she felt she had tried to play by the rules, yet other girls had unprotected sex for years and never got pregnant.

The next story was about Dana, whose parents told her never to have sex and wouldn't allow her to use birth control. She began challenging her parents' rules by having sex without using birth control. Dana likes to flirt and feels that is okay; she likes playing with desire but does not want to be labeled a "slut". She believes that messing around (anything except intercourse) is okay anytime, but that sex should happen in the context of a relationship. Though she has one of the strongest voices in the group, she says she wouldn't dare ask a partner to use a condom.

Both girls feel that being a "slut" is the worst label, and that this term often regulates their behavior.

Natalie is straight-forward in her talk about sex, constantly talking of "hot" guys, etc. She is the object of rumors in her school about her sexual activity and addresses that by not denying it. She says, "I'm a slut, and I don't care who knows it." By stating this she is owning her own sensuality. She uses the word "slut" for lack of other words.

Mary has noticed how watchful girls are of other people and how the others interpret the rules. She also found that girls in a comfortable environment can be vocal about their opinions; however, once in relationships with boys, the girls' voices become silent as they yield both voice and power. Through conversations with the girls, Mary has learned that sexuality education in school is not particularly helpful and she's looking for ways to do the following:

Make safe spaces for girls to talk about sex.

Find ways to talk without condemning.

Create forums that are culturally acceptable.

Help girls reframe the conversation; otherwise, the only terms they have are "good girl" or "slut."

Calendar

January 2001

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
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February 2001

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March 2001

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April 2001

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What's Happening?

USM Science Bowl Apply immediately Saturday, Feb. 24, Gorham

USM is attempting to sponsor a US Dept. of Energy Science Bowl on Saturday, Feb. 24 in Bailey Hall, Gorham. This is a national "game" run in a "Jeopardy" style format run on a regional basis with high school teams of 4 (+ 1 alternate) participating. The winning team gets a free trip to Washington, D.C. to participate in the national Science Bowl. Also, this event is sponsored by various businesses so there are free prizes for all teams participating... I am writing this because teams need to apply!! Right now there are not enough teams to run the event (6 need to apply so the chances of winning are terrific!! If you know of any high school science teachers who might be interested or if you are interested in applying for a team, please contact Rob Sanford before the end of January. If this event runs, MWIS members can be involved.

For more information, please contact:

Robert M. Sanford
Environmental Science & Policy Program
University of Southern Maine
37 College Ave.
Gorham, ME 04038
(207) 780 5756
RSanford@USM.maine.edu

Canoe Expedition for Maine Girls Application process begins in mid-January. Trip is the first three weeks in August.

Kirstin George, Outward Bound instructor and Goddard College graduate student, has designed a 24-day canoeing program for 16 – 18 year old Maine girls with an emphasis on self-awareness, confidence, challenge, and growth. This multi-cultural education project is centered around a three-week expedition on one of northern Maine's traditional canoe routes. Two experienced female instructors will lead the expedition in August of 2001.

The four main objectives for the project are:

- 1) to provide an opportunity for adolescent girls to discover their inborn capacities for courage, compassion, insight, and perseverance as they transition into adulthood;
- 2) to help them develop leadership skills and establish relationships with adult mentors;
- 3) to deepen their sense of place, cultural identity, and appreciation of diversity; and
- 4) to further their environmental knowledge of the Northwoods.

The ten participants will be girls from rural Maine communities: five Native American and five of European descent. Mainely Girls will assist in finding eligible, motivated girls and women to be their mentors throughout the year. The Penobscot River Keepers and Maine's five Native American communities will provide educational resources for the study of Northern Maine's history, culture, and ecology as well as equipment, food, transportation, and insurance.

The Canoe Expedition for Maine Girls is an opportunity for ten girls, on the brink of adulthood, to leave

behind their familiar milieu and become immersed in the North Woods with a close-knit community of peers. The girls will help plan the trip beginning in the spring when they gather for a weekend to make their own wooden canoe paddles. Their families and communities will be involved in preparing the educational components of the expedition (e.g. arranging educators to meet with the group). Each participant will also have a woman mentor from her home community who will follow her through the entire process, from writing the application to reentering her social environment in the fall.

Women ecologists, anthropologists, story-tellers, and crafters will meet with the girls along the canoe route.

On the river, the girls will learn to navigate white water, portage eighty pound canoes and make camp in the rain. Group discussions will provide mirrors for self discovery, while a forty-eight-hour solo will spark insights about identity and personal values. By the last week, the girls will have the skills to travel safely without input from the instructors.

