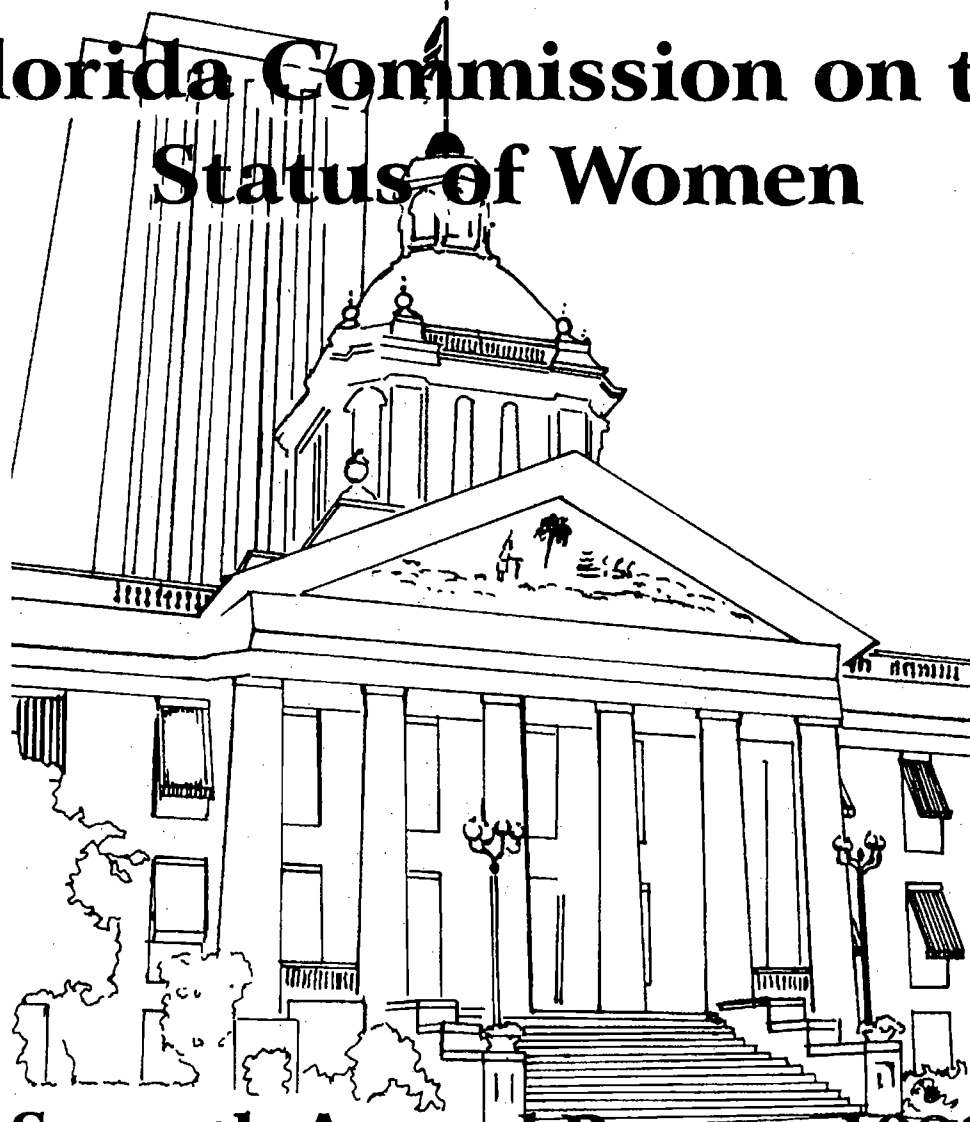


Florida Commission on the Status of Women



Seventh Annual Report, 1998
A Definitive Study on Young Women
Ages 12-18 in Florida



STATE OF FLORIDA COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Executive Committee

Kate Gooderham
Chair

Susan Gilbert
Vice Chair

Bob Levy
Secretary

Rose Marie Cossick
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Member at Large

Lisa A. Tropepe, P.E.
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Marsha Griffin Rydberg
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Cathy M. Boyer

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Elsie B. Crowell

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Debbie Green

Susan Guber

Navita Cummings James, Ph.D.

Mona Rels

Debbie Warren

Dee Williams

Judy Wilson, Ph.D.

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Susan Gilckman

Staff

Nancy Clemons
Executive Director

Pat Gleason
General Counsel

Florida Commission on the
Status of Women
Office of the Attorney General
The Capitol
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1050
(850) 414-3300
FAX (850) 921-4131

Dear Florida Citizen:

As part of the Florida Commission on the Status of Women (FCSW) legislative mandate, Section 14.24, F.S., FCSW is required to report annually to the Governor, the Cabinet, and the Legislature the Commission's accomplishments during the year as well as on pertinent issues affecting the women in Florida. That includes ALL women, especially our often overlooked and oftentimes vulnerable young women.

It is our belief that what you will find on the following pages is one of the most definitive studies ever undertaken on the subject of young women in the State of Florida, possibly the nation. Unlike other studies, voices of the young women themselves, are included through focus groups and journals. We also included articles from experts and others who work extensively with this particular demographic group.

We decided to undertake this enormous project because although we as commission members and many of the women we know have achieved at least a modicum of success, we questioned what the daughters of Florida are experiencing. What do they have to look forward to as they continue on the path of their own lives?

FCSW believes that you will gain as much from reading this report as we have gained in publishing it. It is also our goal to take what we have learned and help affect changes that will benefit our young women. We invite your constructive feedback on how the FCSW can accomplish its objectives.

Sincerely,

Kate Gooderham *Susan Gilbert*
Kate Gooderham Susan Gilbert
Chair Vice Chair



The Florida Commission on the Status of Women deeply mourns the loss of Governor Lawton Chiles.

Governor Chiles was a consistent and unyielding supporter of the Commission's work. His faithful participation, whether a Women's Hall of Fame ceremony or a press conference, was enthusiastic and sincere. The State of Florida has truly experienced a great loss.

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History of the Florida Commission on the Status of Women

by Susan Gilbert, Vice Chair, FCSW

“WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the State of Florida, acting through its appropriate agencies and governmental commissions, to ensure equal treatment on the basis of sex in public and private employment and to develop services which enable all women to maximize their contribution to the world around them....” Executive Order 79-60

The existence of the Florida Commission on the Status of Women (FCSW) has been anything but consistent. In fact, the Commission was not established by the Florida Legislature until 1991. Prior to that time, the Commission's existence was at the whim of the Governor in office at the time.

The FCSW is administratively located in the Office of the Attorney General, State of Florida. It is composed of 22 members who represent the cultural diversity of the state's population. The Governor, Attorney General, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives each appoint three members to four-year terms. The Secretary of State, Comptroller, Insurance Commissioner, Commissioner of Agriculture and the Commissioner of Education each appoint two members for four-year terms. No member may serve more than eight consecutive years.

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy created the Commission on the Status of Women, which was chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt. During that year, the President's Interdepartmental Committee on the Status of Women and the Citizens Advisory Council on the Status of Women decided that each state should have a similar Commission on the Status of Women. Several years later, in 1964, Governor Farris Bryant created by Executive Order the first Florida Commission on the Status of Women.

For several years after its formation, the Florida Commission on the Status of Women was provided little or no funds to support its activities. In 1968, when Claude Kirk became Governor of Florida he made no appointments to the Commission, and the Florida Legislature provided no funding for its activities. In 1972, Florida Governor Reuben Askew reestablished the Florida Commission on the Status of Women by Executive Order. However, by 1978 the Commission's budget had been almost completely absorbed by other entities.

On July 31, 1979, Florida Governor Bob Graham reactivated the Florida Commission on the Status of Women by means of Executive Order 79-60. Furthermore, he supported the activities of the Commission throughout his tenure as Governor. On May 14, 1991, legislation was passed that created the Florida Commission on the Status of Women in its present form. The leading sponsor for CS/CS/HB 109 was Representative Elaine Gordon of Dade County. The Commission's legislative authority is contained in Section 14.24, Fla. Stat. (1991), and Chapter 91-77, Laws of Florida.

Since then, the Florida Commission on the Status of Women has received full support by the Governor, the Cabinet, and the Florida Legislature. As required by Section 14.24 Fla. Stat., the Commission's mandate is to study and to make recommendations to the Governor, Cabinet, and Legislature on issues affecting women. The duties and interests of the FCSW include, but are not limited to:

- Identifying and studying the socioeconomic factors influencing the status of women
- Aiding in the development of individual potential
- Encouraging women to utilize their capabilities and to assume leadership roles
- Coordinating the efforts of numerous organizations interested in the welfare of women
- Identifying and recognizing the contributions made by women to the community, state and nation
- Implementing recommendations to improve working conditions, financial security, and legal status of both sexes.

1998 Accomplishments

- Completed the FCSW Sixth Annual Report, *Women and Economic Development*, January 1998.
- Conducted a financial workshop, *Show Me the Money*, in cooperation with the Miami-Dade County Commission on the Status of Women and the *Women's Business Journal*, June 1998.
- Conducted a press conference in commemoration of the First Call For Women's Right To Vote in Seneca Falls, New York on July, 20, 1848, July 1998.
- Conducted a statewide essay contest and press conference in cooperation with Secretary of State Sandra B. Mortham, to bring attention to Florida women who were involved in the women's suffrage movement, August 1998.
- Conducted the 5th Annual Women in the Workplace Survey, which was administered to more than 3,000 small and large companies, and governmental entities statewide, September 1998.
- Conducted a press conference recognizing the 1998 Women-Friendly Employers, September 1998.
- Published the First Annual FCSW Calendar, November 1998.
- Submitted the names of 10 nominees to the Governor for his selection of up to three women for induction into the Florida Women's Hall of Fame. The Florida Women's Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony was held at the Capitol Rotunda, November 1998.
- Obtained audio biographies on historical Florida women including Florida Women's Hall of Fame inductees, January–December 1998.
- Administered and maintained the FCSW home page including the gubernatorial appointments, statewide calendar of events, member photographs and biographies, news releases, meeting minutes, and Florida Women's Hall of Fame photographs and biographies, January–December 1998.

- Developed resolutions on Term Limits for NACW Women Officers, Supporting Individual Commission Votes for NACW for Women Officers, and Women's History Month, March 1998.
- Instrumental in obtaining the Minority Participation in Legal Education Scholarship sponsored by the Florida Education Fund for Gloria A. Carr, Former Acting Executive Director, June 1998.
- Developed a resolution recognizing Attorney General Bob Butterworth for his efforts to place women in key leadership positions within his organization and for his encouragement and support of the Commission and of its efforts, September 1998.

Participation in National and Statewide Conferences/Conventions

- Southern Women in Public Service Annual Conference, Asheville, North Carolina, May 1998.
- National Association of Commissions for Women Annual Conference, Las Vegas, Nevada, July 1998.

Publications

- Women in the Workplace, 1992
- Justice and Human Rights, 1994
- Benchmark Study, 1996
- Women and Economic Development, 1997
- Women and Health, 1993
- Welfare Reform in Florida, 1995
- Women and Health, A Status Report, 1996
- Women's Hall of Fame Brochure
- 1999 FCSW Calendar

Other Resources

- Home Page —
<http://legal.firn.edu/units/fcsw/>
- Florida Women's Hall of Fame
- Women's Hall of Fame Nomination Form (available April 15–July 15)
- Speakers Bureau
- News Releases
- Meeting Minutes
- Governor's Quarterly Vacancy Report
- Women in the Workplace Survey (available during the survey period)

1998 Annual Report Committee

Susan Gilbert, Chair

Cathy Boyer, Health Subcommittee Chair

Kate Gooderham, Social Subcommittee Chair

Navita Cummings James, Education Subcommittee Chair

Bob Levy, Political Subcommittee Chair

Mona Reis, Family Subcommittee Chair

Toni Crawford

Susan Guber

Marsha Griffin Rydberg

Dee Williams

FCSW Staff

Nancy Clemons, Executive Director

Michele Manning, Administrative Assistant III

Gloria A. Carr, Former Acting Executive Director

Intern

Anneliese Doyle, University of Florida

Current Commission Members

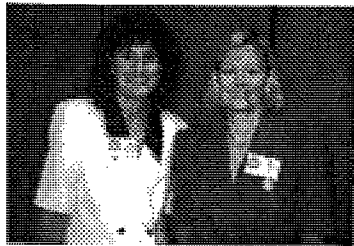
Cathy M. Boyer, Orlando
Conchy Bretos, Miami Beach
Patricia Clements, Ph.D., Tallahassee
Rose Marie Cossick, Hollywood
Toni Crawford, R.N., Jacksonville
Elsie B. Crowell, Tallahassee
Karen Cunningham, Ph.D., Tallahassee
Barbara Effman, Sunrise
Susan Gilbert, Miami
Kate Gooderham, Ft. Myers
Susan Guber, Miami

Allison Doliner Hockman, J.D., Miami
Navita Cummings James, Ph.D., Tampa
Robert M. Levy, Miami
Peggy Morgan, Merritt Island
Mona Reis, West Palm Beach
Caroline Routson, Maitland
Marsha Griffin Rydberg, J.D., Tampa
Lisa A. Tropepe, P.E., Palm Beach Shores
Debbie Warren, Orlando
Doris Weatherford, Seffner
Dee Williams, Sun City Center

Former Commission Members

Karen Coolman Amlong, J.D., Ft.
Lauderdale
The Honorable Rosemary Barkett, Miami
Roxcy O'Neal Bolton, Coral Gables
Yvonne Burkholz, Miami
Barbara Carey del Catillo, J.D., Ft.
Lauderdale
Jennifer Knapp Crock, Ormond Beach
Marilyn J. Dewey, St. Petersburg
Peggy Gagnon, Satellite Beach
Susan Glickman, Indian Rocks Beach
Debbie Green, Orlando
Donna Hansen, Ft. Myers

The Honorable Edward Healey, West
Palm Beach
The Honorable Sally Heyman, North
Miami Beach
Mohinder Jain, M.D., Ph.D., Bradenton
Martha Pinkston, Ed.D., Plantation
Judith Byrne Riley, Valparaiso
D. Anne Terrell, J.D., Ponte Vedra Beach
Laura Ward, Ft. Lauderdale
Judy Wilson, Ph.D., Ocala
Susan Wilson, Alachua
Karen Woodall, Tallahassee



State of Florida Local Commissions on the Status of Women

Brevard County Commission on the
Status of Women
1270 North Wickam Road, #16-205
Melbourne, Florida 32935
407/633-2027

Broward County Commission on the
Status of Women
Department Governmental Center
115 South Andrews Avenue, Room 433
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301
954/728-2705

Jacksonville Mayor's Advisory Commis-
sion on the Status of Women
117 West Duval Street, M-100
Jacksonville, Florida 32202
904/630-3448

Miami-Dade County Commission on the
Status of Women
111 Northwest 1st Street, #660
Miami, Florida 33128-1919
305/375-4967

Miami Beach Commission on the Status
of Women
4410 Alton Road
Miami Beach, Florida 33140
305/672-4287

North Miami Beach Commission on the
Status of Women
17011 Northeast 19th Avenue
North Miami Beach, Florida 33162
305/948-2986

City of South Miami Commission on the
Status of Women
1501 Venera Avenue, Suite 213
Coral Gables, Florida 33146
305/666-5319

Okaloosa Commission on the Status of
Women
1158 Murifield Way
Niceville, Florida 32578-4080
850/897-2894

Sarasota County Advisory Commission
on the Status of Women
2215 60th Drive East
Bradenton, Florida 34202
941/727-1533

Volusia County Commission on the
Status of Women
123 West Indiana Avenue
DeLand, Florida 32720-4612
904/736-5920

University of South Florida, Status of
Women Committee
4202 East Fowler Avenue, Building
SCA 110
Tampa, Florida 33620
813/974-2327



Miami-Dade County



City of South Miami



Miami Beach



Volusia County



Commissioners

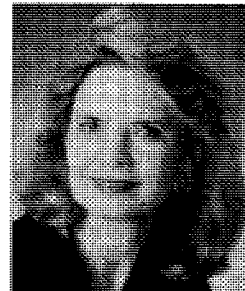
Cathy Boyer is Director of The Betsy Ross Stars & Stripes Foundation, an educational and public policy business. She has acted as the state legislative liaison for Concerned Women for America of Florida and Deputy Field Director for Christian Coalition of Florida. Cathy also serves as the Republican State Committeewoman for Orange County. As a political consultant, she has been involved in many political campaigns ranging from the local level to the national level. Cathy has been involved in her community with numerous local organizations that help children from dysfunctional families, the homeless, and in school-related programs. Mrs. Boyer has been married for 21 years and has three children — one in college, one in middle school, and one in elementary school.



Conchy Bretos is the president of MIA Consulting Group, a management firm that specializes in elderly housing and services. She served as the director of the Dade County Commission on the Status of Women for four years, as the Florida Assistant Secretary for Aging for two years, and as program director for the World Health Organization in Sydney, Australia. She is the past president of the Coalition of Hispanic-American Women and the past chair of the Florida Hispanic Affairs Commission. Ms. Bretos is a graduate of Oberlin College, first college to admit women in 1836.



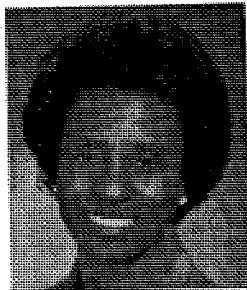
Patricia Clements is a Leon County business woman and a historical preservationist. She is the founder of the Florida's First Ladies Inaugural Gown Collection at the Museum of Florida History. She is a communications strategist who has served on publicity and fundraising committees for numerous organizations throughout the state. Her collection of audio biographies of prominent Floridians is preserved in the Bureau of Archives and Records Management. She serves as the liaison for the Department of State to the Women's History Committee.





Rose Marie Cossick is a Realtor and past president of the South Broward Board of Realtors. She served on the City of Hollywood Equity Study Commission and Community Redevelopment Advisory Board. She is a board member of the Community Health Purchasing Alliance of Broward and is vice-chair of the Broward County Planning and Zoning Board. Ms. Cossick also serves as an officer and member for numerous civic and community organizations in the Broward County area. She has volunteered her time to various charitable organizations, including the Boy Scouts of America, the United Way and the American Cancer Society. Since 1995, she has held the office of secretary of the Broward County Republican Party.

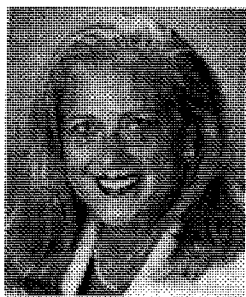
Toni Crawford is a registered nurse by profession. She is an active community volunteer involved in many children-related activities, particularly in the fundraising aspect. Serving presently on the Board of Baptist Hospital Foundation, Emergency Pregnancy Center, and the Exchange Club Family Center to prevent child abuse, Toni also serves as chair of the Republican Party of Duval County and on the Jacksonville Mayor's Commission for the Status of Women.



Elsie Crowell is the Insurance Consumer Advocate for the State of Florida. She represents consumers in several capacities as a member of statutorily created organizations designed to fill unmet consumer needs by the voluntary insurance market. She is a graduate of Florida A&M University and has had extensive experience in government serving on numerous community boards, both public and private. She has been active in women's issues for many years, with emphasis on health care and insurance. She is past chair of the FCSW and the Health Care Committee.

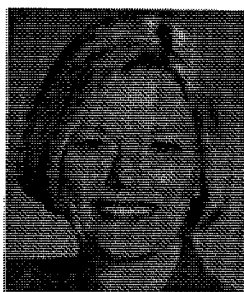
Karen Cunningham is an associate professor in the English Department of Florida State University. Her specialties are Shakespearean and Renaissance Drama, and Literature of the 16th and 17th Centuries. She currently is working on Gender Studies and the Law in the 16th and 17th Centuries. The recipient of multiple teaching awards, she serves as a member of the AAUW, the Women's Caucus of the Modern Language Association, and the Society for the Study of Early Modern Women.





Barbara Effman served as the executive director of Planned Parenthood of South Florida, and has a background in public health and business administration. She chaired the Broward County Commission on the Status of Women. She is currently a board member of the American Cancer Society and the Broward Health Planning Council, and is a trustee of the Westside Regional Hospital Board. She is married to State Representative Steven Effman.