The application process begins in mid-January. We are looking for:

10 participants - girls must be 16-18 years old, from a rural area in Maine and eager to spend three weeks in the wilderness in a close community of peers.

10 adult mentors.

1 qualified Native American woman co-instructor. Scholarship donations. (Our goal is to provide substantial scholarship assistance so no one is excluded due to financial need.)

Tentative dates of the trip are first three weeks in August, though the starting date may change to July 30 to accommodate the Aroostook school schedule.

Project coordinator and expedition leader, Kirstin George, is a wilderness guide and environmental educator, currently pursuing a master's degree in education at Goddard College. She grew up in rural Maine and attend the Maine Coast Semester at the Chewonki Foundation where she was introduced to the world of environmental education. Kirstin attended the Audubon Expedition Institute and the GEO Institutes Overseas Program. Her Marlboro College thesis was on Holistic Education, and she received a B.A. in sociology in 1995.

Kirstin has led wilderness trips for eight years. She established the Walkabout Program, a three-week wilderness rite-of-passage experience for adolescents in California's Trinity Alps. A winter in Fairbanks provided the opportunity to teach an ethnically diverse class of aboriginal and white students. As an Assistant Faculty at Sterling College, she has taught courses in outdoor education, river canoeing, and environmental issues. Kirstin is a lead instructor at the Hurricane Island Outward Bound School's Northwoods Base and is a certified Wilderness First Responder and Life Guard.

For more information about getting involved, please contact Kirstin George at:

1379 East Hill Rd.
Wolcott, VT 05680
(802) 888-6893 kirstingecore@hotmail.com
or Mary Orear at Mainely Girls.

Maine School of Science and Mathematics

Open House: February 11 and 12, 2001

Application deadline: March 1, 2001.

The Maine School of Science and Mathematics (MSSM) in Limestone, a member of the National Consortium for Specialized Secondary Schools of Mathematics, Science and Technology and New England's public residential charter school, is hosting an Open House for current high school sophomores and juniors February 11 and 12, 2001 at MSSM. Visiting students, hosted by MSSM students, will stay in the residence hall, attend classes, and learn about life at MSSM during a faculty/student panel presentation. Families must provide transportation.

MSSM's extensive curriculum provides a full program of studies with a well-balanced humanities program and intensive science and mathematics offerings. At the end of each school year, May Term affords students the opportunity to broaden their traditional academic experience through internships, special courses, independent projects and travel.

Sophomores and juniors interested in applying for the 2001-2002 academic year are encouraged to begin their applications now as the application deadline is March 1, 2001. Applicants must take either the PSAT or SAT I test as part of their application.

To reserve a space for the February Open House and to request a 2001-2002 Admission Bulletin, call the Admission Office at 800-325-4484 or visit the MSSM website at: www.mssm.org. Please see our website at www.maine.today.koz.com/maine/mwis for additional information and scheduling.

Maine Women in Science Ethics Panel,

Wednesday, February 28, 2001, Scarborough

MWIS, an organization dedicated to promoting women and girls in scientific and non-traditional careers is sponsoring this Ethics Panel which will be held at MMCRI's new conference center located on Route 1 in Scarborough. The event is free and open to the public. This will be an opportunity to hear discussions regarding the important issues emerging due to tremendous increases in biotechnology and genetic research and technology from experts in these fields.

High School Girls and Money Conference

Monday, March 5, 2001, Husson College

On March 5, 2001 the Old Town Public Library, Bangor Public Library, Brewer Public Library, Edythe Dyer Public Library, Husson College and Mainely Girls will sponsor a conference for high school girls on economic empowerment. The conference will be at Husson College. The keynote speaker will be Christine Kenna the founder of the Natural Body Bar, Inc. Other sessions will include:

Are Taxes Bad For You?

How To Be a Smart Shopper....

Credit Cards—What Do They Really Mean to Me?

The Truth about Advertising!

The cost for the day is \$5.00 for lunch. Bus transportation will be provided for young women in the greater Bangor area at no charge. Brochures will be available in February through area high school guidance offices.

Funding for this conference comes from the New Century Community Library Grant.

8th Annual Camden Girls Festival

Friday, March 9, 2001, Camden

Girls grades 6 – 12 are invited for a day focused on their interests, hopes, dreams and concerns and can choose from over two-dozen workshop sessions ranging from films and discussions to stress relieving yoga or dance. The Department of Transportation is returning with their hard hats and heavy machinery for girls to drive. And, the festival will also feature an original theatre presentation written by Cathy Plourde, performed by area girls, and funded by the Knox County Coalition Against Tobacco. Come with a friend and spend the day with us!

Registration brochures will be available in early February in area schools or can be down-

loaded from the Mainely Girls website at www.mainelygirls.org. Sessions are filled on a first come basis, so register early. Cost for the festival, including lunch, is \$10. Registration closes on Friday, March 2nd.

Middle School Girls Unlimited! Conference

Saturday, March 17, 2001, Kennebec Valley Technical College in Fairfield.

This year's third annual Girls Unlimited! Conference, "Girls as Allies", has been designed to emphasize the importance of girls' friendships and to encourage girls to help one another. In addition to many of our returning presenters, we have several new presenters and many new workshop choices.

Registration will begin in February and will be limited to 200. For more information please call Andrea Price at (207) 859-1626 or Mary Ann Pickard at (207) 859-2529.

Take Our Daughters to Work Day

Thursday, April 26, 2001

It's not too early to start planning what you can do to participate in the 9th annual celebration of this important day for girls. A wealth of material can be found at the website:

www.takeourdaughtersstowork.org

Maine Women in Science Careers Picnic

Wednesday, May 2, 2001, Falmouth

Our 2nd annual Careers in Science picnic will provide an informal setting for high school girls to get together with science professionals and hear first hand about various and dynamic careers that are available to individuals interested in pursuing science in college and / or as a possible career choice. There will be food, fun, and some marvelous discussion and interactions with scientists of all ages and careers! This year's picnic will be on May 2, 2001 from 12:00-2:00p.m. at Gilsland Farm Rd (Audubon Society) off of Route 1 in Falmouth.

For additional information please contact:

Christine R. Maher, Ph.D.

Department of Biological Sciences

University of Southern Maine

Phone: (207) 780-4612 or email: cmaher@usm.maine.edu

MWIS is dedicated to promoting women and girls in scientific and non-traditional careers.



Nurturing Nature and Numbers

July 1 – 7 or July 8 – 14, 2001, Limestone

Maine School of Science and Mathematics, is privileged, for the fifth year, to offer a summer residential program entitled, Nurturing Nature and Numbers: an exploration of science, mathematics, and technology for middle school girls". This week-long camp is for girls currently in grades 5 through 9 who are curious about math, science, and technology and would like to explore possible careers in these fields. A typical day includes classes in topics such as: genetics, tessellations, virtual reality, astronomy, secret codes, and web page design. Afternoon activities provide opportunities for swimming, crafts, theater, horse-back riding, soccer, etc. Each day concludes with a different evening program designed to raise aspirations and increase confidence. Last year, 215 Maine girls participated. The cost for the camp is \$400. Some scholarships are available. For more information, visit our web page at www.mssm.org/nnn, contact co-director Deborah McGann via email at nnn@mssm.org, or call 1-800-325-4484.

The BIODIVERSITY CROSSROADS Mosaic Mural Opportunity for Girls

In an attempt to address the monumental shifts taking place in agriculture and the environment, a women run art-activist collective are embarking on a public mural of monumental proportions...a 400 square foot STONE MOSAIC MURAL, expected to take three or more years to complete, to be installed in the exhibition hall of the "Common Ground Fair" at the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners association in Unity, Maine. The mural's theme will illustrate the historical struggles between traditional

and industrial agriculture, with highly detailed images of huge insects and plants. The project offers an exciting opportunity for young women to become involved through a summer apprentice program, free classes in mosaic construction and design, and events unfolding at our new community arts and youth center at the Machias Valley Grange Hall in Washington County. Please contact us for flyers, photos, opportunities for involvement or to lend "seed money."

The Beehive Collective
HC35 BOX 205
Gouldsboro, ME 04607
207-963-7016
thornthicket@chickmail.com

Myra Sadker Curriculum Award

Since gender bias can emerge in any subject area, shouldn't every discipline confront this bias? Should teacher education programs promote curriculum development that counters society's biases? Can an interdisciplinary approach strengthen our efforts to eliminate sexism, racism, classism and other forms of bias in schools?

If you answered yes to these questions, visit www.sadker.org. The Myra Sadker Advocates for Gender Equity is offering a curriculum award. This website provides details of the competition and how you, or your local school, can get involved.