Susan Gilbert is the owner of a marketing, advertising, and public relations firm. She has a long history of political advocacy. Susan Gilbert is a past Governor of the 4th District American Advertising Federation and is a trustee of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce. She has been named in *Who's Who and Why of Successful Florida Women*, named Outstanding Young Women and Women of America for the past 8 years. She has also won many awards for her advertising abilities.



Kate Gooderham is the owner of a Fort Myers consulting firm, specializing in issues management, grassroots organizing, lobbying and monitoring, coastal permitting and strategic planning. She is vice president of communications for the National Women's Political Caucus and is the past president of the Florida Women's Political Caucus. She is the immediate past chair of the Lee County Coastal Advisory Council and is vice chair of the Lee County Conservation Lands Acquisition and Stewardship Advisory Committee. Ms. Gooderham was recently appointed bylaws chair for the National Association of Commissions for Women.

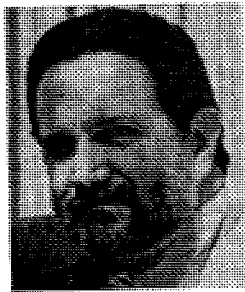
Susan Guber served three terms as a Florida Legislator, representing House District 117 where she chaired the committee on Vocational-Technical Education. She also has served as vice chair of the Dade Legislative Delegation. Susan Guber's community involvement includes chairing the Appointment Subcommittee of the Florida Bar Grievance Committee, Dade County's Common Cause, the Citizen's Coalition for Public Schools, and Dade County Women's Political Caucus. She served as a lobbyist for several hospitals in Florida and currently serves on the Dade County Cultural Affairs Council. She has also published a book, *How to Win Your 1st Election*, (2nd Edition, April 1997).





Allison Doliner Hockman is an attorney specializing in civil appellate law. She is past president of the Florida Association of Women Lawyers, Dade County Chapter; past president of the Coral Gables Bar Association; and has been named *Who's Who of Executive Women* and *Outstanding Young Women of America*. Ms. Hockman served as a research assistant for the late Honorable Norman Hendry and the Honorable Thomas Barkdull on the Third District Court of Appeal. She was also assistant general counsel for Air Florida, Inc. and an associate with the law firm of Goldstein & Tanen, P.A. in Miami.

Navita Cummings James serves as Director of African American Studies at the University of South Florida. She recently served as the president of the Southern States Communication Association, and is a past chair of the FCSW. James represented the State of Florida in planning sessions for the 1995 United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, and she attended the NGO Forum in Beijing. She also serves on the Florida Management Council and other professional and community boards.



Bob Levy is the owner of Robert M. Levy & Associates, a public and governmental relations firm with offices in Miami and Tallahassee. He is active in political campaigns and campaign management. Bob Levy is a veteran of the Vietnam War, where he was awarded the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, and three Purple Hearts.

Peggy Morgan is an Assistant Vice President and Sr. Financial Consultant with Merrill Lynch, a full service financial firm. She has served as Vice Chairman and Board member of the Merritt Island Redevelopment Agency and is a Past President of the Kiwanis Club of Cocoa. She is also a member of various other civic organizations. Her interests include issues that relate to children and health care, especially those relating to long-term health care. Mrs. Morgan graduated from the University of Central Florida in 1979 where she majored in Public Administration.





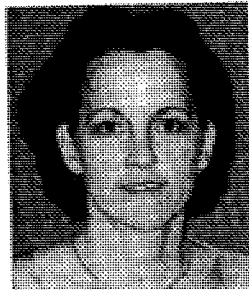
Mona Reis has been a strong advocate of reproductive health care and protecting a woman's right to choose for three decades. She has been president/director of Presidential Women's Center since 1980, which provides comprehensive health services for women. She serves on the Board of Directors for the Anti-Defamation League and is a member of the Executive Women of the Palm Beaches and very active in the Palm Beach County Democratic Party. She was recently appointed to the Board of Directors of the National Abortion Federation in Washington, D.C. Mona Reis was awarded the 1998 Private Sector Award for Leadership by the Executive Women of Palm Beaches. She was also the recipient for the Planned Parenthood 1997 Advocacy Award.

Caroline Routson is the owner of Caroline Routson Certified Appraisers, Inc., covering 5 counties in the Central Florida area. She is Executive Director of Mary's Shelter, Inc., a new nonprofit organization awarded Abstinence-Until-Marriage Title V grant funds to teach abstinence in the Seminole County school district. She is President of Orlando Right-to-Life, board member of a crisis pregnancy center, and precinct chair for Seminole County Executive Committee and the Suburban Republican Women's Club. As a former member of the True Majority-Woman Speaking for Woman, she received NGO status to attend the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China and the World Food Summit in Rome, Italy. Caroline Routson is married and has two grown children.



Marsha Rydberg, a Foley & Lardner attorney, concentrates her practice on land use, real estate and commercial litigation, and bankruptcy. She has been awarded an AV rating from Martindale-Hubbell, its highest. She serves on the Florida Bar Board of Governors, the Stetson Law School Board of Overseers, and she is a member of numerous other professional organizations. She was the first woman to serve as President of the Hillsborough County Bar Association. Her varied areas of service include her membership on the Board of Directors of the Jacksonville Branch of the Atlanta Federal Reserve, the Board of the Tampa Housing Authority, the Tampa Downtown Partnership (past Chair) and the Board and the Executive Committee of the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce. Also, she is the first woman in its 75-year existence to chair Tampa's Exchange Club.

Lisa Tropepe is a registered professional engineer in the State of Florida and is an associate with the firm of Shalloway, Foy, Rayman & Newell, Inc. in West Palm Beach. She has received two Bachelor of Science degrees: Architectural Engineering and Civil Engineering; and was one of only two University of Miami graduates in 1987 to receive double engineering degrees. Lisa Tropepe is the past secretary of the National Young Republicans, a member of the Women's Political Caucus and Pinion, Inc., a not-for-profit organization for Special Olympics. Lisa is also the Chair of the Employment Committee for the Commission.



Debbie Warren was appointed to the Commission by Speaker of the House of Representatives Daniel Webster. She is the mother of three children, all now grown, whom she home schooled. Debbie Warren serves on the Christian Life Committee for her church to profile political candidates for the membership.

Doris Weatherford, who serves as the Commission's historian, is an author whose works include *Foreign and Female: Immigrant Women in America*; *American Women and World War II*, which has been translated into Japanese; *American Women's History: An A to Z of People, Organizations, Issues and Events*, which was published by Prentice Hall in 1994. *Milestones: A Chronology of American Women's History* begins in 1492 and continues on a yearly basis through 1995. Her most recent work is *A History of the American Suffragist Movement*, with an introduction by Geraldine Ferraro. She also has many years of experience as a political consultant and is listed in *Who's Who of American Women*, and *Who's Who in America*.





Dee Williams is retired from Lucent Technologies (formerly AT&T) in February 1986. Her career was spent in the secretarial field, the last 16 years on the Administrative Staff. During her working years she continued her education by obtaining a License in Cosmetology and a Real Estate Brokers License. After relocating to Sun City Center from Greenwood, Indiana, she continued her involvement in local politics. In January 1998, she was reelected to her ninth term as President of the Sun City Center Republican Club, the largest in the United States. She is a Precinct Chair and serves as a Clerk for the Hillsborough County Election Board. She is active in the Sun City Center Community Association where she serves on the Governmental Affairs committee, Chaired the 1998 Library Fund Drive, and is Co-Chair of the Community Association Election Committee. She served on the Hillsborough County Charter Review Board in 1995. Dee is Past President of the American Businesswomen's Association, Chapter 13, and past Finance Chair of the Greenwood Chapter Republican Women Federated. She and her husband, John, are the parents of one daughter, Kim.

Quarterly Meetings of the Florida Commission on the Status of Women

Date	Site	City	Presiding Officer
1998			
November	Doubletree	Tallahassee	Gooderham
September	Airport Marriott	Orlando	Gooderham
June	Sundial	Sanibel Island	Gooderham
March	Governor's Inn	Tallahassee	Rydberg
1997			
November	Governor's Inn	Tallahassee	Rydberg
September	Hilton and Towers	Jacksonville	Rydberg
April	Supreme Court Building	Tallahassee	Rydberg
February	Riverside	Fort Lauderdale	Rydberg
1996			
November	Governor's Inn	Tallahassee	Rydberg
September	Full Telephone Conference	Statewide	Rydberg
May	Sheraton Grand	Tampa	Rydberg
March	Governor's Inn	Tallahassee	James
1995			
November	Radisson	Tallahassee	James
September	Hotel Sofitel	Miami	James
June	Sheraton Grand	Tampa	Rydberg/James
February	Hyatt Westshore	Tampa	Crowell
1994			
October	Quality Suites	Indiatlantic	James
May	South Miami Hospital	Miami	Crowell
March	Supreme Court Building	Tallahassee	Crowell
January	Sheraton Design Center	Dania	Crowell

Date	Site	City	Presiding Officer
1993			
October	Airport Marriott	Orlando	Crowell
May	Brazilian Court	Palm Beach	Crowell
February	Supreme Court Building	Tallahassee	Glickman/ Crowell
1992			
November	Alexander Building	Tallahassee	Glickman
September	Broward County Center	Fort Lauderdale	Glickman
May	Supreme Court Building	Tallahassee	Glickman
February	Supreme Court Building	Tallahassee	Glickman
1991			
November	House Office Building	Tallahassee	Glickman/ Rep. Elaine Gordon

Public Hearings

Date	Site	City	Presiding Officer	Subject
1998				
June	Baptist Hospital	Miami	Reis	Women and Finances
1997				
November	Capitol Building Room 214	Tallahassee	Rydberg	Issues Facing Young Women in the 1990s
September	Edward Waters College	Jacksonville	Rydberg	Welfare Reform
1996				
May	Audley Evans Youth Center	Tampa	James	Public Housing
1995				
October	S.M.I.L.E. Center	Apopka	James	Welfare Reform
1994				
December	Pasco-Hernando Community College	Dade City	James	Farm Workers

The Florida Women's Hall of Fame

The Florida Women's Hall of Fame began in 1982 under the aegis of the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women, a body that was appointed by Governor Bob Graham. A total of 27 women were selected as members of the Hall of Fame in 1982, 1984, and 1986, but the Hall fell dormant when Governor Graham left office.

In 1992, Governor Lawton Chiles proposed, and the legislature passed, a bill (CSSB 1148) that created a permanent Florida Women's Hall of Fame. Chapter 92-48 of the Laws of Florida now states: "It is the intent of the Legislature to recognize and honor those women who, through their works and lives, have made significant improvement of life for women and for all citizens of Florida."

In addition to creating clear criteria for additions to the Hall, this legislation mandated the inclusion of the women who had been honored in the previous decade. The project became a responsibility of the Florida Commission on the Status of Women, which consists of appointees of the Governor, the Cabinet members, the Speaker of the House, and the President of the Senate.

Because education of the public is one important purpose of the Hall of Fame, CSSB 1148 provided display space in the Capitol. In 1994, the Commission unveiled plaques that offer a brief biography and photograph of each honoree. The FCSW annually produces a brochure that is intended to allow visitors a convenient form of taking these individual histories home with them. We especially hope that this information will inspire young women and those who teach them.

Since 1993, three women have been inducted into the Hall annually. Nominations may be made between April 15 and July 15. A nomination form may be obtained from the Internet or by contacting the Commission at the address listed in this publication. The Commission appreciates public input that assists us in honoring meritorious women and in educating the public on the significant and varied accomplishments of women in Florida's history.

The Florida Women's Hall of Fame List of Members

1982

Mary McLeod Bethune*, Daytona Beach
Helene S. Coleman, Jacksonville
Elaine Gordon, Miami
Wilhelmina Celeste Goehring Harvey,
Key West

Paula Mae Milton*, Miami
Barbara Jo Palmer, Tallahassee

1984

Roxcy O'Neal Bolton, Miami
Barbara Landstreet Frye*, St. Petersburg/
Tallahassee
Lena B. Smithers Hughes*, Orlando
Zora Neale Hurston*, Eatonville/Orlando

Sybil Collins Mobley, Tallahassee
Helen Lennehan Muir, Miami
Gladys Pumariega Soler*, Jacksonville
Julia DeForest Sturtevant Tuttle*, Miami

1986

Annie Ackerman*, Miami
Rosemary Barkett, Miami
Gwendolyn Sawyer Cherry*, Miami
Dorothy Dodd*, Tallahassee
Marjory Stoneman Douglas*, Miami
Elsie Jones Hare*, Century
Elizabeth McCullough Johnson*,
Orlando

Frances Bartlett Kinne, Jacksonville
Arva Jeane Moore Parks, Miami
Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings*, St. Augustine
Florence Barbara Seibert*, St. Petersburg
Marilyn K. Smith*, Miami
Eartha Mary Magdalene White*,
Jacksonville

1992

Jacqueline Cochran*, Pensacola
Carrie P. Meek, Miami

Ruth Bryan Owen*, Miami

1993

Betty Skelton Frankman, Winter Haven/
Tampa

Paulina Pedroso*, Tampa
Janet Reno, Miami

1994

Nikki Beare, Miami
Betty Mae Jumper, Indiantown

Gladys D. Milton, Laurel Hill

1995

Evelyn Stocking Crosslin*, Daytona
Beach

JoAnn Hardin Morgan, Kennedy Space
Center
Sarah "Aunt Frances" Brooks Pryor*, Ft.
Walton Beach

1996

Marjorie Harris Carr*, Gainesville
Betty Castor, Tampa

Ivy Julia Cromartie Stranahan *, Ft.
Lauderdale

1997

Alicia Baro, Miami
Carita Doggett Corse*, Jacksonville

M. Athalie Range, Miami

1998

Helen Gordon Davis, Tampa
Mattie Belle Davis, Miami

Christine Fulwylie-Bankston *, Pensacola

*deceased

Results of 1998 Women in the Workplace Survey

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women recognized the 1998 top “women-friendly” large, governmental, and small employers in Florida. This is the fifth *Women in the Workplace Survey* conducted by the Commission. The following companies are to be commended for their accomplishments in providing Florida’s workplace with a Women-Friendly environment.

1998 Women-Friendly Employers

Large Employers

Ryder System, Inc.
Baptist Health Systems of South Florida
Orlando Regional Healthcare System
Times Publishing Company
ASSET Group, Science Applications International Corporation

Small Employer

Suncoast Epilepsy Association

State Government

Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles
Department of Environmental Protection
Florida Lottery
South Florida Community College
Hillsborough Community College

Recommendations for Action as a Result of the Findings in this Report as Directed by the Florida Commission on the Status of Women

- Encourage legislation requiring mandatory sexual harassment training in the middle schools.
- Promote legislation to provide for increased funding for school health services in K-12 including placement of a health care professional in every school.
- Research avenues to encourage mentoring programs particularly for at-risk girls.
- Support sponsorship of a bill that would provide for a class in the middle schools and 9th grade curriculum entitled, "Issues and Ethics," consisting of small groups which address the subjects of: peer pressure and prejudices, managing emotions, conflict resolution, tobacco, drug and alcohol use and abuse, STDs (sexually transmitted diseases), healthy body images including sexual appeal, accomplishment, self worth, nutrition, sexual harassment, and parenting with regard to gender.
- Require local school boards to fully implement the legislative mandate as provided in 233.061, Florida Statutes for teaching women's history. Mandate inclusion of women's history in all textbooks purchased by contract by Florida schools.

Introduction
Florida Commission on the Status of Women
Seventh Annual Report, 1998
A Definitive Study on Young Women 12-18 in Florida

by Robert D. Hays, Ph.D.

It is a cliché you hear often: our children are the future. Well, of course they are, if for no other reason than that today's children will, in the aggregate, outlive today's adults. The implication, of course, is different; the skills and beliefs we teach our children will, in large measure, define how they will conduct themselves as adults academically, socially, in business, etc.

The success of institutions, such as the State of Florida, depends entirely upon the interests and successes of their members. Yes, Florida is a "mega-state" in pure population terms, but an inordinate share of our population came from somewhere else. Florida does not have a vast core of natives among our adult residents. Even Florida's Native Americans, the Seminoles, came here from somewhere else over the last 300 years. We do not have a large cadre of residents who were born and raised to care about the success of the State of Florida.

The young women at the focus of this study, those aged 12-18, are a new and very large group of true Floridians; natives that can be raised to ensure that they and their children, and by coincidence the State of Florida, will prosper.

No business, no sports team, no enterprise of any sort is truly successful unless it makes full use of all its assets. We have come to understand nationally that we are not properly utilizing women's capabilities. This is true in Florida, too. This report presents a picture of how young female Floridians are currently faring and the prospects for their futures.

What does the picture show us? The first image that appears has four dimensions:

1. There is a troubled minority of young women who are being overwhelmed by the task of becoming adults.

2. A vast majority of Florida's young women are coping, some very well, with that task but are not advancing as far or as fast as they might be. Further, they will face mounting obstacles as they grow older.
3. The national culture is struggling toward gender equality but still has different expectations and often different rules of behavior for women and men. The culture is more limiting on women, and it is that pressure that overwhelms the first group and hinders the progress of the second group.
4. At this stage in their lives the young women do not see the degree of male/female inequality in the culture to be as uneven as the statistics suggest.

Further inspection of the articles in the report reveals a varied underlying texture.

1. There is a crisis in self-esteem among young women aged 12 to 15. Dealing with that crisis becomes a crucial factor when making choices regarding school, eating habits, smoking, alcohol, drugs, sexual activity, and even the contemplation of suicide.
2. African-American adolescents face a second source of self-esteem pressure due to racial attitudes and beliefs.
3. There is an ongoing conflict in the minds of young women between the attraction of a professional career and the perceived fulfillment of being a mother who is the focus of a nurturing family.
4. Television and print journalism continually present images of thin, sexually active, women which challenges a young woman's self-esteem and can lead her to seek validation in high-risk activities.
5. Adult women report a persistent "male is better" cultural norm based on historical male roles. Young women do not perceive this norm. It is unclear whether this is a sign of a truly different generation or that they have not yet entered the "real world."
6. Issues such as smoking, eating habits, drugs, sexual activity, etc., are evaded in traditional classrooms, yet young women 12 to 15 years old are interested in, and are comforted by, discussions of those issues when presented in a non-threatening manner.
7. However, because these young women are still children seeking to find their own ways in the world, experimentation with alcohol, drugs, and sexual activity, and the touching and verbal activity defined as sexual harassment, will never be fully eradicated. They know full well the dangers, in an abstract sense, but will experiment anyway.
8. There are too few programs directed specifically towards young women (about 6% of philanthropic funds).

9. Young women's performance in middle school equals or exceeds that of young men. By the end of high school the situation has reversed. This is because high school women are not challenged, academically or athletically, to the same degree as high school men.

10. Single gender schools are not the answer to promoting young women's academic achievement, but they can provide understanding about how young women learn best.

11. Using objective measures, adults find inadequate access to sports opportunities for young women. The young women don't share that view, perhaps because of cultural norms regarding young women and sports or perhaps because actual inequalities have reduced overall interest.

12. Physical violence and sexual abuse against young women are significant problems that are often unreported or unaddressed. Even so, they are the second and third most common forms of reported child abuse, following neglect.

13. Teen pregnancy rates are falling. Unfortunately, somewhere between 65% and 85% of those pregnancies are unintended. Teen pregnancy significantly reduces educational progress and lifetime earning potential.

14. More young women than young men contemplate suicide (30% to 18%) and more young women than young men actually attempt suicide (13% to 5%). However, about three times more young men than young women actually die by suicide.

15. The presence of a strong sense of "family," whether biological or in some other form, is paramount in the development of self-esteem, in helping young women to make the right choices, and in helping them to mend the damage from the occasional wrong choice.

16. Women who are the most successful, and the happiest, as adults made good use of their late teen years, they are comfortable with spending time alone, they read often and embrace ideas, and they know how to grow from challenges.

That is a long list. In order to guide effective action to improve the development of Florida's young women and to reduce the number that are lost to the pressures of growing up, the list needs to be generalized. There are plenty of topics to address. Starting with the details above, the following approach can be adapted to any topic.