(Myra was born and raised in Maine, and taught here frequently before her unfortunate early death. It would be especially fitting for a Maine teacher or school to receive this curriculum award. Please inform those whom you feel should enter this competition.)

Mainely Girls News

Our organization had a busy autumn continuing work on established projects and beginning some new ones.

Cathy Plourde and I presented the results of our survey of 500 Maine girls at the Maine Principals' Association in Portland, and I traveled to Presque Isle to speak at the Maine Association of School Nurses' Conference. (While attending sessions there, I was astonished to learn about the incredible workload of many rural nurses. Many travel to three or four schools and see 600 students. The most extreme example was one woman who was responsible for 2,000 students in twelve schools. Mainely Girls strongly supports a more realistic nurse-student ratio in Maine schools for the good of everyone!) Cathy and I would be pleased to present the results of our survey to your school, club or organization; to make arrangements, please contact Mainely Girls. You can find a copy of the report at our website. We are grateful to the Bingham Program for funding our outreach efforts.

Mainely Girls is becoming increasingly involved in girls' health care issues and recently received a contract from the Maine Bureau of Health, Department of Human Services, to work with Medical Care Development on developing a statewide Girls' Health Action Plan. This effort is directly related to the Maine Women's Health Campaign Action Plan which was published in July, 1999. We're very pleased to be involved in this year long project and will cover this effort in depth in future newsletters.

We are also happy to announce that Mainely Girls is the recipient of a grant through the Knox County Coalition Against Tobacco which will fund two girls' health related projects in the midcoast area. The first project, a play Mainely Girls has hired Cathy Plourde to write and direct, is about girls and smoking, and it will be performed at the Camden Girls' Festival on Friday,

March 9th. After that date, the play can be performed for other audiences throughout the state. As you may know, Cathy is the writer/director of the highly acclaimed play, "The Thin Line" which is being performed throughout New England. Cathy can be reached at 772-1167.

The remainder of the grant will be used to fund the second year of the high school girls' disordered eating support group, "Circle of Strength," or to start a second group this year, should numbers warrant that. The first year of the "Circle of Strength" has been funded by a generous donation from the King and Jean Cummings Charitable Trust Fund of the Maine Community Foundation. It is co-facilitated by Dr. Robin Cubberly and Dr. Linda Vaughan.

Mainely Girls continues its commitment to Maine Youth Center girls and is currently attending meetings of three groups addressing needs of girls in the juvenile justice system: the Board of Visitors of the MYC, the Task Force for Gender Specific Programming, and the Girls' Collaborative.

While attempting to change and improve the system itself, we were recently given a wonderful opportunity to work with some of the incarcerated girls. In October Ellen Wells kindly donated half of her Maine Women's Fund Sarah Orne Jewett Award money to Mainely Girls to provide something special for girls at the MYC. As a result, during the week of Christmas vacation, 17 girls were able to receive a present in the form of a two-day clay workshop, conducted by Squidge Davis. Squidge created a serene space by playing wooden flute recordings as girls worked in silence, constructing bowls, masks, and a private environment in miniature. Assisted by Dayle Fuller, Squidge's gift during Christmas week made the holiday a little happier for girls in a

bleak situation. Mainely Girls is thankful to Ellen, Squidge and Dayle for reaching out to these girls. (During the holiday week, 38 girls were living in the cottage built for 20. Throughout the state this autumn, the number of girls involved in the juvenile justice system has skyrocketed; no one has yet determined why.)

Good-byes and Hellos

Peggy Cox, who was introduced in our last newsletter and who worked with Mainely Girls through the Senior Citizen Service Project, is now working at Thomaston College. We appreciate all her good work and wish her well.

Sarah Andrews, brought to us compliments of the Maine Women's Fund, concluded her internship with us in late October, though she still comes in to volunteer occasionally. We miss Sarah, her energy, her enthusiasm and her good will.

Mainely Girls welcomes three new board members: Megan Boothby, Dr. Linda Vaughan, and Ellen Wells. Megan lives in the Portland area and works for PROP. Dr. Linda Vaughan lives in Rockport and works at Pen Bay Women's Mental Health. Ellen Wells lives in Falmouth and was the founder of the Maine Women's Fund. Each brings a tremendous amount of experience working with women and girls in various capacities, and we are very grateful that they are offering their energy and expertise to Mainely Girls.