1. Help young women address the self-esteem issues before and during adolescence.
2. Provide constant, honest information regarding alcohol and drug abuse, smoking, sexual issues, eating habits, etc.
3. Support mentoring programs for young women.

4. Encourage parents, educators, and other mentors to expect as much academic and athletic attainment from young women as they do from young men.
5. Identify and continually communicate gender inequality issues.

As you read through the articles collected here you will find several that describe current social conditions and attitudes regarding young women aged 12 to 18 (from their viewpoint and from adult viewpoints) and others that describe currently operating programs that can serve as models.

Articles by Barbara Goldman, Ph.D.; Katherine Fernandez Rundle; Anneliese Doyle; Hilda Roseelli, Ph.D.; Kathy Malone and Nancy Humbert; and the two by Haysmar, Inc., all describe social conditions and attitudes. Both the Rosselli and the Malone and Humbert articles provide good descriptions of the guidance and support that a successful young woman will need. Those descriptions provide a blueprint for the philosophies that should underlie any support program. The first Haysmar article describes young women's viewpoints.

Articles by Eileen Nexer Brown, Jennifer Valoppi, Cheryl Rodriguez, and Shirley Haglund describe currently operating programs and initiatives designed to assist the development of the young women at the focus of this study.

When you have finished the report we are sure that you will agree that Florida needs to continue to develop this resource, both to better the lives of the young women and to make Florida an even better place to live.

Views of Middle and High School Girls and Educators A Focus Group Study

by Haysmar, Inc., Research and Analysis

As we noted in our proposal, current practice in formal writing shies away from the word "girls," for reasons that have little to do with young women aged 12-18, but the practice has spread to cover that group anyway. The FCSW bid document used the term "girls" to refer to them and, in order to make this easier to read, we will do the same.

I. Introduction

This report presents the findings of six focus groups held on Wednesday and Thursday, October 14 and 15, 1998. Three groups were held at the Miami Lakes Public Library in Dade County, and three were held at the Matheson Historical Center in Gainesville in Alachua County. The focus groups were commissioned to provide information for the Florida Commission on the Status of Women's (FCSW) Annual Report. The focus groups were designed to provide insight about the opinions and outlooks of middle and high school girls and educators in each of five general subject areas: Education, Family, Health, Politics, and Social matters. Each set of focus groups was composed of one group of girls aged twelve to fourteen (hereafter referred to as the middle school group), one group of girls aged fifteen to eighteen (the high school group), and one group of educators working at either the high school or middle school level.

Student participants were recruited by telephone. Parents were initially contacted, the project was explained, and they were asked if they thought their daughters would be interested. If the parents said, "yes," the daughters were interviewed by phone to determine if they had the required level of involvement in outside activities and if they could hold their own in a conversation. If those criteria were met, the girl was invited to the appropriate group. A representative recruiting screener is included with the report as Appendix 1. The participants were sent a one page sheet listing the topics, and encouraged to write a sentence or two about their thoughts on each subject. Copies of these "home-work" sheets are included as Appendix 2.

The educators were also recruited by telephone. The purpose of the group was explained and they were asked if they were interested. If they expressed interest, they were screened to be sure that they were currently working as an educator and that they had

both male and female students in a proportion not exceeding 80/20 in either direction. If those criteria were met, the educator was invited to the appropriate group.

All participants were required to sign a participation agreement that set out the conditions of participation, the incentive payment, and an authorization to use comments made during the groups in the FCSW Annual Report. Copies of the three participation agreements are included as Appendix 3.

A total of fourteen middle school students, nineteen high school students, and twenty-one educators attended the groups. Tables 1, 2, and 3 present their characteristics.

I.A. Participant Characteristics

Table 1: Middle School Participants

Location	Age	Grade	Activity	Ethnic Background
Gainesv.	14	9th	Spanish Club, Key Club	Anglo American
Gainesv.	13	8th	Band, Chorus, Student Council, Soccer	Indian
Gainesv.	13	8th	Cheer Leader, FFHA Middle School	Anglo American
Gainesv.	13	8th	Ministry Work, Church Youth Group	African American
Gainesv.	12	7th	Dance Group, Piano Classes	Asian
Gainesv.	12	6th	Gymnastics, CCD Youth Group	Anglo American
Miami	14	9th	Barrel Racing, FHA	Anglo American
Miami	13	8th	Cross Country, Chorus	African American
Miami	12	7th	Band, Church Youth Group	African American
Miami	12	7th	Tennis, Piano, Track	Hispanic American
Miami	12	7th	Guitar, Swimming	Anglo American
Miami	12	7th	Bible Study, Tennis	Hispanic American
Miami	12	6th	Band, Temple, Church	Anglo American

Table 2: High School Participants

Location	Age	Grade	Activity	Ethnic Background
Gainesv.	17	12th	Student Council, Interact, Alpha Club	Anglo American
Gainesv.	17	12th	Student Council, Black Engineer Club, Service Club, TOC, Hospital Volunteer	African American
Gainesv.	17	12th	Student Council, Debate Club	Asian
Gainesv.	16	11th	Natl Honor Society, NU Alpha, Youth Grp	Anglo American
Gainesv.	16	11th	Explorers Club, ROTC, Youth Choir	Anglo American
Gainesv.	16	10th	Cross Country, Track, Church Youth Grp	Anglo American
Gainesv.	16	10th	Future Buss. Leaders, Alpha Club, Track, Volunteer at Temple	Anglo American
Gainesv.	15	10th	Future Buss. Leaders, Cheer Leader, Sunlight Youth Choir	Anglo American
Gainesv.	15	9th	HOSA, Student Council, Flag Football	African American
Miami	18	12th	Church Youth Group	African American
Miami	17	12th	Tennis, Natl Honor Society, Volunteer at Temple	Anglo American
Miami	17	12th	Sunday School Teacher, Debate, Journalism Club, Bowling Team	Anglo American
Miami	17	12th	Polo, DECA, Swimming	Anglo American
Miami	17	12th	Drama, Exchangette, Debate	Hispanic American
Miami	17	12th	Track, Basketball, Key Club, Church Grp	African American
Miami	16	11th	Key Club, Church Group	Anglo American
Miami	15	10th	Softball, Temple Youth, Computer Club, Key Club	Anglo American
Miami	15	10th	Drama, Debate, Church	Anglo American
Miami	15	10th	Church Group	Hispanic American

Table 3: Educators

Location	School Type	Job Title	Female/Male Ratio	Ethnic Background
Gainesville	High School	Teacher	60/40	Anglo American
Gainesville	High School	Guidance	—	Anglo American
Gainesville	High School	Teacher	60/40	Anglo American
Gainesville	High School	Teacher	60/40	Anglo American
Gainesville	High School	Administrator	—	African American
Gainesville	High School	Media Center	—	Anglo American
Gainesville	High School	Media Center	—	Anglo American
Gainesville	Middle/High Sch	Counselor	—	African American
Miami	Middle School	Teacher	50/50	Anglo American
Miami	Alternate M.S.	Teacher	50/50	African American
Miami	Middle School	Administration	—	African American
Miami	Middle School	Teacher	50/50	African American
Miami	High School	Teacher	50/50	Anglo American
Miami	Tech High School	Teacher	80/20	Anglo American
Miami	High School	Teacher	50/50	Hispanic
Miami	High School	Teacher	40/60	Anglo American
Miami	Alternate H. S.	Teacher	50/50	African American
Miami	High School	Teacher	50/50	Anglo American
Miami	Middle School	Teacher	50/50	Arabic
Miami	High School	Teacher	50/50	African American
Miami	High School	Teacher	50/50	Anglo American

I.B. General Observations

Students in both localities were recruited who were active in their communities and who would speak up in groups that included people they had not met. All four groups clearly met those criteria but both the middle and high school groups in Gainesville contained girls that seemed to be more aggressive in their academic and extra curricular activities.

This seemed to be due to the large degree to which the University of Florida (UF) pervaded the community consciousness in Gainesville. All but one of the high school participants in Gainesville noted that they wanted a career that would begin by attending UF. Further, one middle school participant noted that her father was a molecular biologist and another noted that her father was a gastroenterologist. These are family backgrounds unlikely to be encountered in the northern Dade County area from where the Miami focus groups were recruited. The dominating presence of UF in Gainesville seems to have made academic achievement a common community standard, much more so

than is likely to be found in any community of similar size without the presence of a large university. Further, all but one of the High School participants in the Gainesville group attended the same school, although there is wide diversity among them in terms of current activities (as is seen in Table 2) and career goals.

This creates an unusual condition. The area that by demographic standards is more rural is actually more cosmopolitan and academically oriented than the urban area. Several of the educators in Gainesville group noted this as well, occasionally prefacing their remarks with the view that "*things are different in the rural areas.*" It is useful to remember this situation when analyzing the comments in the groups. However, in the group discussions this condition is obvious only in the education and politics topics. During discussions of the health, family, and social topics, areas that reflect daily life experiences rather than future goals, the girls from the two areas exhibited similar outlooks.

I.C. Report Format

Each of the five subject areas is discussed in a separate section. Each section contains the comments of all three groups from both areas. When the opinions expressed are similar, the comments are combined, otherwise each group's or area's point of view are identified. Specific participant comments, when included, are paraphrased and printed *in italics*. (For an example, see the prior paragraph.)

II. General Themes of the Discussion

This section presents eight general themes that either recur during the sessions, or capture the overall theme of a particular discussion. They provide a variety of focus group based options for the FCSW to pursue as it continues its work of encouraging legislation to empower women in achieving their fullest potential. The list is not exhaustive, commissioners will surely see additional opportunities in the discussions; however, it does provide a starting point to put what has been learned here into action.

1. There is an ongoing conflict in the minds of these girls about their future roles in the world. It manifests itself in a variety of ways but it is best described as an interest in career vs. being a nurturer with a family. It is manifested most strongly in high achieving girls but seems to occur to some extent almost universally. Girls would benefit from help in developing their own resolution to this conflict.
2. Girls in middle school clearly see themselves as brighter than boys, with greater accomplishments and having more promising futures, because of their achievement in school and because of the opportunities they see opening to women. By the time these girls are finishing high school many have lost that feeling of greater promise.
3. There is less gender discrimination and broader general enthusiasm for activities when the football team is not doing too well. This situation was also present in a situation where everyone came to a new facility at the same time, forcing social order among students and teachers to be established fresh and concurrently.

4. There is a sense among the educators of a "*males are better*" cultural norm. That opinion was not apparent in the students. The source of the idea among the educators seems to lie in a sense that the present day carryover of the historical male roles of breadwinner and "governor" result in women feeling as though they are continually fighting a battle in which they do not make the rules. The students do not see this as readily, probably because a perceived sense of equal opportunity in all endeavors except boys football has resulted in generally equal or greater achievement in school activities.

5. The touching and verbal behavior that is defined as sexual harassment will never be completely stopped because it is initiated by both boys and girls, although boys are the more common instigators. However, continual education about its social and legal implications will suppress it somewhat and will give girls the confidence to speak out when it "crosses the line," rather than feel that they cannot speak up later simply because they did not speak up when it started.

6. Similarly, experimentation with alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and to a lesser extent sex, will never be completely eradicated. The girls know and understand all that we can tell them and proceed as they want to. A strong sense of independence is provoked when discussing this issue. However, continual education will be effective in keeping the negative effects to a minimum.

7. Anorexia and Bulimia are not seen as problems to the extent that adults think that they are. However, poor eating habits and media images encouraging thinness are pervasive negative influences to developing and maintaining healthy lifestyles.

8. A strong sense of family in the girls' lives will strengthen the impact of any school-based program aimed at warning against dangerous behavior and/or improving self-esteem. The most important components of a sense of family are a continual feeling of inclusion, encouragement of achievement, and the establishment and enforcement of basic behavioral rules.

III. Focus Group Discussion: Whom Do You Admire Most?

This question was posed to the middle and high school girls as a way of breaking the ice and giving them all a chance to speak on a topic about which they would be very comfortable. It resulted in, perhaps, the most telling discussion of the groups. All but one of the girls named a close family member. "*Mom*" was most often mentioned (18 of 33), but dads, grandparents, aunts and cousins were all mentioned. The one [middle school] girl who didn't name a parent, named her math teacher, but gave reasons similar to those associated with "mom."

High school and middle school reasons for admiration were different. The middle school girls see their most admired person as "*always there for me*" and "*a good role model*." (The math teacher was "always there" for the student who named her.) The high school girls chose their person because of the person's accomplishments: "*immigrated*

to U.S.," "fighting cancer," "owns own business," "always volunteering," or because the person "has been through a lot but keeps the family together."

These two sets of expressions simply reflect the different descriptive abilities of the two age groups. "Always there for me," is not significantly different from "keeps the family together." Similarly, "a good role model" is simply a more general way to describe a list of characteristics that includes immigrating to the U.S., or starting one's own business.

These themes will be echoed several times during this report as the girls discuss the various subjects. The importance ascribed to "being there for me" and "keeping the family together" provide the first mention of the cultural, and perhaps biological, role of nurturer. The girls, and to some degree the educators (adults), are already struggling with alternate views of what is admired: "a good role model," vs. "ambitious, starts things on her own." The finding of a middle ground between these most basic impulses seems to lie at the base of much of the rest of the discussions.

IV. Focus Group Discussion: Education

IV.A. Hopes for the Future

These discussions started with a few of the participants reading from their "homework" sheets. This made it easier for them to begin a discussion and provide an unguarded insight into their general thoughts on the subject.

Both the middle and high school girls in both cities expect to go to college. The high school participants focused on observations that educational opportunities are more fair now than they have ever been and that college was necessary to prepare yourself for a successful adult life. The middle school participants went a little further. Two of them saw girls in ascendancy in the future because "girls are excelling more than guys in school so, in the long run, girls will be in the dominant position." The middle school participants were also more broad in their view of the current situation. One noted that not everyone wants to go to college but that "parents should encourage kids to get good grades anyway." Another was pessimistic, feeling that the education process is getting worse. She observed that "teachers and students don't care about what is taught."

When asked what they wanted to do when they finished school, all the answers suggested a college education. The high school responses indicated that they had begun thinking about the realities of their ideas, e.g., "when I was young I wanted to be a cop or in the FBI, but now I want to work with animals, a zoologist or marine biologist, something that will still get me out in the field;" or "I am thinking about becoming a doctor but the doctors I talk with suggest being a physician's assistant; all of the fun, and pretty much the same money, without many of the headaches."

The middle school responses present an understandable lack of clarity about professions and often contain an element of the nurturer roles. These participants said things like "teacher and beautician," "animals and performing arts," or "a zoologist or

geologist or interior decorator." The reasoning behind many of the choices was "to help people," or "because I want to help animals."

Both age groups however clearly show a desire to excel, an openness to learn about where different career paths will lead, and a subconscious interplay of differing role expectations. This suggests that the late middle school and early high school years are opportune times to present career information and perhaps educational programs that will help girls understand the several role choices they face.

The educators' opinions reflect the demographic differences between the Miami and Gainesville groups. The Miami educators generally felt that most girls are focused "*not on the future but on boys and current activities.*" While many of their students would go on to college and careers, and some would go to a community college or a vocational school, most "*were interested in motherhood and want to give love,*" or wanted "*to graduate on time.*" The best statement of the career/nurturer conflict was by a high school educator who described an exercise in which her students described their futures. Most of them picked college and traditional careers and were initially successful, but "*then the girls got married, they all ended up on the White Horse in the end.*" This part of the discussion ended with the general observation that "*choices have a lot to do with family background, exposure, and immediate gratification: money.*"

That position is very similar to the one that the Gainesville group reached. There were several opening comments regarding a trend toward careers and away from motherhood. The statement "*they are going to college and they are not going to be mothers,*" drew several agreeing nods and a couple of echo comments from this group. Then a participant noted "*it may be an urban/rural thing, when I taught in a rural high school, the very top girls talked about college but most were ready to start families right out of school.*" The discussion following this comment included the observation that rural kids attending urban school "*dream the same dreams*" but that, wherever the student was, "*if she was in a high level class she would pursue a career and if not, she was probably not thinking that way.*"

When asked what was driving the career views, one educator noted that a recent emphasis on a school-to-work initiative was resulting in more contemplation of careers. Another participant noted that "*they want careers because they want more money.*" This group came to two opinions about the perceived interest in earnings. Most felt that the girls "*want to maintain a certain lifestyle.*" Others observed that it might not be so bad because "*behind the money comes a sense of empowerment. The girl doesn't have to be the nurturer. It may also shift the focus to males for more nurturing.*"

IV.B Equal Opportunities

All six groups immediately began speaking about athletics and noted, to varying degrees, that nothing will equal boys football in importance. As one educator in Gainesville put it, "*We had an Olympic medal winning swimmer who still didn't have the stature of the quarterback.*" The only two dissenting voices were high school participants. One noted that the football team at her school was really bad and that the debate team is favored.

The other attended a brand new school facility with students and faculty drawn newly together so that there was "no history." She noted that "everyone was equally excited about everything."

Once beyond football, it was generally agreed that the opportunities are equal, even in the other sports. "Girls are leading the way," said a Gainesville participant.

The educators felt the same way. In Dade County they noted that the school system has made an active attempt to broaden opportunities for girls, both administratively and financially, and that some girls are taking advantage. However, both localities seemed frustrated that girls were not taking even greater advantage. The Dade County participants told about a tuition paid program for airline mechanics and engineers that the few girls who attended the organizational meeting decided not to pursue. In Gainesville they noted that they "still haven't achieved equality in math and science even though the opportunities are there."

When asked why this is, the participants had several opinions. Regarding the airline program they noted "it is tough to stay in a program if you are the 'only one' [girl] in it," and that there is "a mind set that boys had better look toward income producing activities while that is not as necessary for girls." The "mind set" comment was followed with "The playing field is level but girls are still being socialized that they are in charge of the kids," and "There is some social pressure to get pregnant." The implication was that a girl's income is seen as secondary to her nurturing and that, at least in some cases, having a baby puts a girl in a position to be "taken care of."

In Gainesville the participants were more concerned with "still having some stereotypes, oriental females seem to be taking full advantage of the math and science opportunities." One participant felt that "girls today don't know that women were as smart as they were back through history," and therefore do not have a subconscious expectation of success.

IV.C. Sexual Harassment

In each student focus group the participants gave a specific and accurate textbook-based description of sexual harassment, such as this example from a middle school group, "to be handled or talked to in a way that you don't feel comfortable with, and doing that over and over." There was no comment in any group about such conduct having an effect on someone's school performance. It was seen as entirely outside the classroom.

Participants from both areas had similar views. They all felt that it wasn't too much of a problem and that it was both verbal and physical, although the Miami participants indicated more physical contact than the Gainesville participants.

In Gainesville however, participants in both the middle and high school groups suggested that in some cases it was the girl's fault for encouraging such attention. One middle school participant observed, that it did not happen to her but it did to "people who were asking for it." A high school participant said she felt that to some extent that it was

"my fault that I don't go tell someone that it is being done." These participants felt that a girl's dress and actions could to some degree be implicated in an episode of harassment and that, further, in some cases a girl was seeking that type of attention. The high school participants also noted that it was *"too much of a problem to report it [and cause a 'big deal']". You don't want to make an issue of it, especially the first few times.*"

The educator comments in most areas echo the students'. Gainesville sees more verbal harassment and Miami more physical behavior. Neither area sees it as a problem that affects the girl's school performance. In fact, in Miami the educators felt that more often than not, girls were initiating the touching behavior. This was not the same thing as inviting such behavior by dress and actions, but rather actual instigation of the actions.

Educators' comments also suggest a basis for the Gainesville opinion that sometimes girls bring it on themselves. One Gainesville participant noted, *"The media makes them think that they need to dress to be noticed and if you do that around 14 year old boys what do you expect?"* The Miami participants noted a school board memo with five or six lessons on harassment. In the schools where the lessons were presented the educators noted *"when they [the students] heard what behaviors were harassment they couldn't believe it, now they understand."* The implication is that the message of "No means no, regardless of how the girl dresses or how she initially behaved" that is central to such lessons has been communicated in Dade County by the school board's memo. Still, harassment seems to be somewhat of a two-way street. As one Miami educator put it, the girls *"know what harassment is and they play with it."*

V. Focus Group Discussion: Family

V.A. Importance to Daily Activities

High school participants felt that family was important, *"It is very important to keep strong family bonds, it builds your character and your personality."* And they see the effects of two wage earner demands, *"In our generation men are more often helping out around the house."* When pushed, they offered two contributions that families make beyond developing character and personality. They see families, including moms, dads, and sisters, as sources of support with problems and they see them as the source of life-long companionship, *"they know your history and will be there in the future."*

When asked which was more important in dealing with everyday issues, family or friends, most high school participants said family, or equivocated by saying friends for day to day issues and family for more overarching issues.

The middle school participants had similar thoughts but were a little more concerned with the future of the family. While they all felt that family was important, and a majority felt that their families were in fine shape, in their opening comments from the "homework" sheets several voiced concerns. *"Family structure is going downhill because parents are out working, it is the care givers who are the support for the kids."* *"A majority are divorced, giving the kids a bad influence about family."* *"Things would be great if*

we lived by Bible principles, but I don't see much evidence of it." And one girl hoped that there would be more family "therapy groups" in the future.

To these middle school girls the value of families was simple. Families helped out, often with school projects but also with other activities and sports, and families, (especially moms) were the builders of self-confidence.

Educators view family support as a key variable in a child's success in school. Put positively, *"the students that survive 9th grade are the ones that worry about the threat to call their mother."* Unfortunately, most of the educators' observations involved negative associations. From an educator in an alternative school, *"When kids get kicked out elsewhere they come here. After enrollment, we rarely see parents."* From a counselor, *"A lot of girls I work with need support from mentors because the family doesn't support them."* And from a teacher who teaches both advanced placement and regular classes, *"More parents of high achieving students come to parents' night."*

Clearly, the educators share the girls' feelings that familial support is important. Just as clearly, the girls see problems for families in general because of economic demands. As the high school participants put it *"Women should be allowed to stay at home with a family if they want, but now days women don't have that choice unless they marry rich."* The middle school girls added *"we don't get to see much of each other because parents have been working or they are tired and watching TV."* Overall, the comments describe a struggle between jobs and family with a few positive observations as well, *"Both [of my] parents work, but they still spend time with the family,"* or *"[My] parents are divorced, but both help me out a lot."*

V.B. What Will Your Family Be Like?

Most of the high school participants wanted to establish a career and delay having kids. These thoughts were best captured in Gainesville, *"Family is so important that I want a career first and to be successful before I start a family. I will wait at least until I am 30."* Those that did want a family foresaw primary devotion to that family, *"I want a job, but not to work while my kids are growing up. I want to be home for my kids, be loving, communicative. I will have a good life partner."* The middle school participants had similar views although a little more idealistic.

A couple of the participants didn't want kids at all. A Gainesville middle school participant who wanted to be like Jane Goodall and study chimps in Africa and the high school participant who said, *"I want too many things for myself. I don't want kids. They depend upon you all the time."*

The educators correctly reported that their students generally had concepts of what their families would look like. They also felt that those concepts were often unrealistic, but that they were useful for the educators to use to guide the students toward classes or skills that they would need to approximate those dreams.

The educators also noted the existence of role conflict between family ideals, careers, and the female nurturing role, conflict that was evident, but not openly presented, in the high school comments about wanting to have a career first before having a family. The educators clearly expressed the pressures leading to the conflict and the manifestation. In Miami they noted that, even though family involvement is a good thing, when parents at higher socioeconomic levels get involved with their daughters' school activities, *"the girls get confused about equal rights and sexual roles. They hear 'you can be anything you want' but they still see themselves sitting home with kids."* In Gainesville, the educators predicted a change in attitudes in the currently ambitious girls. *"They want the good stuff, a car, a housekeeper. They will want a family, too, they just haven't begun to fully consider it yet."* This was followed by a comment suggesting a reason for the students' current view, *"They have seen us wait until later to have kids."*

VI. Focus Group Discussion: Health

VI.A. What are the Real Health Problems?

Reading from their "homework" sheets, the girls were very clear about their foremost concerns. Middle school girls in both areas wanted people to live longer, they wanted *"scientists to come up with cures to make everyone better,"* especially AIDS, and they felt that *"with all the new breakthroughs in health, regular checkups should be offered free to women."* The high school participants thought immediately about staying in shape then turned to appearance. *"Our generation is caught up in body image, we eat and exercise for our body not our health."*

Middle school participants did not fully embrace the idea of the presence of anorexia and bulimia. In Miami when asked about eating disorders their comments focused on what, not how much, people eat, *"a lot of people eat candy."* In Gainesville the participants talked about the issue a little more, but were no more concerned. As was seen elsewhere, they used the terms more as a general description of people publicly choosing to eat less than as a diagnosis of an eating disorder. As a result there were instances where the presence of the conditions was claimed and dismissed in the same sentence: *"There are many girls affected with anorexia and bulimia, . . . but girls eat better than boys; most people I know are not anorexic. They just eat moderately."*

The high school participants in Miami were quicker to diagnose anorexia and bulimia in many of their classmates, *"I know lots of girls with eating disorders, they aren't happy at all, eat lunch and go throw up."* In Gainesville they were less likely to claim to have seen them. These participants knew the differing symptoms of the two conditions, but not the obsessive nature of the behavior necessary for it to actually be one or the other. Therefore, in both areas, as in the middle school participants, the words anorexia and bulimia were often used almost offhandedly to describe people who didn't eat the way the speakers thought that they should. This is similar to the use of the term dyslexia to "diagnose" an occasional slip of the tongue when reciting a number. In summary, most participants agreed that "their friends" did not follow a healthy diet regularly, and that the reason had to do with appearance, *"We are not going to be asking guys out often, so*

we have to attract guys to us," but the actual presence of clinical cases of anorexia and bulimia is suspect.

The girls almost universally attributed the pressure on eating habits to "the media." In Gainesville a middle school participant noted girls are *"trying for the super model images that all the magazines talk about."* The high school participants felt that *"our generation is caught up in body image,"* they noted that in *"magazines, TV, everyone is perfectly skinny."* But in Miami, accomplices were named, clothing stores and their friends were implicated too, *"media and stores both push the skinny image," "not only media and stuff, it is the people you hang around with."*

The educators were also sanguine about the issue. In Miami, the participants first response to a direct question about eating disorders was to begin describing the amount of junk food, their students eat, just like the middle school groups. The conversation carried on from there to poor eating habits. One educator explained that they *"did a review [an impromptu survey] and found that they had no idea about eating right. We had someone from Jackson Memorial Hospital come in and lecture on proper diet, the kids kept saying 'you have to be thin.'"*

The Miami participants were asked what percentage of their students had anorexia or bulimia. The first response was 40% and was met with a chorus of unbelieving comments. The next two responses put the number at 3% to 4% and noted that they felt that it seemed to be an "upper class" problem. Other participants agreed with the "upper class" observation, as one stated, *"They are into looks, their parents are into fitness, they want to be, too."*

In Gainesville, the educators were even less excited about the issue. One participant who worked in the media center noted that books on anorexia and bulimia that had high circulations three or four years ago now sit on the shelves, while child abuse and abortion are still commonly researched topics. The other participants had very little to add.

VI.B. Are Adults Targeting the Correct Health Issues?

Each group was read a list of the following health issues: eating right, smoking, alcohol and drug use, mental depression, and the threat of pregnancy. They were told that these were the issue that parents felt were most important and they were asked if they agreed.

The middle school participants maintained their generalist view of health issues, *"those aren't the only main concerns, we have concerns about dying or getting very sick."* *"Main health concerns? Drinking milk and orange juice and smoking and alcohol."* They balanced this with a deterministic view of the causes, *"I don't think I would smoke because I have heard so much about it. The people in IB (the International Baccalaureate program) seem to be brought up better and don't drink or have sex."* *"Health in teenagers really has a lot to do with the family. The way you are brought up effects the way you live as a teenager and around other people."*

The high school participants used this question as a springboard to comment on parental control. They immediately established smoking, alcohol, and drugs as discussion vehicles but also occasionally mentioned sex. They agreed that these were the problems and they demonstrated a solid knowledge of the facts then followed those comments with the observations that, because they were teenagers, they were going to try it anyway and that their parents "overreact" to their experimenting with them. The common feeling was *"Older people associate being young with being stupid. We aren't, but we are curious and will try them [alcohol, tobacco, and drugs]. Kids don't think they will be affected by bad habits."* The more aggravated participants are best represented by the comment *"We know the facts they have been drilled into us since 5th grade. We don't care, we are not thinking long term, more talk won't make a difference."*

The participants were then asked about kids who drive after they have been drinking. The answer, universally, was that it was a bad idea. But when that question was followed with a question about what parents could do to reduce it, it was met with the strongest assertion of "kids' rights" of the session. For example a high school girl who had experienced a "bad event" with alcohol and who was then taken to a psychiatrist said, *"Adults overreact. Just because we try it [alcohol] a few times does not mean that we have a problem. Kids should be allowed to do what they want because they will anyway."*

The girls were defending their perceived right to try anything they wanted even if the trials lead to sad results. In all of these conversations however, a simple, callous law-of-the-jungle ethic was professed. *"A lot of people need to hit bottom before they learn, for some of them it's too late to fix,"* or *"If someone knows the facts and has seen others hurt and still doesn't change, then there is nothing you can do for that person."*

The educators on both areas, while wishing that the girls (and all students) would adopt a longer term view, agreed that what the student participants said, accurately describes what they see in general in their classes. As one educator put it, *"I don't think that they see these as important. Most high school students see smoking and drugs and alcohol as part of life. They are going to do it or not. The ones who do partake don't see it as an issue."* Or, *"I could give them a test on the dangers during the week and they would all get an 'A.' But they forget it all on Friday night."*

VI.C. Is the Current State of the Health System O.K.?

This question was asked, time permitting, at the end of the health discussion. The participants clearly knew very little about the health system, but they did offer two common statements: 1) *"A lot of people can't afford it,"* or *"Only people who can pay get care,"* statements which lead to 2) *"The government should pay, nobody should be denied care."* They maintained this view even after noting that *"There is a difference between needed and wanted care."* One participant, whose mother worked as a nurse in Miami, didn't feel that the quality of care was always determined by what a patient could pay. She was politely chided for her "mistaken" view by the other participants.

The educators added that many low income students know very well how to access the health care system because a combination of programs results in their "not having to

pay." But, they agreed that most students don't know much about the health care system.

VII. Focus Group Discussion: Politics

VII.A. How Much Does Government Affect Your Daily Lives?

This discussion was opened with a short comment by the moderator that "government" actually included a lot of different groups, from the federal government in Washington to the local School Board or the governing committees of local Saturday sports leagues.

Both the middle and high school participants were uniform in the view, *"I know that they do [affect our daily lives], without government there would be chaos, but I don't know how."* This opinion was generally followed by a lament that, *"people don't pay attention until something bad happens."*

What awareness there was of the effect of government came in the middle school groups. In Miami a participant said that she expected to get involved in government because she wants to help out in education, another said that there was not as much violence as there used to be and a third said that, *"my brother says that stocks are dropping because of Clinton and foreign countries."* In Gainesville the middle school participants took a broader view observing that government, *"has a big effect, all these things [different kinds of governing bodies being discussed] make rules about everything you do."* And they had a clear view about various levels as well, *"local government has more of an effect than the President."*

The participants all knew the candidates for governor of Florida. One even asked the moderator to specify the state when the group was asked if they knew "the candidates for governor." The middle school participants all noted the increase in political commercials over the past few weeks.

In Miami, both groups moved directly to the issues of the Clinton/Lewinsky matter. There was an almost universal feeling that the matter should be dropped. They drew a distinct line between having an affair and treason, going so far as to say that the President's telling a lie is OK because the court had *"no right to ask the question."* In Gainesville the groups were much less interested in the matter. The high school group passed two opportunities to discuss the issue, but the middle school group did observe that, *"it is not O.K. to lie. If you can't trust him, you don't know what is going on."*

The educators were quick to note that many students know the effects and workings of the court system very well, but knew very little about executive and administrative activities of a governmental body. These participants also noted that *"those on welfare are very aware of government activities."* There were a few individual statements linking higher academic achievement to an interest in government, but no consensus.

VII.B. Participants' Own Involvement in Government

At least one participant in each group knew someone or had a friend who knew someone in some level of government. Only one participant said that she was involved in student government even though at least five indicated that they were in student government when they were recruited. This furthered the impression that these participants saw government as something distant from their daily lives.

When asked if they thought that they might get into government in the future, a few participants felt that it might be a nice idea. The general undercurrent was that this was an opportunity to help the community, and one participant thought that it would be fun *"to run for office and to sign papers on bills,"* but most stated no interest. A few participants in the high school group in Gainesville, even took the opposite tack noting that they had once had an interest but were repelled by *"the entertainment and bounding aspects,"* of holding public office. One high school participant made the comment that many seemed to be feeling, *"I find no interest. I should, but I see more men in it. I liked it in student government in middle school."*

Again, some educators felt that socioeconomic status, just as it affected her educational attainment, played a role in a girl's interest in involvement with government. They cited a few examples of students, usually in advanced classes or on debate teams, that had shown an interest. One educator spoke proudly, about her female students' involvement in the YMCA Youth Government event. She noted *"how conservative they were when they wrote bills,"* and how *"they didn't live their lives by the laws they passed."* But even this educator didn't feel that the experience carried over into an interest in government as a vocation.

Educators in both locations noted that the prevalence of males in government seemed to inhibit girls interest. In Miami they commented that, *"in upper socioeconomic families, girls see themselves as being controlled by government, instead of controlling it, because they are females."* In Gainesville the educators felt, *"that they [girls] have to compete with governing bodies that make the laws that are male dominated."* This comment was followed by the observation that *"in most of our country there is a feeling that males are better than females and we are fighting that."*

VIII. Focus Group Discussion: Social

VIII.A. Who is in Your Basic Social Group?

As with health, the middle school participants look to the future and hope that current ills will be solved, *"One day there will be one big family without racism or violence,"* or *"Society will stay the same. Unless adults take charge of their lives there will still be groups hating groups,"* or *"Things have gotten better lately, there will always be people who hate, but more folks will get better."* The high school participants were more pragmatic: *"It is important to sit and talk with each other, the more people you talk with, the more open minded you will be."*

The discussions then focused on whom the participants selected as friends. They were asked to describe a group they would pick to accompany them on a day trip to Disney World. The middle school participants' described groups composed primarily of girls with [often, but not always] a few boys. *"I only know one or two guys who are responsible."* *"No guys, it would deflate the whole thing."* The middle school participants were more interested in making sure that all members of the group would get along, be well behaved, and want to do the same things. They did not want to waste time negotiating about what to do next, they wanted to maximize the time spent at the attractions. *"I went with a group to Busch Gardens and we argued the whole time about what to do. I want people who like what I like."*

The high school participants started their descriptions with similar comments but quickly began to consider male companionship more seriously. They started with answers like *"Some girls, some boys, some paired off, some not,"* or *"A group of 20, guys and girls who can mix and match so being together too long is not a problem."* The comments then began to suggest a greater interest in mixing than matching. The comment that signaled the switch in Miami was *"Dates would be hard if you are going with a group."* One participant described a trip she made with four girls who were, *"at each others' throats when we got there, then we met some boys right away and things were all right."* Another noted, *"We go as girl groups, but we meet guys."*

The educators indicated similar behaviors. In middle school they see mostly same gender groups *"until 8th grade."* Then as girls get further into high school, *"it would depend upon whether or not they had boyfriends. I see same gender grouping until couples start to separate."* Another educator saw the same condition in a different setting. *"I see them mixed in the hallways, [social settings] but in class [formal setting] they don't mix too well."* (The explanatory brackets were added by the author.) Or, in the media center *"after lunch, when people are there because they want to be, the groups are mixed."* Clearly as girls grow older and nearer graduation there is a tendency to seek out individual relationships.

This is borne out, in a somewhat counter intuitive way, by the answer to the question: "Do you have a boy friend?" Most of the middle school participants said yes but what they described was more of a crush or attraction than a mutual relationship *"yes, for six years,"* or *"yes, since 4th grade,"* or *"[with a laugh] I did until last Friday."* When the high school participants were asked the same question, only four of the nineteen said yes. The high school girls had fewer, but more focused relationships.

VIII.B. How Important is Your Friends' Acceptance of Your Choices?

The participants were asked, if they were to decide to do something out of character for them, and their friends said that they thought that the idea was dumb, would they still do it. The participants were uniform across cities and age groups: no, they wouldn't change their minds. Some noted that they would listen and consider the objections, but most suggested that they would pursue their idea and ignore their friends. Their comments ranged from mild, *"No, people will change their opinions if you are successful,"* to

forceful, *"If my friends can't accept my hobbies, they can't accept me,"* to my favorite, *"It is kind of like an in-your-face thing if you succeed."*

Their teachers backed up their statements to some degree. The educators drew a distinction between girls who are achievers, they used the term *"individuals"* and those who were not, saying that the achievers would proceed regardless of their friends' opinions. Another educator noted, *"Friends are important, but it also depends upon the self-esteem of the girl. The IB kids are more self confident, they don't need the outside validation."* These student groups were clearly made up of *"individuals."*

The educators offered more depth on the subject and were a little more circumspect. The comment *"Peer involvement is more important than parent or teacher viewpoints,"* echoes the student participants' comments in the health discussion about trying risky behaviors regardless of the possible consequences. Other educators noted, *"We [females] are verbal thinkers,"* and *"It has always been important, what your friends think. I think that females care more than males,"* and *"Peer validation is important but it loses importance with age."* These comments place the issue in cultural terms, similar to the conflict between career and family discussed earlier.

VIII.C. What Do You Worry About When Attending Social Gatherings?

The Miami middle school and Gainesville high school participants initially stated that they worried about turning down *"guys who try stuff like alcohol and drugs"* or *"people who come high or drunk."* The Gainesville middle school and Miami high school participants' first comments cited worry about *"fights."* The high school participants noted that *"girls are vicious and guys have too much pride."* Both middle and high school girls worried about, *"hurting someone's feelings,"* or *"leaving someone out."* After further discussion with all groups it was clear that all three issues, alcohol and drugs, fights, and hurting someone's feelings are universal, but that the order of introduction into the discussion does represent measurable local differences.

When asked why there are police at school functions, participants were as likely to say *"because it is school policy,"* as they were to say *"to keep kids from fighting."*

One comment that came up in this conversation should be noted, because it reflects the spillover from national to local events, even though it was tangential to the issue. The participant, a very self confident person (ROTC and Explorers Club activities), noted that she has been scared by *"fire crackers in the ball. I think it is a gun, because of what was in the news last year."*

As before, the educators generally validated the student participants comments, especially their worries regarding drugs and fighting. It was the educators' feeling, however, that there was more interest in, *"how they will look, who is going to be there, who is driving and what kind of car will it be."* Both views seem valid.

The student participants were answering this question after discussing the make up of their group of friends and the importance of their friend's opinions. Consequently, their

thoughts were directed outward to interpersonal relations. The educators, on the other hand, were answering from their position as someone with which the students discuss lighter matters on the days leading up to the event. This final set of comments ends the analysis at the same place it began: the conflict between personal interests and nurturing.

IX. Conclusion

After analyzing the discussions for the underlying themes, eight general concepts become clear. The concepts, presented in detail in Section II, are repeated here in shorter form.

1. There is an ongoing conflict in the minds of these girls about their future roles in the world, best described as an interest in career vs. being a nurturer with a family.
2. Girls in middle school see themselves as brighter and with more promise than boys. By the time girls are finishing high school many have lost those feelings.
3. There is less gender discrimination and broader general enthusiasm for all activities when the football team is not doing well or when everyone, including teachers, is new to a facility.
4. There is a sense among the educators of a "males are better" cultural norm, an opinion that is not apparent in the students.
5. The touching and verbal behavior defined as sexual harassment will never be completely stopped, but continual education about its social and legal implications will suppress it somewhat.
6. Similarly, experimentation with alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and to a lesser extent sex, will never be completely eradicated. The girls know and understand the perils but proceed anyway. Continued education will serve to reduce the negative effects.
7. The terms anorexia and bulimia are used commonly to refer to people who are or seem to want to be "super thin." Generally poor eating habits and media images encouraging thinness are the primary impediments to healthy lifestyles.
8. A strong sense of family will strengthen school programs aimed at warning against dangerous behavior and/or improving self-esteem.