Mainely Girls' New Year's Wish List

As our organization grows, so does its needs. Please take a look at the following list to see if something you have taking up space in a spare room or adding to the clutter of your basement or garage may be very much in need in our office:

- A desk
- A printer
- A small carpet
- Two desk chairs
- A two drawer file cabinet
- A table or floor lamp

Please call if you find something you'd like to donate.

In Memoriam

All participants of the Girl-to-Girl mentoring program are saddened at the passing of Alice Pratt who died on New Year's Eve. Alice was a mentor in the program for three years, and during that time we all benefited from her quiet smile, her enthusiasm, and her warm support of the girls and women in the program. Alice established a close mentoring relationship, and she offered the group her thoughtful opinions to strengthen the program. She was a role model for us all. We are pleased that she was with us for so long, and we will miss her greatly.

Membership form

Yes, I would like to support Maine girls, the women they will become and the families many will raise by becoming a member of Mainely Girls! (Members will receive the Mainely Girls newsletter which comes out three times a year.)

- ☐ \$10 (girls) ☐ \$20 ☐ \$35 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$1,000

Please make your tax-deductible contribution payable to Mainely Girls and return it with this form to:

Mainely Girls
PO Box 93
Rockport, ME 04856

For our records, please fill out the following:

Name
Address
City State..... Zip

Please send my friends the Mainely Girls' newsletter:

1. Name.....
Address
City State..... Zip

2. Name.....
Address
City State..... Zip

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Girl's Page

What's a newsletter about girls, for girls, but without girls' voices? Not a good thing, we think. So in each edition we hope to print some writing submitted by Maine girls. You can rant against some injustice, praise something or someone, react to something you've heard or read or thought long and hard about, warn us all of something we should beware of, or recommend the best anything you've recently discovered and feel others would love, too. We also favor poems and drawings. Please e-mail them to [Mainely Girls at megirls@midcoast.com](mailto:megirls@midcoast.com) or mail them to P.O. Box 93, Rockport, ME 04856

Check Out These Websites

Dads and Daughters

I keep hearing good things about this national nonprofit membership organization which provides tools to strengthen father-daughter relationships and to transform the pervasive messages that value girls more for how they look than who they are.

Dads and Daughters Update is a biweekly service to Dads and Daughters members. Their November 27th Dads and Daughters Update included pieces on:

- People Power
- Nova on PBS: Dying to be Thin
- Analyzing Fathers' Portrayal on TV
- Still Girl-cotting the Movies
- Speak Up for DADs
- Young Dads Break Mold
- Shop for DADS
- A Tip or Two

Here's the contact information to find out more:

www.dadsanddaughters.org.

DADs

PO Box 3458, Duluth, MN 55803

(888) 824-3237 email: info@dadsanddaughters.org

The Girls' Health Newsletter: iEmily!

The premier issue of the iEmily newsletter, "All You!," was recently mailed to more than 3000 girls (a large number of them in the Northeast). You might like to check out this first issue, and you may note that Mainely Girls is included in the "Organization Spotlight."

Here's the link:

<http://www.iemily.com/newsletters/newsletter.html>

iEmily.com, Inc.

141 Portland Street, 9th Floor

Cambridge MA 02139 617-441-4954

Take Our Daughters to Work Day

Thursday, April 26, 2001

It's not too early to start planning what you can do to participate in the 9th annual celebration of this important day for girls. A wealth of material can be found at the website www.takeourdaughterstowork.org

EVERYONE WEARS A MASK,
AS IF TO AVOID THE TRYING TASK,
OF BEING YOURSELF,
AND LETTING PEOPLE HELP.
I HAVE A MASK FOR EACH OCCASION,
BUT I STILL HOLD THE TEMPTATION
OF SCREAMING ABOUT WHO I REALLY AM,
NOT LETTING MYSELF SCAM,
MYSELF OF BEING FREE,
AND ACTING LIKE ME.
I HIDE,
BEHIND EACH MASK I TRIED.
FOR I WAS TOO SCARED,
THAT NO ONE CARED.
WHEN I FINALLY REMOVED MY MASK,
I HEARD SOMEONE ASK.
"WHAT'S WRONG?
SHE NEVER SHOWS HERSELF THIS LONG."
I SIMPLY REPLY,
"I CANNOT LIE.
THIS IS THE TRUE ME,
I AM FINALLY FREE."

By Jenn Kane 12-28-00



Mainely Girls
69 Elm Street
Camden, ME 04843