Some of these issues, specifically items 1, 4, 5, 6, and 8, are simply present day expressions of the timeless pressures of human culture accompanying the passage from childhood to adulthood. It is unlikely that they will be eliminated, but actions can be taken to reduce their negative results.

Items 2, 3, and 7, seem to be more of a result of our immediate culture and as a result, are more prone to modification by the activities available to the Commission, such as legislation, education, and issue advertising.

Educator's Views on Issues Relating to Girls and Young Women

by Haysmar, Inc., Research and Analysis

Education Issues

Progress in Education Equity

"Access to education has proven to be the most effective means for women and girls to escape the limitations of discrimination and reach their full potential," reports Richard W. Riley, Secretary of the U. S. Department of Education in the report "Women and Girls in Education: What's Working in the U.S., Ten Years of Advancement, 1985-95" as part of a worldwide conference in Beijing sponsored by the UN Commission on the Status of Women.⁽¹⁾ In this presentation, it was pointed out that the critical success factors for an optimal educational environment depend on eliminating barriers that inhibit girls and women from participating equally in the educational system. This is accomplished by:

- enforcing federal laws that prohibit discrimination
- encouraging strategies and actions that address special needs of girls and special needs groups
- providing technical assistance to states, school systems, organizations and individuals through federally supported programs and
- supporting research and spreading information about practical solutions.⁽²⁾

To understand the equity issues in education, the federal government funds both direct research and such programs as the WEEA, Women's Educational Equity Act Program, and ERIC, the Educational Resources Information Center System, which act as clearing-houses for disseminating information about the work done and reported on these issues. ERIC is the nation's largest general education database, containing approximately 800,000 abstracts, research reports, and curriculum materials. The WEEA is specifically dedicated to programs which reduce educational disparities between men and women.

Of the federal laws to prohibit discrimination, Title IX, passed in 1972, is most significant to this research since it requires equal opportunity for females and males in all aspects of

schooling.⁽³⁾ By requiring school systems and in some cases workplaces to offer equal opportunities to both sexes, this law has had a dramatic impact on reshaping attitudes and behaviors about how gender stereotypes can limit educational experiences. In addition, it has had several specific successes, including:

- **lowering the dropout rate among high school girls** who become pregnant or have a child by prohibiting schools from suspending, expelling or discriminating against girls due to their status as a mother. The effect was a 30 percent decrease in dropout rates among this group between 1980 and 1990, a time when the childbearing rates doubled.⁽⁴⁾
- **increasing opportunities in math and science** for both girls and boys. Between 1982 and 1992, increasing percentages of both male and female students took advanced math and science courses in high school with no gender gap in mathematics for females and only a slight gap in science achievement on standardized tests. In college, increasing percentages of women are majoring in math, perhaps as a result of better preparation in high school. The percent of undergraduate math degrees awarded to women increased from 27 percent in 1962 to 47 percent in 1992.⁽⁵⁾
- **increasing the achievement of college degrees.** By 1994, for the first time in U.S. history, women began earning bachelor's degrees at the same rate as men, with both at 27 percent. This compares to 1971, when only 18 percent of women and 26 percent of men achieved college degrees. By the year 2006, it is expected that the majority of bachelor's degrees, 55 percent, will be awarded to women. Women currently earn the majority of associate's degrees and master's degrees, and have increased their representation in doctoral degrees to 44 percent of the total awarded.⁽⁶⁾
- **increasing representation in nontraditional fields.** Women's degrees in certain nontraditional fields such as business have increased significantly, from 8 percent in 1962 to 47 percent in 1992. This in particular will help close the earnings gap between women and men since women in these nontraditional fields will likely have lifetime earnings that are as much as 150 percent of women in traditional fields such as nursing and teaching.⁽⁷⁾

Nontraditional fields extend beyond business. During the period of 1972-1994, the percentage of professional degrees awarded to women rose from 7 to 43 percent of all law degrees, 9 to 38 percent of all medical degrees, and from 1 to 38 percent of all dental degrees. More than 50 percent of all veterinary science and pharmacy degrees were awarded to women.⁽⁸⁾

Gender Inequity in the Classrooms

These successes are not to imply that gender inequity has disappeared from our schools or that the successes have been uniformly applied throughout all school systems. In fact,

the majority of those writing on the subject feel that significant abuses still exist. Perhaps most often quoted are Myra and David Sadker, authors of the well-known, *Failing At Fairness: How America's Schools Cheat Girls*.⁽⁹⁾ Their book provides numerous examples of gender bias in the classroom, which takes multiple forms, including:

- Women role models are conspicuously absent from textbooks and other supporting media.
- Women who do appear in texts and other media are passive, valued for their appearance rather than intellectual contributions, and stereotyped into the traditional roles more consistent with 50 years ago than the reality today.
- Girls are often pitted against boys in classroom competitions.
- When it comes to a division of resources, such as playgrounds or equipment, girls are often given what is leftover after the boys have their choice.
- Teacher bias is often present even when the teacher is consciously trying to be fair to both sexes. Girls are encouraged to be quiet and follow the classroom rules, and boys are more often called upon in class and given more attention because of their higher level of physical activity and noise. Girls are complimented on their looks or more superficial achievements such as penmanship while boys receive more constructive and participatory feedback.

These authors have achieved much recognition from this book, and their theories have been the source for much research conducted on the subject. There is even a "Sadker" Web site, www.sadker.org/, which posts updated articles from and about their research and related gender bias issues. One of the articles appearing on their Web site is a reprint of an editorial written for the Washington Post, which reports, "In today's coed classrooms, girls are shortchanged. Girls receive fewer teacher questions, less help and less praise, less of all the intense instruction that makes for academic confidence and success. Boys act as classroom magnets, attracting attention by calling out and acting up, demanding teacher time and talent. Well-behaved girls become spectators as boys soar past them in the standardized tests they once excelled at."⁽¹⁰⁾

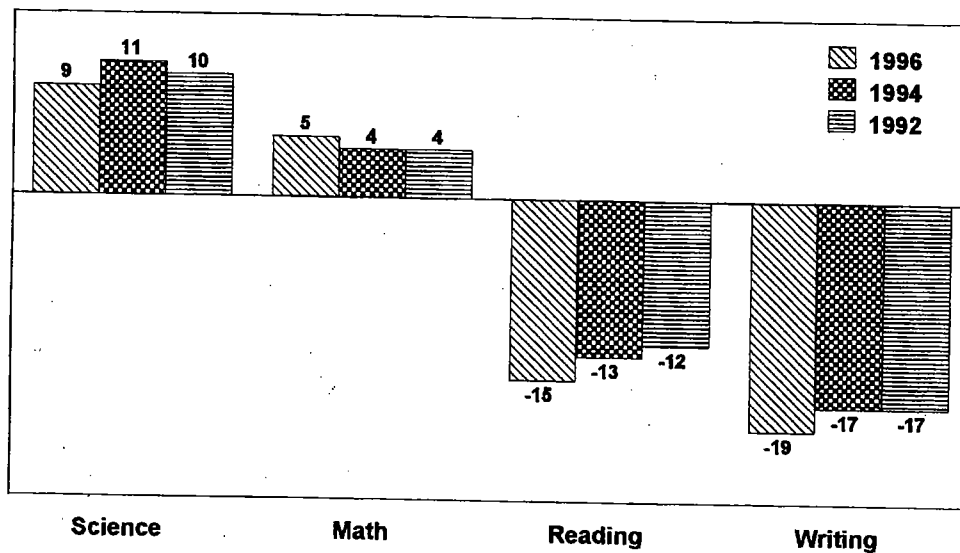
The Evidence of Test Scores

The differences in standardized test scores does not occur until middle school or later, and in part it seems related to preparatory class preferences by male and female students. One report, *The Condition of Education, 1997*, noted that 15 percent of college-bound seniors took at least one advanced placement course and exam, and males were more likely to take this exam in calculus, computer science, and specific science areas. Males were also more likely than females to score a three or higher, qualifying them for placement.⁽¹¹⁾

Most reports on gender bias point to the higher math and science scores by males but don't report that females score much higher on reading and writing standardized tests. Not only does this gap exist, but the gap in reading and writing is considerably higher than the gap for math and science. Although it could be argued that math and science lead to more economically lucrative careers, it does seem curious that a corresponding concern among educators does not exist in improving boys' scores in the important areas of communications.

The following chart comparing female and male test scores in several subject areas is taken from the National Center for Education Statistics, "1996 Trends in Academic Progress."⁽¹²⁾

**Trends in Differences in Average Scale Scores
Male Scores Minus Female Scores, Students Age 17**



The Technology Gap

The gap in science and math scores is believed in part due to differences in technology use by boys and girls. A National Education Technology Brief reports that the disparity in the technology proficiency of girls and boys is evidenced by:

- higher numbers of boys than girls in computer camps
- tendency for home computers to be located in more boy's than girl's rooms
- disproportionate design of computer games towards boy's interests and
- fewer females in technological fields.⁽¹³⁾

The brief goes on to point out to teachers the gender "neutrality" of the computer: its lack of bias in the feedback offered by applications, its infinite patience, and its ability to record and assess performance without bias or response to the appearance or manner of the user.⁽¹⁴⁾ Teachers are urged to incorporate computer technology into the classroom in all subject areas and in collaborative projects, ensuring that when students are paired, each student gets equal time on the keyboard.

Teacher Influence on Gender Bias

What are the causes of the gender bias in schools? Some researchers point to teachers, their expectations and biases, and others to students' development and self-esteem issues.

Classroom research has shown that teachers rarely wait more than five seconds for a response to a question and will seldom call on students who don't volunteer; both these behaviors favor aggressive male students.⁽¹⁵⁾ Yet, there is much evidence that teachers can change their discriminatory behaviors if the behaviors are brought to their attention and if this process becomes part of their teacher training.

To help overcome gender bias in the classroom, teacher education programs are beginning to incorporate gender awareness strategies into their teacher preparation courses.⁽¹⁶⁾ Before practice teaching, teachers are trained to recognize bias in curriculum materials, and in their own verbal interactions, eye contact and body language to help strengthen conscious control and become more gender neutral. They are also taught to identify and intervene in harassing student-to-student behavior.⁽¹⁷⁾

When it comes to volunteering in the classroom, studies have shown that a relatively small group of students account for the highest rate of volunteering, and increasing the participation of the non-volunteering group will create the best teacher-student interaction environment.⁽¹⁸⁾

Single-sex Education

Another suggested approach to equalizing gender bias in the classroom is to separate the boys and girls, either by class or school. Single-sex education in public schools has become increasingly popular since the 1992 release of the report by the American Association for University Women (AAUW), *How Schools Shortchange Girls*, which reported widespread gender bias in elementary through high school classrooms.⁽¹⁹⁾ In response, the AAUW Educational Foundation convened a research round table to discuss and review literature on the subject of single-sex education; the result was a second report, *Separated by Sex: A Critical Look at Single-Sex Education for Girls*.⁽²⁰⁾ Basic findings of this research include:

- When equitable teaching practices, focused curriculum, and reasonable class size are present, both girls and boys succeed in schools.

- Single-sex programs do produce a preference for science and math among girls in single-sex schools, but there is no significant improvement noted as a result from single-sex classes.
- Even in single-sex programs, there are elements of sexism that reinforce stereotypes about men's and women's roles.
- Single-sex classes are not easily reconciled with the coeducational nature of the public school environment.⁽²¹⁾

Instead of promoting single-sex classes or schools, the report recommends increased emphasis on teacher training in gender-equitable practices. The president of the AAUW, Sandy Bernard, summed it up by saying, "Sound teacher training is key to reducing sex stereotyping in both the coed and single-sex programs."⁽²²⁾

The National Education Association (NEA), the organization representing millions of educators working in the country's school systems, felt this approach important enough to include in its agenda during the 1998 Representative Assembly of members. As part of its action plan for equity, the group proposes to "educate its membership about the discrepancies in educational experience for males and females and by promoting methods such as textbook evaluation, revision for inclusive curricula, and instructional delivery systems, the NEA will ensure equity in education."⁽²³⁾

The Role of Self-Esteem

Beyond teacher training, it is important to recognize the self-limiting power of personal image and expectations in adolescence. Research has shown that girls respond to self-imposed pressures which have direct and significant effects on their academic achievements. Even girls considered "high achievers" had lower levels of self-confidence in certain areas, such as math ability, than would be expected by their successes.⁽²⁴⁾ In students classified as "gifted," girls and boys were more similar to each other than to girls and boys not classified as "gifted" with one notable exception — the recognition and acceptance of their own level of ability.⁽²⁵⁾ Girls attribute success to luck and failures to their own lack of ability, whereas boys attribute success to their abilities and failures to lack of effort.⁽²⁶⁾ The lack of confidence experienced by girls manifests itself in health and social issues as well as in education.

Family Issues

The Role of Family Support

Family support is vital to the healthy development of adolescent girls. More influential than religious or social organization, teachers, or even the media, families help frame their daughters' identities through acceptance and encouragement. Lynn Phillips, in the recently published *Girl's Report: What We Know and Need to Know About Growing Up Female*, recommends "Families should encourage girls to explore their strengths and

embrace their competencies; challenge themselves in difficult or unfamiliar arenas; achieve in, and feel good about school; respect their own minds and bodies; explore a wide range of roles and career possibilities; think critically about social inequities; and envision themselves as fulfilled individuals in healthy, chosen futures. Adults at home can model respect for women and girls, and support girls' aspirations."⁽²⁷⁾

In her book, *Gender Play*, author Barrie Thorne says, "The landscape of contemporary childhood includes three major sites: families, neighborhoods, and schools. Each of these worlds contains different people, patterns of time and space, and arrangements of gender. Families and neighborhoods tend to be small, with a relatively even ratio of adults and children. In contrast, schools are crowded and bureaucratic settings in which a few adults organize and continually evaluate the activities of a large number of children."⁽²⁸⁾ She goes on to note that gender differences are more pronounced at schools than in families or in neighborhoods, which may be viewed as extensions of families. Schools present vast choices of companions, and when offered a choice, children tend to select school friends of their same sex and age to the exclusion of others. Families and neighborhoods should offer an environment of greater opportunity, to have relationships with fewer gender overtones.

Healthy psychosocial development of adolescent girls is best achieved when there is a balance between individuality and connectedness.⁽²⁹⁾ The parent-child relationship should be continually and mutually redefined, with encouragement towards the child's autonomy while offering emotional security and participation in the family group. This model depends on distinct roles for parents and children, and can be hampered by conflicts between parents when they compete for a child's loyalty or falsely reunite against a child's poor behavior. This confusion of roles can upset the child's balance of individuality and connectedness.⁽³⁰⁾

Maternal Influence on Their Daughters

Not surprisingly, the adolescent's mother has a significant impact on the girl's development. The daughter's concept of women's roles as they are in reality as well as her expectations are strongly influenced by the example and behavior of her mother.⁽³¹⁾ The mother's parenting style and the gender roles she communicates to her daughter are in turn related to the mother's social background, employment status and level of education. Generally speaking, the daughters of employed and more educated mothers are more likely to be nontraditional in their gender role attitudes, expecting women and men to share responsibility for paid work, housework, and child rearing.⁽³²⁾ The nature of the parent-child relationship likewise correlates to the socioeconomic status of the mother; working mothers are more likely to set high behavior standards but to encourage independence in their daughters, while mothers from lower socioeconomic status are more authoritarian, more uncompromising in their exercise of parental power.⁽³³⁾

Families also play an important role in the adolescent girl's assessment of her body image. In general, the physical changes occurring in adolescence are internalized in different ways by boys and girls. As boys enter adolescence, they grow larger and stronger, and consequently, feel more in control. In contrast, as girls develop they add fat to their

bodies creating physiques that clash with multiple messages from the media telling them that thin is beautiful. Compared to boys at this age, girls are smaller, weaker, and slower. As these factors add up, girls move from "self confidence" to "self consciousness."⁽³⁴⁾

The natural insecurity surrounding the physical changes of adolescence can be greatly alleviated by a supporting family. One study found that "family members may influence body image and gender role identity by providing the first set of significant external criteria against which girls learn to evaluate themselves as women, an evaluation that necessarily includes an assessment of their physical adequacy."⁽³⁵⁾ Mothers in particular serve as role models to their daughters, providing information and guidance on their behaviors and perceptions of femininity.⁽³⁶⁾ The body image that girls develop correlates strongly to the body image of her mother.⁽³⁷⁾

Nonparental Adults and Development

Parents are not the only source of support and influence on girls' lives. In extreme cases of poverty or parental absence, the bonding of at-risk children with a nonparental adult is a significant factor contributing to better-than-expected outcomes for the child.⁽³⁸⁾ This person can be another family member such as a grandparent or older sibling, or it could be someone not related such as a teacher or older friend, whoever provided consistent emotional support.

For centuries until perhaps World War II, the trade apprenticeship system paired adolescents with older nonparental adults for the primary purpose of education and acquiring skills. Now more commonly referred to as mentors, adults in these roles are still used to help young people further their careers and occupational interests. Often a formal business relationship exists, but other times the relationship is more social. Research has shown that adolescent girls are more likely than boys to have an important person in their lives who is not a parent but acts as a mentor or in a supporting role.⁽³⁹⁾

Bridging into Adulthood

As much as adolescents need family support as their bodies begin to mature in middle school and high school, family relationships are critical to healthy development for teens facing the decisions posed at graduation. Particular aspects of this life transition that can benefit from family involvement include:

- **Self advocacy and marketing.** As teens face the competitive world of work or college, they need extra guidance and self-confidence in adapting themselves to new environments. During this transition, as peer relationships change, family support can provide a consistency that teens need.
- **Meeting basic needs.** All teens have basic physical and emotional needs that must be met. As they move beyond high school, they begin to question their relationships, their life purpose, and how they will support themselves. Family role models can help show the way.

- **Coping with stress and loss.** Adolescents are particularly affected by loss such as parental separation, divorce, or a death in the family (often of grandparents at this stage in their lives.) Family involvement with the adolescent can be reassuring and help the teen develop coping skills.⁽⁴⁰⁾

Health Issues

Current views on health have expanded its definition beyond the absence of illness to a state of overall well-being, encompassing mental, emotional, and physical wellness. This state of nirvana is difficult to reconcile with the significant changes occurring in the mental, emotional and physical states of the typical adolescent female. Immunizations, improved nutrition and sanitation have eliminated threats of many serious diseases that claimed young lives in previous generations. Improved safety awareness has even reduced, although not eliminated, deaths from vehicular accidents. Today, risky behaviors and poor emotional health have replaced germs and viruses as the greatest health threats to adolescent girls.

Eating Disorders

The *Girls Report* notes, "among the health issues affecting adolescents, eating disorders are most strongly associated with gender."⁽⁴¹⁾ They are also apparently among the most serious. In the same report, the National Institutes of Mental Health is referenced to point out that 90 percent of all eating disorders are found among girls and young women. Further, eating disorders are associated with the highest mortality rate (10 percent) of all types of psychiatric disorders. The importance of understanding the signs and identifying girls at risk is obvious.

Society's emphasis on thinness encourages girls to diet. This trend is often taken to unhealthy extremes with use of diet pills and excessive dieting. The *Girls Report* notes that the heaviest users of diet pills are girls between 7 and 17 years old.⁽⁴²⁾ According to the National Institute of Mental Health, the two most common forms of eating disorders are anorexia, with distorted body image and weight loss at least 15 percent below normal weight, and bulimia, binge eating followed by purging through self-induced vomiting, laxatives or excessive exercise.⁽⁴³⁾ Reported incidences of anorexia and bulimia occur in one percent and two to three percent, respectively, of the adolescent female population.

There is a strong association between a girl's appearance and her self-esteem. During adolescence, girls tend to view the physical changes in their bodies more negatively than do boys. And, although girls from all races can experience eating disorders, white girls, followed by Hispanic girls, are more likely to develop anorexia and bulimia than black girls. This finding is consistent with research that shows African-American girls to be more accepting of their looks and more comfortable with their bodies.⁽⁴⁴⁾

Frances M. Berg, licensed nutritionist and author of *Afraid to Eat: Children and Teens in Weight Crisis*, reported to the National Education Association, "In the media, the ideal size for women and girls is about a third thinner than 20 years ago, which does not

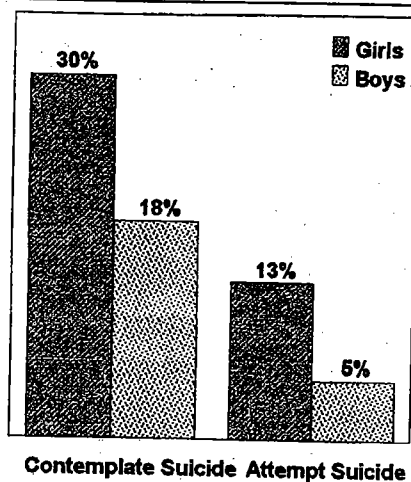
reflect the diversity of shapes and sizes of the average female.”⁽⁴⁵⁾ She goes on to note that “girls involved in athletics are more at risk for these problems because of the perceived need for physical perfection.” This is not to refute the positive benefits of exercise in a healthy teen’s daily routine, but instead intended to alert coaches and physical education instructors to the problem since they may be the first to recognize it. Berg also warns that since the success rate of treating eating disorders is low — around 30 to 40 percent — care must be given when dealing with these girls because blame and feelings of rejection from parents or teachers could lessen their chances of recovery. She suggests that schools should have someone on staff trained on the issues of eating disorders who can refer for further evaluation, support and counseling when a problem is suspected.

Depression and Suicide

Beginning in adolescence, girls are more likely than boys to be clinically depressed. This gender difference continues through adulthood, with the incidence of depression in adult women about twice that of adult men.⁽⁴⁶⁾ Physical effects of puberty increase the likelihood of depressive symptoms, but are considered less influential than the life events occurring simultaneously. Depression seems to be particularly pronounced among those girls for whom the physical changes of adolescence are occurring earlier than in their peers or for those who are unhappy with the physical changes of their bodies. By contrast, the physical changes occurring in boys — greater height and bulk — are usually viewed positively.

The *Girls Report* points out that when symptoms of depression — sadness, feelings of hopelessness, withdrawal, appetite loss — are often dismissed by adults as normal signs of adolescent moodiness, clinical depression can go unnoticed and untreated. This results in a dangerous environment where eating disorders, suicide attempts, early pregnancy and substance abuse can develop.⁽⁴⁷⁾ A 1997 study by the Commonwealth Fund reported that only 28 percent of girls with severe symptoms of depression and 18 percent of girls with moderate symptoms had seen a mental health professional in the past year. Of the girls with symptoms, 46 percent gave as a reason for not seeking help that they were worried about confidentiality and their parents finding out about their problems.⁽⁴⁸⁾

A depressed mood is a major risk factor for adolescent suicide attempts which have increased by 200% in the past 30 years.⁽⁴⁹⁾ The 1995 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance reported that 30 percent of high school girls had contemplated suicide compared to 18 percent of boys; 13 percent of girls actually attempted suicide compared to five percent of boys. The results of these attempts is in reverse proportion to the attempts: suicide attempts were five to seven times more likely to end in death for boys than girls.⁽⁵⁰⁾

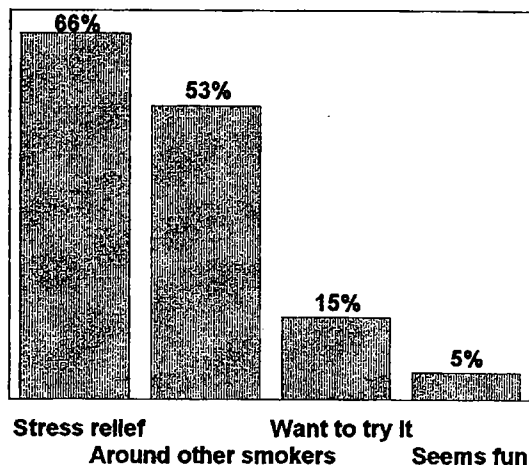


Substance Abuse

Use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs by adolescent girls is a serious concern for their current and future health and safety. The Office on Smoking and Health reports that nearly all first time use of tobacco occurs before high school graduation, and more than a third of all smokers start before they turn 14.⁽⁵¹⁾ Over the past twenty years, girls have become as likely as boys to start smoking. Smoking puts girls at greater risk for a number of health problems including heart disease, lung and bladder cancer. In 1995, a survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control indicated that 34 percent of high school girls nationwide smoked (as defined by having had at least one cigarette in the previous 30 days) with 16 percent reporting that they had smoked cigarettes on at least 20 of the previous 30 days.⁽⁵²⁾

Although there has been less research on the reasons adolescent girls start to smoke, most begin smoking out of a desire to control weight. Girls who are currently dieting or concerned about their weight are twice as likely to start smoking as those who are content with their weight. Of the girls who continue smoking on a regular basis, stress relief was cited most often as their reason for smoking, followed by being around others who smoke, wanting to try it and it seeming like fun.⁽⁵³⁾

Reasons for Smoking by Girls Who Smoke Regularly
The Commonwealth Fund Survey of the Health of Adolescent Girls, 1977



Other studies have found that girls who are self-confident and outgoing are more likely to begin smoking, perhaps in response to the highly successful advertising campaigns of the tobacco companies which show women who smoke to be slender, attractive and popular. More encouraging is the finding that participation in sports or other leisure activities makes it less likely for a girl to smoke, adding to the known health benefits of athletics.

Alcohol use by adolescent girls has been linked to their desire for popularity, while use of certain drugs like cocaine and heroin are associated with girls' desire to be thin. While use of these substances carry health risks by themselves, girls using alcohol and drugs are also at an increased risk for sexual assault and abuse and domestic violence and are less likely to require partners to wear condoms during intercourse, putting the girls at greater risk for unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) including HIV/AIDS.⁽⁵⁴⁾

In a recent news release by the American Medical Association, the National Longitudinal Alcohol Epidemiologic Survey found that adolescents who begin drinking before the age of 15 were 4 times more likely to develop alcohol dependence and twice as likely to abuse alcohol as those who delay drinking until the age of 21 or older.⁽⁵⁵⁾ Unfortunately, the same source shows that teens who drink typically try their first alcoholic drink around the age of 13. Teens find themselves the target of alcohol marketing. Over half of the students in grades five through twelve say that alcohol advertising encourages them to drink, and more than a third of all wine coolers sold in the U.S. are consumed by junior high and high school students.⁽⁵⁶⁾

Sexuality, Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Adolescent sexuality encompasses a variety of topics and issues including sexual identity and activity, reproductive rights and practices, sexuality education, sexually transmitted diseases, and sexual abuse. All must be addressed in a study of adolescent girls' health.

National data from the Centers for Disease Control shows an increase in the percentage of girls aged 15 to 19 who have had intercourse: from 29 percent in 1970 to a high of 55 percent in 1990. The first downturn occurred in 1995 when this percentage dropped to 50 percent.⁽⁵⁷⁾ This percentage is not spread evenly among groups. It represents 49 percent of non-Hispanic white girls, 53 percent of Hispanic girls and 67 percent of African American girls in this age group.⁽⁵⁸⁾

The *Girls Report* points out that most of the academic research and reporting on adolescent sexuality relates to intercourse and not the full range of sexual activities. This position trivializes lesbianism, bisexuality, and may discourage adolescents from practicing other safer forms of sex. Further, most of the research focuses on the negative aspects of sexuality which, while cause for considerable concern, should not exclude the possible positive benefits of sexuality such as emotional closeness and a meaningful relationship. Such a limited point of view may also prevent adolescents from seeking access to needed information and contraception.⁽⁵⁹⁾

There is evidence that the motivations behind adolescent sexual activity differ by gender. Young men most often cite physical satisfaction as their primary goal, with young women more likely to mention intimacy, and a closer relationship.⁽⁶⁰⁾ These motivations influence the reactions and interpretations of early sexual experiences with girls more likely to feel guilty and dissatisfied than boys. In addition, there is evidence that in order to reduce this guilt and worry over having had sex, girls are more to interpret the experience as a bonding relationship and forgo contraceptives and precautions against HIV.⁽⁶¹⁾

Although there is evidence that little discussion occurs between parents and their teens about sexuality, parenting style and marital status correlates to adolescent sexual activity. Permissive parenting, lack of parental support, non-intact families and family stress all correlate with sexual activity among young people.⁽⁶²⁾ Similarly, adolescent sexual activity relates to a number of peer measures including peer pressure and perceived sexual activity among peers.

One outcome of early sexual intercourse is teen pregnancy. Although the U.S. teen birth rate has declined 12 percent from 62.1 to 54.7 per 1000 between 1991 and 1996 in spite of increased sexual activity, it still represents 800,000 teen pregnancies each year.⁽⁶³⁾ This U.S. teen birth rate is two to seven times higher than that of most comparable industrial nations — in 1990, almost 10 percent of all U.S. girls between the ages of 15 and 19 became pregnant, the majority of these unintentionally.⁽⁶⁴⁾

Of the teens who become pregnant, about half go on to give birth; another 14 percent of the pregnancies end in miscarriage, and 35 percent choose abortion. Abortion as an alternative is skewed to upper incomes with approximately 75 percent of girls from higher income families terminating their pregnancies by abortion and fewer than half of girls from lower income families choosing this option.⁽⁶⁵⁾

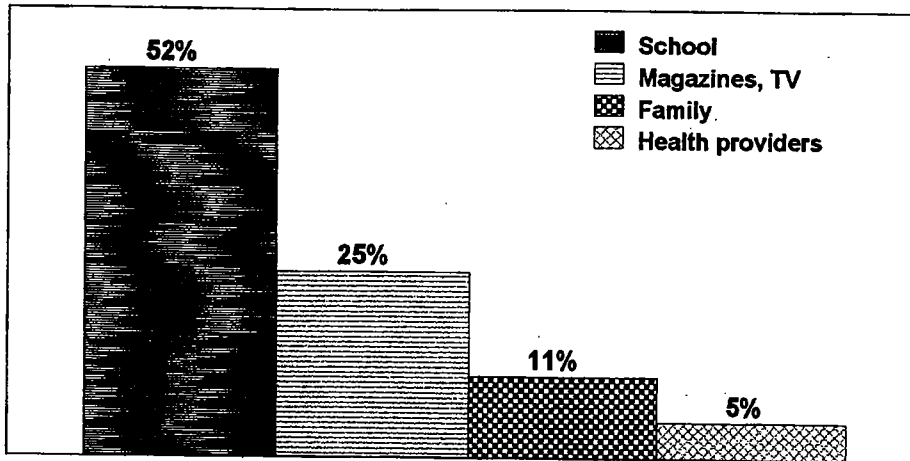
Teen pregnancies present a number of health and economic concerns for the teen mother and her baby. The majority of high school age mothers, 62 percent in 1996, drop

out of high school before graduation, and those who do graduate are less likely than their peers to go on to college.⁽⁶⁶⁾ This lack of basic education and training decrease the mother's lifelong earning ability. Children born to mothers age 17 or younger have lower cognitive scores, more health problems and less access to health care, have higher incarceration rates, and are more likely to become teen parents themselves.⁽⁶⁷⁾

Often teen pregnancies are the result of nonconsensual sex. Teen pregnancies, particularly those involving girls age 15 and younger, often involve boyfriends who have coerced the girl into intercourse. *The Journal of the American Medical Association* reports that, "boyfriends who are considerably older than their adolescent girlfriends have been found to be responsible for a majority of teen pregnancies. Over half of all infants born to women younger than 18 years of age were fathered by adult men, with 40 percent of 15 year old girls having infants with partners aged 20 years or older."⁽⁶⁸⁾ In general, the younger the mother, the greater the age gap between the mother and the father, raising concern about the role of "predatory" adult men in teenage pregnancies. Research indicates that 74 percent of girls who had intercourse before the age of 14 and 60 percent of girls who had intercourse before the age of 15 had sex against their will at least once. The majority of girls age 13 and younger who have had intercourse have **only** had involuntary sex.⁽⁶⁹⁾ Although some have suggested that enforcing laws against statutory rape might address this problem, others feel that many of the girls would shy away from cooperating since identifying their partners could put them at further risk of physical abuse. To further the problem, teens who have a history of sexual abuse are more likely to engage in high risk behaviors with other partners and show a greater desire to conceive.⁽⁷⁰⁾

In addition to teen pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, or STDs, present considerable risk for the sexually active adolescent girl. The Centers for Disease Control report that of the 12 million cases of STDs annually, 3 million occur among teenagers.⁽⁷¹⁾ The most common of the STDs is chlamydia, occurring among 30 to 40 percent of sexually active teens. Chlamydia poses significant problems for the teen girl, since it starts with no symptoms and can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility and other complications. Genital warts, a known cause of cervical cancer, are also common among adolescents, followed by gonorrhea, herpes and HIV.

**Teen's Primary Information Sources About STDs
NEA, 1995**



Educators who support STD education in the schools are often criticized for this position, regardless of the evidence that teens look to the schools as their primary source of information on the topic. The criticism is deflected somewhat by The National Education Association (NEA) research that shows that STD education does not increase sexual activity.⁽⁷²⁾

Access to Health Care by Adolescent Girls

Adolescence should be a time of optimal physical health in spite of the many bodily changes occurring, and most adolescents, 92 percent, rate their health as excellent or good.⁽⁷³⁾ The same survey reported that 90 percent had visited a health care provider during the previous year. However, a substantial minority also said that they did not receive needed care or health information because they did not know where to go for confidential treatment.

Besides potential embarrassment, some adolescents go without needed medical care because they lack health insurance. According to the Bureau of Census, in 1996, 10.6 million children under age 18 in the United States were without health insurance.⁽⁷⁴⁾ The percentage of uninsured children varies by state from a low of 3.8 percent in Vermont to a high of 18.4 percent in New Mexico and Texas. Girls in families without insurance were twice as likely as their counterparts with insurance to report that they did not have a regular source of health care.⁽⁷⁵⁾ Differences were reported by race as well; Asian-American girls were most likely to lack a regular source of health care (26 percent) with African-American girls next (21 percent), then Hispanic girls (20 percent) and white girls last at 13 percent.

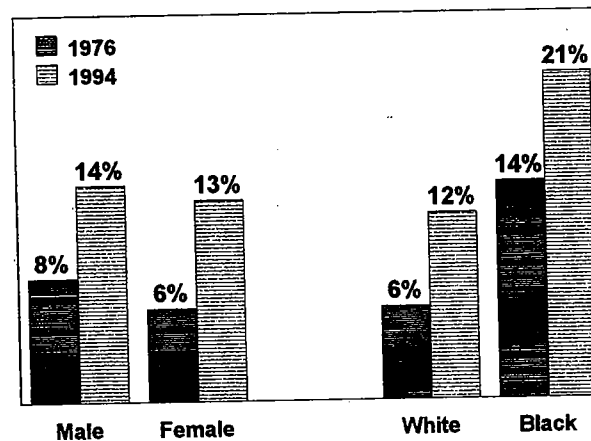
Political Views

The Young Women's Leadership Initiative at the Center for the American Woman and Politics eloquently states the relevance of this issue. "The well-being of our communities, our

states, and our nation depends in large measure on the quality of our leaders. Public leadership contributing to the greater welfare of the entire community through government and public policy making has long been considered a noble calling, demanding that the nation's best and brightest take on the challenges of the nation's future. Yet women have been largely absent from government and political leadership. In an age of new challenges for politics and public decision-making, the need to motivate and prepare a new generation of leaders is critical."⁽⁷⁶⁾ Few would disagree with the need, but how have adolescents responded to the challenge?

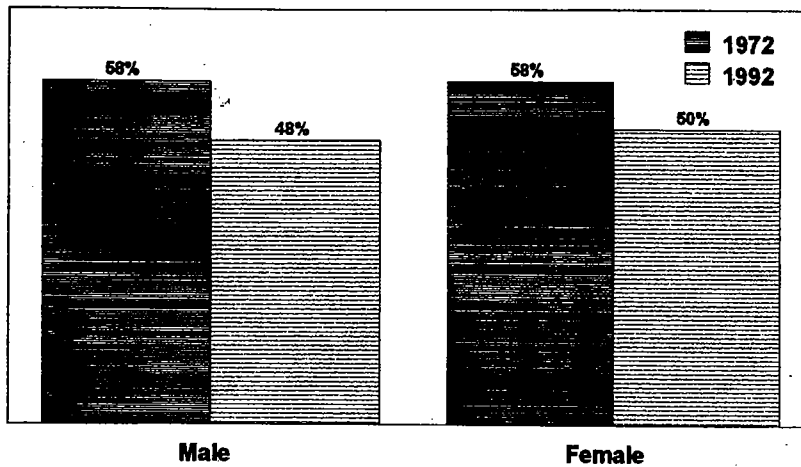
According to one aspect of the Longitudinal Study of Adolescents and Health, the sense of social responsibility is growing among high school students. Responses from high school seniors questioned in 1976 vs. 1994 showed an increase in the percentage who felt that it is extremely important to make a contribution to society, (18 percent to 24 percent) and to become a leader in the community, (7 percent to 14 percent).⁽⁷⁷⁾ Among these responses there was little difference between males and females in a given year, but a significant difference between whites and blacks with blacks finding community leadership more important.

**Percent of High School Seniors Who Rate Life Goal,
Being A Leader in My Community, As "Extremely Important"**

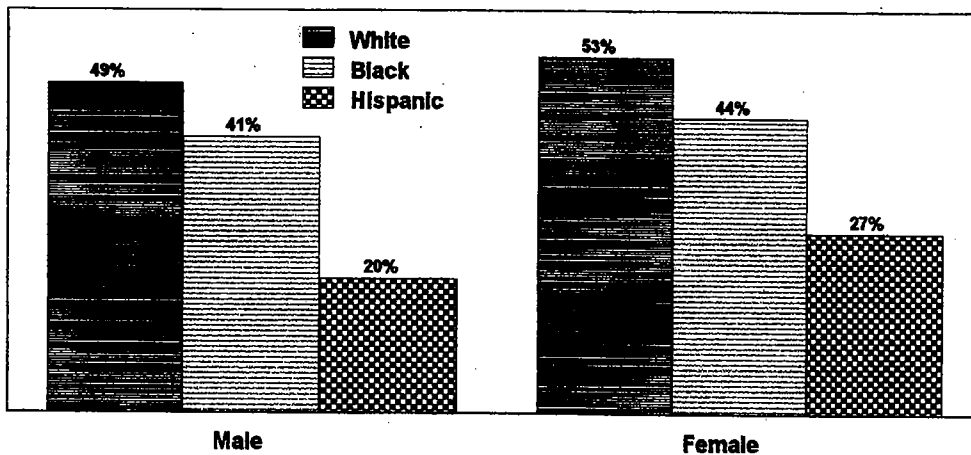


Along with taking leadership roles in the community, registering to vote is another indicator of political consciousness. Although eligibility to vote doesn't come until age 18, the traditional end of adolescence, studies have been conducted to review the voter registration rates of young people aged 18–20. Such studies began with 1972 data, the first presidential election in which young adults aged 18–20 could vote. Presidential elections were selected because turnouts are traditionally highest during those elections. As shown in the table below, such rates are currently higher for females than for males, throughout ethnic groups.⁽⁷⁸⁾

**Percent of Young Adults Age 18–20 Registered to Vote
Presidential Election Years, 1972–1992**



**Percent of Young Adults Age 18–20 Registered to Vote
By Ethnic Group and Gender, 1992**



Social

From the earlier sections on education and sexuality, we know what teens do with at least part of their time. Regarding other social pursuits, television viewing and participation in sports represent two ends of the activity spectrum often associated with this age group.

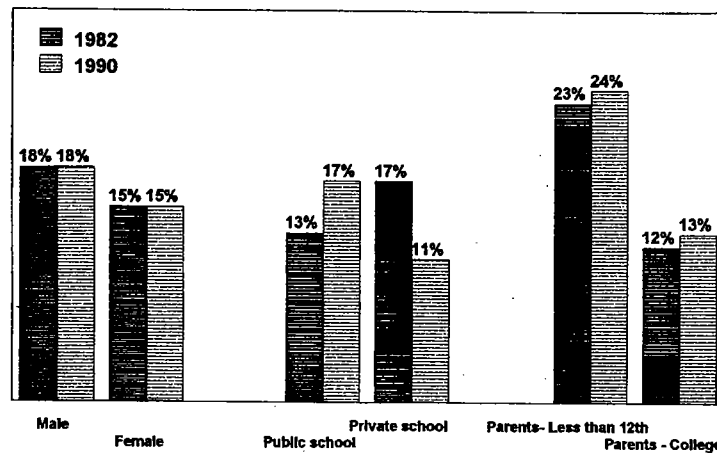
Television Viewing

According to the U.S. Department of Education, children and adolescents who watch six or more hours of television per day score lower on achievement tests. In general, most authorities agree that excessive viewing has a negative effect on children's academic achievement and health. Its effect on health takes several dimensions. Not only does it

often take the place of physical activity, but children usually watch TV alone and often eat while they watch, causing both feelings of isolation and weight problems.

Television viewing habits seem to correlate to several factors: age, gender, race, type of school and parents level of education. The peak percentages of students who watch TV more than six hours a day occur among 13 year olds and are lower for girls, private school students and children of parents with higher educational backgrounds.⁽⁷⁹⁾

Percentage of 13 Year Olds Watching More Than Six Hours of TV Per Day



Physical Activity and Participation in Sports

Although most experts recognize the physical benefits of regular exercise for both sexes and all ages, and although many of the body image deficiencies, nutritional deficiencies, and depressive symptoms experienced by adolescent girls could be alleviated, at least in part, by physical activity, girls are still less likely than boys to exercise regularly or participate in sports. Consider these facts from the Centers for Disease Control's 1995 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System Report on high school students, grades 9-12:

- Male students (74.4 percent) were significantly more likely than female students (52.1 percent) to report vigorous physical activity
- Male students (59.1 percent) were significantly more likely than female students (41.0 percent) to participate in strengthening exercises
- Male students (57.8 percent) were significantly more likely than female students (42.2 percent) to play on a sports team run by their school
- Male students (46.4 percent) were significantly more likely than female students (26.8 percent) to report playing on a sports team run by an organization other than their school.⁽⁸⁰⁾

Thanks in part to the passage of Title IX in 1972, which required federally-funded schools to provide equal athletic opportunity to male and female students, girls now account for about 37 percent of all school athletes, an increase over the 27 percent prior to 1972.⁽⁸¹⁾ This is an improvement, but obviously a gap still exists. Reasons for this gap are varied but generally stem from fewer opportunities for girls.

Financial restraints on some families keep some girls from participating in sports. Since girls of color come disproportionately from low-income families, access to sports affects black girls more than white girls.⁽⁸²⁾ One study found that three times as many white girls as black girls were likely to participate in private organizations, while African-American girls were more likely to participate through their schools (65 percent compared to 50 percent.) Of the girls participating in sports, 33 percent of the African-American girls compared to 18 percent of the white girls said that their families could not afford to pay for equipment, lessons, or fees, and almost one-half of the black girls said that their families could not afford to pay for transportation required to participate. In addition, girls from low income families are less likely to receive training at a young age, which may inhibit motor development and interest in sports, and are also less likely to be educated to the importance of exercise and diet. Their environments may be a factor as well. Neighborhoods may be unsafe for less expensive forms of exercise like jogging, and their family requirements to watch after younger siblings and prepare meals may limit their time for exercise.⁽⁸³⁾

Opportunities for all girls may be limited by their schools and communities where pervasive emphasis is placed on boys' sports programs at the expense of girls' programs. In spite of progress in resource allocation made since Title IX, girls' teams are often allocated inferior equipment and playing fields. There is less coverage of their sports in the media. And there are fewer female role models among their team coaches: only 25 percent of all high school athletic teams are coached by women; 40 percent of the girls teams are coached by men; and women coaches earn less than their male counterparts.⁽⁸⁴⁾

Recognizing the health benefits of physical activity, it is important that school and community programs be developed that encourage girls to participate in athletic teams and offer non-athletes the training and opportunity to become involved in regular exercise. Special attention should be paid to extending these opportunities to girls from all socioeconomic backgrounds.

Violence

Violence threatens the healthy development of adolescent girls in many ways. According to one national study, 21 percent of high school age girls said they had been physically or sexually abused, with half of those reporting abuse saying that a family member had abused them.⁽⁸⁵⁾ The National Education Association reports that 16 percent of girls said they were victims of a violent act in or around school.⁽⁸⁶⁾ There is probably no greater threat to adolescent girls' sense of security and well-being than having the two traditional safe havens of home and school be the source of violence for so significant a percentage of girls.

The National Education Association reports that although the majority of schools are generally safe places, school violence remains a problem with:

- About three million crimes occurring each year on school grounds.
- Between 1989 and 1990, 75 deaths and 200 injuries from gunshot wounds occurred in schools nationwide.
- In 1990, nearly 20 percent of high school students reported that they had carried a weapon to school at least once during the preceding 30 days.⁽⁸⁷⁾

In response, the NEA recommends a multidimensional plan of action that involves communities and families in safety committees, developing crisis management plans, facilitating training of educators to identify and deal with child abuse, and helping to teach parenting skills.

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Electronic Sources of Information

<http://www.ama-assn.org/adolhth/adohlth.htm>

Sponsored by the American Medical Association, this Web site contains current clinical information related to adolescent health issues.

<http://www.ncrw.org>

Web site for the National Council for Research on Women, an alliance of 77 university-based research centers, national policy organizations and educational coalitions. Among their initiatives include research projects, including the *Girls Report*.

<http://www.aauw.org>

This Web site for the American Association of University Women contains summaries of reports commissioned through their Educational Foundation, including the recently published *Separated by Sex: A Critical Look at Single-Sex Education for Girls*, and their 1992 report, *How Schools Shortchange Girls*.

<http://www.nea.org>

The National Education Association, a voluntary group representing the nation's teachers, offers a Web site with many of its periodicals online.

<http://www.girlsinc.org>

The Web site for Girls Inc., formerly Girls Clubs of America, is geared towards adolescent girls and offers many specially-developed programs. Programs are focused on developing leadership and life skills, staying healthy and career preparation.

<http://www.ed.gov>

The U.S. Department of Education's site offers a database specializing in educational issues and resources. ERIC, the Educational Resources Information center, provides access to abstracts and full articles on many subjects related to education.

<http://www.iwpr.org/>

The Institute for Women's Policy Research is a nonprofit group that provides research on women's' lives.

<http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~cawp/>

The Center for American Women and Politics is a university based research, education, and public service center based at Rutgers University.

<http://www.edc.org/womensequity/>

This Department of Education program is dedicated to reducing educational disparities.

Expert Articles and Journal Excerpts

On the following pages you will find articles written by experts in their respective fields that work with or mentor young women ages 12–18 on a daily basis.

You will also find comments from young women who served as journal participants for a 6-week period at the request of the Florida Commission on the Status of Women. Many of these excerpts echo the issues spotlighted in this report.

If She Only Knew ...

by Eileen Nexer Brown

Executive Director, Women's Fund of Miami-Dade County



A computer instructor looks up and sees one of her students — a teen girl — diligently typing while silent tears roll down her face. Puzzled, the instructor moves down the aisle towards her. With her hand resting on the girl's shoulder the instructor softly asks, "What's wrong?" The girl looks down at her swelled belly, looks up to the instructor and replies, "If I only knew ... if I only knew." She continues to explain that she didn't know about the world that was *now* unfolding around her in the school she was attending for pregnant teens ... opportunities she could have taken advantage of ... the different path she would have chosen if she had a glimpse into the future she could have had without the responsibilities of an impending child.

This young girl's words have haunted me and spurred me in my work. What can we do — individually and as a community — so that girls "know" at an early age? What can we do to give them a clear window to see a road that leads to self-reliance, self-worth, fulfillment and attainment of their dreams? What can we do to help them avoid the pitfalls that they will encounter along the way? What can we do to give them the tools to navigate the twists and turns down a sometimes rocky road, to encourage and support them in their travels, and to applaud their efforts on their journey towards womanhood?

First, Some Facts We Need To Know

According to *Worlds Apart — Missed Opportunities to Help Women and Girls*¹ national statistics show that:

- Dropping out of school gives a girl a 90 percent chance of living in poverty as an adult. School dropout rates are roughly equal for boys and girls, but female dropouts are twice as likely to then be poor as are young men who have dropped out.
- One in six girls attempts suicide during adolescence.
- Households headed by single women are the fastest growing segment of the nation's poor.

According to *Preteen and Adolescent Girls in Dade County: The Critical Gap Between Programs and Need*²:

- Girls are increasingly at greater risk of becoming involved with youth gangs.
- Homicide is the second leading cause of death for all young women between ages 15 and 24.
- Girls are at greater risk of becoming victims of physical and/or sexual abuse than is true for boys.
- Girls are having increasing problems with eating disorders ranging from anorexia and bulimia to severe obesity.

In Miami-Dade County:

- Repeat teen pregnancies are at *double* the national rate.
- Teen mothers tend to become sexually active at a significantly younger age (14) than the national average (16).
- There are relatively few proactive programs which involve girls *before* problems arise.
- *Only 5%* of the agencies responding work primarily or exclusively with pre-teen and adolescent girls.

Teen years are a time when many girls become more silent, are overly concerned with how others perceive them, become more self-conscious of their appearance, and may underachieve scholastically. They may turn to alcohol or drugs and look to males to make them feel whole, risking pregnancy. During these years we must focus on their positive development and not get lost in dealing with the frustration of their sometime erratic transition from girlhood to womanhood.

What We Want Her to Know

- **She has a strong circle of support surrounding her.** In a perfect world this includes an intact family. However, in today's complex society her world often extends to others in the community. We want her to know that we encourage her to learn about and like herself at this critical juncture of her life — to celebrate her uniqueness, her strengths. We want her to know that we promote her taking healthy risks, and we will be there to support her when she stumbles. We are eager to praise her for her accomplishments and talents, not just

her appearance. We want to help her expand her dimensions in life, through academics, after-school activities, hobbies, friends, and service to others.

We will provide her with effective communication and conflict resolution skills that will serve her in her personal development and professional career. We will teach her life's de-stressors — like the importance of humor. We will promote school programs like *Bring UP the Funny* class — a unique project funded by the Women's Fund — which builds girls' self esteem by giving them the tool of humor as a response to negative situations. "Through comedy we can look at both sides of a negative situation coin," says Barbara Stone, director of the project. We want her to know that we will help her to accumulate an abundant toolbox of resources that comprise the spokes of her self-esteem wheel.

- **She must honor, safeguard and appreciate her body.** We want her to know that the human body comes in many shapes and forms — and that perfection lives only in the illusion. Mary Pipher, Ph.D., in her book *Reviving Ophelia*, reminds us that girls struggle with mixed messages in our society. "Be beautiful, but beauty is only skin deep. Be sexy, but not sexual. Be honest, but don't hurt anyone's feelings. Be independent, but be nice. Be smart, but not so smart that you threaten boys."³

Pipher also cautions us to beware of sending the message of "lookism" to our girls. "Lookism" is defined as evaluating others solely on the basis of one dimension — appearance⁴. She says that like other 'isms,' such as racism, "lookism" is a way of simplifying that can lead to stereotyping. Studies show that 10- and 11-year-old girls are already concerned about their weight. According to HHS' 1996 Youth Risk Behavior Survey⁵, nearly two-thirds (63.8 percent) of ninth-grade girls report dieting.

The media's bombardment of idealized women saps a girl's confidence and makes her vulnerable to look to unhealthy places for validation. One super-model recently stated that she was among the "freaks" of nature, being super tall and super thin. The majority of women just are not formed the same way she is and could never diet to achieve her appearance. We want each girl to look in the mirror and embrace what she sees with acceptance so she will not abuse herself with an eating disorder or become immersed in an unhealthy dating relationship to achieve her validation. We want her to know that we champion her evolution to a total, holistic woman, radiating her inner beauty, intelligence and strength out into the world.

- **She deserves to explore all the options that are available to her.** We want her to look through the telescope of long-term possibilities. By giving her a sense of future, she will understand the importance of the building blocks she is forming today and the necessity of sometimes putting off immediate gratification for the achievement of her future goals. But first she must truly visualize herself in the big picture and see the menu of options available. This is the reverse of "If you build it, he will come." If she can see it, if she can dream it,

she *will* build it. We want her to know that we acknowledge our responsibility to mentor her and aid her in constructing her dream.

- **She will need life skills and values to survive and thrive.** We want her to know that knowledge leads to freedom. She is now flapping her independence wings. Her flight — on the positive side of the continuum — includes acquiring the ability to separate in healthy venues. On the negative end of the continuum it takes the form of rebellion. We want her to know that she is the one who loses the most when she rebels. We want her to know that true, long-lasting freedom comes with preparation that begins now. Along with academic skills, we will arm her with life skills — financial, technological, professional, parenting, and communication. We will instill, through example, fundamental values — integrity, compassion, respect — that will serve her through life. With this kind of preparation, she will achieve ultimate and sustained freedom.

- **She has our attention and we are listening.** We want her to know that we encourage her to speak out with her own true voice. As parents, teachers, and leaders, we want her to be fully equipped to come to the table of life. Giving her a strong voice in school to ask questions and to participate is one of our crucial responsibilities to her. According to an American Association of University Women (AAUW) research review, teachers give boys preferential treatment in school. Boys ask more questions, are given more detailed and constructive criticism of their work, and are treated more tolerantly than girls during outbursts of temper or resistance (AAUW, 1991).⁶ This is not an indictment of well-meaning, hardworking teachers. It is a call for awareness to how girls are responded to — or not responded to — in the classroom.

In general, girls lag behind in achievement during the middle years in science and math. These subjects lay the basis for higher paid career opportunities. As their scores decline so may their opportunities for financial independent lives. We want her to know that we encourage her to ask questions, be enthusiastic in her curiosities, be brave and bold in her pursuit of knowledge. We want her to know that we respect her opinions and concerns — that we consider her feedback valuable. This does not mean that we abdicate our responsibilities to guide her and set boundaries. However, we are aware that when people reach mutual consensus with input from all parties, adhering to guidelines is more palatable. This especially applies to teens. We cannot expect her to operate in our complex world upon reaching maturity if we do not allow her to participate in a two-way communication arena.

- **She will always be a winner if she chooses respect.** We want her to know that life will periodically put her in the position of being either liked or respected. Peer pressure often leans heavy on the “like campaign.” We want her to see a flashing sign in her mind’s eye at these times that shouts, “Elect Respect!” This mantra can be used when being pressured to get high — “just

try it" ... to engage in sex — "if you *really* loved me" ... to skip school — "we're all going" ... or to the list of horrors that shock our senses and make headlines. We want her to know that self-respect is a gift that cannot be given, it must be earned. As a bonus, when she earns respect from herself and from others, the "like" often comes along wagging its tail.

What We Must Commit to so That She Will Know

In the real world we do not have the luxury of blinders that include the Norman Rockwell picture of financial, emotional and social responsibility coming only from the family. As a community, state and nation it behooves us to invest in our girls so they get the above messages loud and strong. It is critical to the health of our society. It has been said that the way a society treats its women is a measure of that society. Yet today **less than 6% of philanthropic and foundation dollars go to programs that specifically serve women and girls.** Government spending seems to do no better. We may be funding the "norm," but we are ignoring the needs of "Norma."

There are those who ask why it is necessary to focus our attention specifically on women and girls. Research and statistics answer the question. Girls and women are at greater risk of abuse, rape and poverty. Difficult issues are the regular issues that they face every day.

- In the year 2000, only 14% of jobs will be available to workers with less than a high school education — but 58% of women will have a high school diploma or less.⁷
- Nearly 75% of tomorrow's jobs will require the use of computers; less than 1/3 of participants in computer courses are girls.⁸
- Though 75% of women work at paid jobs, 40% of them earn wages below poverty level.⁹

If we do not proactively take steps to change these statistics, the consequences will haunt us well into the 21st century. The good news is that intervention turns around statistics and can create success stories that inspire. The Women's Fund has witnessed this repeatedly. Programs that involve girls in sports is one example of directing energy and focus in a positive direction. In addition to developing self-esteem, team spirit, and achieving measurable goals, sports is an untapped resource in the struggle to prevent teen pregnancy. According to The Women's Sports Foundation Report: Sports and Teen Pregnancy¹⁰, female athletes were less than half as likely to get pregnant as non-athletes. In addition, significantly reduced rates of pregnancy were found for the subsamples of African-American, Caucasian, and Latina/Hispanic female athletes.

S.M.A.R.T. Sports — a two-year Women's Fund grantee — targets at-risk girls and involves them in sports and academic programs. S.M.A.R.T. is an acronym for Science

Math And Reading Taught through sports. A girl who reluctantly came into the program has transformed into a bright shining star. Extremely intelligent, with natural leadership ability, she openly admits that she was on her way to becoming the leader of a gang in the future. Her intelligence and leadership skills took a turn towards the positive because of her involvement in the program. Her academic performance is now outstanding, and she is affecting other girls' attitudes as well. She proudly states her plans to become a lawyer and eventually a judge. I am confident that we will see her name in print as both in the future. Without this program, we may have seen her name in print and shook our heads in sadness — another girl lost to the streets.

Neat Stuff — a 1997 Women's Fund grantee — provides clothing and training in the fashion and/or merchandising industry to teen girls in foster care. Most of the girls have been abused or abandoned. With no training in rudimentary social, communication or business skills, they are sorely unprepared for the world they will enter as adults. "I wish more people could see the difference a one-to-one relationship can make," says Phyllis Krug, executive director of the project. "So many of the girls have no sense of future. They live a day-to-day nonexistence. But when we focus our attention on them — praising the small things and building on that — it is wonderful to see them blossom and see their horizons expand. Simple things — like learning how to pay bills — to complex issues — like making positive choices — can make the difference of a life destined to hardship or an independent, fulfilling life. The animals in Metro-Zoo get more funding per animal than we allocate for children in foster care," she says.

Realities of life going into the next millennium must be faced. Some of our girls walk through minefields every day. The explosions may be detonated at any moment or are waiting to be tripped in the near future. Our girls' hope lies in how willing we are to commit to defusing the mines today. We must think boldly and aggressively to pave our girls' way to a healthy, safe, productive life. Funding academic, sports, mentoring, counseling, technical, professional, parenting, health, and communication projects will give them the wherewithal to march into the next century as contributing members of society. We have the opportunity of forging a partnership of those who give and those who receive. Our girls deserve our investment in this partnership — of time, focus and funds. Their future depends on us. But — just as importantly — our future depends on them. We at the Women's Fund of Miami-Dade County ask that all embrace our motto: **Together we can make a difference. Save a life. Change a future.**

Notes

¹Molly Mead, Lincoln Finely Center, Tufts University. "Worlds Apart — Missed Opportunities to Help Women and Girls." A 1993 Greater Boston Study of Corporate and Foundation Giving to Women's and Girls' Programs. Boston: Women in Philanthropy/Boston Women's Fund, 1994.

²Women's Fund of Miami-Dade County. "Preteen and Adolescent Girls in Dade County: The Critical Gap Between Programs and Need." A Needs Assessment Report by the Women's Fund of Miami-Dade County. Miami: Women's Fund of Miami-Dade County, 1997.

³Mary Pipher, Ph.D., *Reviving Ophelia*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995), 35.

- ⁴An interview with Mary Pipher, Ph.D., author of *Reviving Ophelia*, available from <http://www.committment.com/ProtectYourChild-Revivin.htm1>; Internet.
- ⁵"HHS Girl Power! Campaign", available from <http://www.cyfc.umn.edu/Learn/press/052897.thm1>; Internet.
- ⁶Parent Brochure — How Can We Support Girls in Early Adolescence?; available from <http://www.aspensys.com/eric>; Internet.
- ⁷The Women's Foundation of Colorado. "Women's Economic Security, Strategies for Change." A Report on the 1995 Summit on Women's Economic Security. Denver: The Women's Foundation of Colorado, 1996.
- ⁸Ibid.
- ⁹Ibid.
- ¹⁰The Women's Sports Foundation Report: Sports and Teen Pregnancy, Executive Summary; available from <http://www.lifetimetv.com.WoSport/stage/RESLIB/htrnl/pregexecsum.html>; Internet.

Ashley Cone, Age 12



"The best thing about being a girl is that I have a tremendous amount of intelligence and courage. Seeing women be just as good or better than men in almost everything has influenced me to be anything I want to be."

Angel Porter, Age 15

"I believe the best part of being a girl is that you can spread life beyond your own and carry a child in you!"

"The worst part would have to be the degradation of our gender!"

"My family tells me I am a role model to my baby cousins which I don't like, but I must deal with! I believe you should be yourself and wear what is comfortable on you — do what you think is right not what someone on television says is good or bad!"

"Look up to people for what they have achieved in their life!"

"When you and your parents argue you can sometimes lose your home!"

"I get along better with my friends than I do my family."

"I have had many problems with my father's rejection towards me! I see my father like once every 2-3 years and each time I see him he tells me something about me not being worth anything!"

"I believe my mother's parenting has much positive affect on myself!"

"I have been involved in student government association at PACE!"

"The faculty [PACE] listens to student representatives opinions very well!"

"My family talks a lot about politics!"

"I would not like to run for a public office because there is too much work involved! The other party spends so much time digging up scandals and your past!"

"Some of my friends are like jumping from guy to guy! I have done that and I dislike it, but its OK for some and bad for others!"

"Many of my friends are involved with boys! It doesn't really bother me, as long as I know the guy and they are protected!"

"I stopped getting high and drunk a long time ago. Unfortunately a lot of my friends still do it!"

"My weight fluctuates very rapidly! I have gained 20 pounds and just as quickly lost 30 pounds!"

"Most of my family smokes very badly!"

"Major health concerns of someone my age are smoking, stds and drugs!"

Adolescent Sexual Abuse Victims: The Long Road to Healing and Empowerment

by Barbara L. Goldman, Ph.D.

Child maltreatment continues to be a rampant problem in the United States, with 67,883 reported cases of child abuse in the state of Florida in 1996. According to state officials, for every reported case there are estimated to be two unreported cases. Sexual abuse was the third leading type of child maltreatment in the U.S., after neglect and physical abuse, with 12.3 percent of victims being sexually abused. More than one-third of the sexually abused children were first abused during the teenage years. Studies vary in their estimates, but many professionals conclude that one out of four girls experiences unwelcome sexual contact prior to age 18. Sexual abuse trauma crosses all economic and social lines, and has a deeply harmful impact on the child.

The consequences of this widespread trauma vary, depending on both the objective and the subjective nature of the specific abusive experience. Objective situational factors known to aggravate the severity of damage to victims include the duration and frequency of abuse; the perpetrator being a trusted, close relative; having multiple perpetrators; experiencing penetration or intercourse; abuse at an early age; a large age difference between perpetrator and victim; and concurrent physical abuse or use of force. Consequences are also aggravated when the subjective experience of the victim includes strong feelings of powerlessness and betrayal at the time of the abuse, when the victim is stigmatized and made to feel in some way personally responsible for the occurrence of the abuse, and when the victim is blamed or not supported by important family members. In providing support for recovery, it is critical to treat each case in a sensitive, empathic way, paying close attention to the objective circumstances and the particular individualized perceptions and meanings to the victim.

Common consequences of childhood sexual abuse include a traumatic sexualization of the child's experience. The adolescent becomes confused about sex and blends sexual feelings with painful, traumatic memories, rather than with a tender, loving relationship. This can lead to promiscuous acting out, and interfere with intimate functioning in later relationships. Sexual abuse also quite commonly stigmatizes the adolescent as "damaged goods," and leads to shame, guilt and inappropriate self-blame. The child experiences a traumatic sense of powerlessness as her body is invaded against her will. She can become pervasively fearful and lose her sense of personal control and efficacy. Particularly when a trusted adult perpetrates the abuse, there is profound damage to her

capacity for healthy relationships, as the child learns to subordinate her legitimate needs to the desires of others.

Because of this constellation of consequences, many victimized children and adolescents maintain secrecy, shame and self-blame about the abuse. They experience dangerously low self-esteem and depression, and become inclined to act out behaviorally rather than disclose what has happened. Many of the adolescent girls seen as "problem kids" are actually behaving in dramatic ways as a result of their abuse. Adolescent girls who run away, act out sexually, engage in prostitution or drug use to numb distress, or become depressed and suicidal are often victims of sexual abuse.

Over the course of the last 10 to 15 years, as the magnitude of the sexual abuse problem has reached public attention, society has become better at helping children to disclose sexual abuse, and at offering at least short-term protection and referral for crisis intervention services. Within our local Miami community, programs have been established to help girls deal with disclosing the abuse, and to provide safe haven and therapy to deal with their trauma and disruption. Society has also become better at believing victims and helping them when they report, rather than blaming them as "bad girls."

While we have done better at the crisis intervention stage of response, however, there are longer-term needs which have been less clearly acknowledged. We recognize the acute symptomatic reactions to sexual trauma, such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and other disruptive emotional states. However, society has insufficiently recognized the longer-term consequences to personality functioning in victimized children and adolescents, particularly those exposed to chronic or intrafamilial abuse. When abuse has occurred under high stress, over a long period, or in the context of a close relationship, the adolescent girl feels a deep betrayal and has trouble trusting others or seeing the world as a safe and good place. These demoralized, sometimes cynical, views and low expectations of the self and others can last a lifetime and dramatically disrupt a girl's self-esteem, her ability to find and fulfill her potentials, and her ability to connect with others in a healthy way. The deep and stubborn personality distortions found in adult patients who have experienced childhood sexual abuse, particularly when undisclosed and untreated, make subsequent change quite difficult.

If treated earlier, in adolescence, girls can rebuild self-esteem, establish healthy, trusting relationships with others, and free themselves of self-perpetuating guilt, shame and grief over their lost childhood. When treated in longer-term individual psychotherapy with a trusted adult, the adolescent girl can experience the support necessary to heal the core injuries to her capacity for trust and intimacy. She can understand her abuse experience with clarity, depth and self-acceptance, and gradually gain mastery over the pain. In group psychotherapy approaches, an essential ingredient for teens, the adolescent girl can gain group and peer acceptance by others with similar experiences, resolve feelings of isolation and differentness, and model the recovery and growth achieved by other survivors.

Long-term individual and group therapy approaches are costly, but help adolescent girls gain stable, productive adulthoods. Such long-term approaches need more public and private financial support to become broadly available. In the Miami-Dade area, we have, as a community, worked hard to create high quality resources, including the CHARLEE program and the newly established Kristi House. These programs address the initial needs of adolescent sexual abuse victims expertly, with dedicated staffs, and strong community support. They are limited in the number of girls they can assist with the intensive long-term therapy approaches discussed here, and need support to expand what they can offer. The Journey Institute, a nonprofit corporation established by a highly capable group of local mental health professionals, has long been a primary source for group treatment of adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Journey has recently received a startup grant to extend services to adolescents, but will need sources of continuing financial support to maintain the adolescent program.

In my experience, this sort of long-term individual and group psychotherapy gives adolescent girls their best chance for developing healthy personalities and for leading happy adult lives, which do not perpetuate the cycle of abuse in the next generation.

In addition to the treatment described here, communities should establish abuse prevention programs to help girls learn verbal assertiveness skills, physical self-defense, and sturdy self-esteem. Parent education is needed to help adults develop a protective sensitivity to abuse issues, enabling them to empower even small children to report and escape from sexual abusers. Here too, both public and private funding are needed to support programmatic initiatives developed by an alliance of survivors, professionals and concerned community leaders.

Biography



Barbara L. Goldman, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist in private practice in Coral Gables. She has directed and consulted to adolescent programs for many years, and has participated as co-chair of the Dade County Psychological Association Sexual Abuse Task Force. She is past president of the Dade County Psychological Association, and has long been a member of its executive board. Adjunct Associate Professor in the Psychology Department at the University of Miami, she is active in training clinical psychology graduate students. Her husband, Philip C. Boswell, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist who shares her practice and her concern for sexual abuse issues. Their two daughters, Rebecca and Abigail, are rapidly approaching adolescence.

Ashley Peacock

"The best part about being a girl is that girls seem to have more long-lasting friendships than guys do."

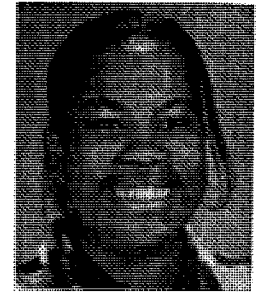
"My personal role model would have to be my mom."

"I have a good relationship with all of my family because friends can turn their backs on you any day, and family is always there to care."

"I don't think parents understand what we go through when we grow up. Because there are a lot of things going through our mind. This age is the age where we start to make decisions in our lives."

"I feel you should not be physically involved with your boyfriend until you are married."

"My personal health concerns are for women with breast cancer."



Faith Hadnot, Age 14

"The best and worst thing about being a girl is that females are looked upon as being beautiful, intelligent, and graceful. Sometimes people don't look beyond those things. So we as females have to keep a set appearance. For some females, its hard. Personal hygiene, health, outside appearances, and education are the most important things a woman should keep up with. We find ourselves spending most of our money on perfume, hair, nails, clothes, makeup and more."

"One of my personal role models is Maya Angelou. I look up to her because of her strength in her heritage."

"Another one of my personal role models is Tina Turner. I admire her because she is a fine example of a strong, beautiful, and independent woman."

"I think that teachers should get paid just about as much as lawyers and doctors. I feel this way because, these teachers are the people who influence and enlighten. They change the lives and shape the mind. They put up with people's children every school day."

"Parenting is a full-time job. Especially when you have to take care of a household and a child or children."

"Sometimes its hard to raise a child the right way if you don't spend time with them. Just trying to make a living and providing for a child calls for all your time."

"Giving birth and raising a child are gifts given by God."

"If people think about it, the parent is the first to make a difference on the child's mind. Think of yourself as a blessing from God himself."

Women of Tomorrow: The Path for the Future

*by Jennifer Valoppi, NBC 6 News Anchor, President and
Founder of "Women of Tomorrow"*



It seems to me, if you don't care for today's teenagers you should. They may be caring for you in the nursing home.

Personally, I've always enjoyed teenagers. Perhaps they're my way of keeping up with the times, but I count adolescents among my favorite groups of people. I think being a teenager can and should be one of the most exciting times of a person's life, and I am always awed by their raw energy and intelligence, the first of which often gets in the way of adults appreciating the second.

Unfortunately being a teenager today, is a very risky venture. Risk-taking and rebellion are a natural sign of the times, but that behavior can place them in extremely dangerous territory. In addition to the centuries old angst and insecurity of a child developing into an adult, today's teenagers are faced with the prospect that sex can kill, that drugs are more lethal than ever, and that guns and weapons are commonplace. Many come from single parent homes, and the parent that is in the household often has problems communicating with the teenager.

In addition, teenage girls have special problems. As you will see in the second section of this article, written by Miami-Dade State Attorney and "Women of Tomorrow" Vice President/Mentor Kathy Fernandez Rundle, young girls are far outpacing boys in increased contact with the criminal justice system.

Teen pregnancy is rampant and cuts short the hope of an independent life. Further, these young girls then become charged with the responsibility of raising the next generation; a task they are ill equipped for, and most frequently do without the help of a loving partner, propagating the vicious cycle we hear so much about. Our students come from a variety of ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. For some, day to day survival is a major concern. We have at least one student who is a single parent and another was charged with the care of her ten-year-old sister, after their single mother passed away.

Many of our teenagers express doubts that even their closest friends are trustworthy. Several of the young women in our program say they have no one they can rely on for

honest, good advice. Parents are too busy, and are almost by definition un-cool and out of touch. Friends lead them astray, and boyfriends have their own agenda.

"Women of Tomorrow" was designed to bridge the gap between parents and friends. To provide an experienced adult to run thoughts, ideas and problems by. Its purpose is also to expose these young women to a positive world they may never have known existed.

As Mentor and President of L.E.A International, Lea Black says, "We want to intercept these young women at an early age to assist them in taking what would have been a predictable path, and instead help them design and create for themselves a life they truly love and are passionate about."

I have learned over the years that many professional women share similar roadblocks and roads to success. Millions of teenage girls also share those experiences everyday. The lucky ones have love and family support to get them through the tough times, but not all are so fortunate. Many express feeling their parents are too busy to be concerned about their well being.

It is also common for the young women to feel labeled by others as bad, good, smart or stupid. It's not uncommon for young people to live up to the labels placed on them. "Women of Tomorrow" are urged not to accept negative labels.

"Women of Tomorrow" Mentor, Circuit Court Judge Judith Kreeger says, "The glass ceiling was pretty low when I started out. Barriers were enormous to becoming a lawyer, or partner, much less a judge. The glass ceiling may be higher in the business world today, but it still exists. We want to teach these young women they can be whatever they want to be."

Despite all the progress women have made, many girls in our program display an extreme lack of direction and understanding of the choices available to them. Many are facing financial hardships that preclude them from even thinking about college. A great number expressed interest in studying medicine. When I inquired why, it became apparent many had been exposed to the medical profession at their local clinic and this was the only professional group some of these women had ever been exposed to.

Fortunately, gone are the days when women lawyers, doctors, judges, politicians, and yes, newscasters were either nonexistent or simply the rare exception. Today we have multitudes of successful women to look to. Yet I am always reminded of some research I studied in college. Women who made it to the top often did little to help other women.

The research also suggested the problem with women achieving their full potential was not because men thought they were inferior to men, but because women thought they were inferior to men. It's been some years since I was in college and I'd like to think times have changed, yet time and time again we see teenage girls clinging to teenage boys as their primary source of validation, instead of looking to their own accomplishments. And of

course, these boys who are so influential often have their own set of unique problems and issues.

Black says, "To have total freedom, you have to rely on yourself. You have to be willing to do whatever it takes to have financial freedom including educating yourself and working two or three jobs at a time like I did to get where I got." Or as Judge Kreeger put it, "I tell the girls a little about my past because I came from a home with severe economic limitations and really jumped through hoops to go to school and law school." In fact, many of the "Women of Tomorrow" Mentors are self-made women, something that many of our students initially expressed great surprise at.

Like many people, my teenage years were tumultuous, and like many teenagers today, my life could have gone either way. I could have made different choices, I could have listened to the people who thought women belonged in certain roles, or that my best chance for success was to marry well. Fortunately I did not, nor did any of our mentors.

Being a "Woman of Tomorrow" is about persistence, hard work and education.

I have often said, the people I know at my age who are the happiest are the ones who made good use of the years these young women are entering right now. Everyone makes mistakes, but now more than ever, they need self-esteem to stand up for what they believe is right. They also need the courage to resist the labels imposed on them by others and to live up to their own expectations. Being a teenage girl can and should be an exciting and wondrous time.

Cast on the inevitable road from childhood to womanhood, often looking more like a woman but feeling more like a child, it is a precarious time filled with the pitfalls of immaturity and indecision, yet it is filled with all the promise and hope one's imagination can hold. Teaching these young women, if they can dream it they can do it, is one of our biggest accomplishments.

Getting Started

For years, I wanted to be involved with working with teenagers, but to my knowledge there was no venue available that didn't require a rigid commitment that many professional people can't adhere to. So out of necessity grew the concept, and so far it seems to be working at a pace that has exceeded even my high expectations.

I knew I would never be able to start a group like "Women of Tomorrow" alone, and I realized if I was going to call upon other professional women, also faced with little free time, and lots of good intentions, this would have to be a well organized venture that students and mentors would enjoy.

So, I went to the President and General Manager of NBC 6, Don Browne. I have known Don for many years, and he has always been a strong supporter of women. In fact, if you

look at many of the women on NBC News today, most likely Don found them, nurtured them, and gave them their big shot. Don was also known in New York, as the guy who recognized potential when he saw it. So I was delighted when he gave my pet project a "thumbs up" and threw the weight of NBC 6 behind it.

To begin with, we invited approximately 25 of the most accomplished professional women in South Florida to form the mentoring organization. Acceptance was almost unanimous. Our mentors come from a variety of backgrounds and professions. They are judges, lawyers, doctors, writers and entrepreneurs. They represent industries as diverse as banking, fast food and fashion, and they represent a variety of age groups. Incidentally, there's no sign of a generation gap at "Women of Tomorrow."

Next we formed alliances with six schools in Miami-Dade and Broward County; Miami Beach High School, Miami Killian, Braddock, Hialeah Miami Lakes High, Miami Edison and Piper High School. The schools were charged with selecting young women they thought would benefit from the program. How the students were chosen was totally up to the individual schools.

Each mentor donates her time, a few hours a month, to work with small groups of girls, usually ten or so young women at a time. The groups are kept small so the students and mentors have a chance to speak their mind and bond. Mentors frequently visit the same school, which builds a sense of familiarity and trust. They also visit different schools to expose young women to a variety of personalities, thought and professions. By all account, "Women of Tomorrow" provides a rewarding experience for the students and mentors alike.

Enjoying the experience is all well and good, but what are we really accomplishing? From the beginning, we elicited the help of Dr. Lana Stern, a psychologist specializing in adolescents. Dr. Stern suggested a standard multiple choice test, that rates self-esteem. We asked the students to fill it out at the beginning of the school year and again at the end. No one expected to see significant results from a first year trial program. Dr. Stern suggested it would probably take a couple of years of working with the mentors before results would be apparent.

We were all incredibly surprised and delighted when the results were tallied and Dr. Stern announced there had been a statistically significant increase in the self-esteem of the young women from the beginning of the program to the end. She cautioned, more research with stricter controls was needed. This past year we are in the process of conducting just such a study.

This year, buoyed by the success of last year's research, we invited several new mentors into the program. Attached is a complete list of the "Women of Tomorrow" Mentors. We also filed for nonprofit status. Don Browne, and the Miami-Dade State Attorney, Kathy Fernandez Rundle, joined me as officers of the corporation. Kathy has been tireless in the support of children and as one of our inaugural mentors has brought much inspiration to our students.

Women of Tomorrow Mentor List, 1998-1999

- Betty Amos, President, Fuddruckers
Adrienne Arsht, Chairman of the Board,
TotalBank
Lea Black, President, L.E.A. International
Connie Banko, President, Connie Banko
Swimwear
Rene Backus Turner, Media Director,
Backus Turner International
Anita Bock, District Administrator, De-
partment of Children and Families
Kathy Fernandez Rundle, State Attorney,
Miami-Dade County
Meri Framer, President, Framer Realty
Sonia Gibson, Fashion and Public Rela-
tions Director, Saks Fifth Avenue
Meg Green, Financial Expert, Meg Green
and Associates
Zeni K. Habif, Owner, Zeni K. Habif Inte-
rior Designing
Katheleen Hoague, Chief Assistant State
Attorney, Miami-Dade County
Judith Kreeger, Judge, Miami-Dade Cir-
cuit Court
Irene Marie, President, Irene Marie Mod-
eling Agency
Yvette Miley, Managing Editor, NBC 6
Michaele Moretz, Focus Group Director,
Weitzman and Philip Research
Debbie Ohanian, President, Meet Me In
Miami
Robyn Perlman, President, R.F. Perlman Inc.
Sandi Powers, Fashion Editor, Ocean
Drive Magazine
Debra Price, Doctor, Debra Price, M.D.
- Dora Puig, Consultant, Fortune Interna-
tional Realty
Tonia Rahming, Group Publishing Man-
ager, Ocean Drive Magazine
Mycki Ratzan, Attorney, Law Offices of
Jeff Weiner
Robin Reiter, Senior Vice President,
BankAtlantic
Linda Robinson, Latin American Corre-
spondent, U.S. News & World Report
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Congresswoman,
United States Congress
Patricia San Pedro, Vice President of Com-
munity Relations, The Miami Herald
Nicole Sayfie, Attorney, Stearns, Weaver,
Miller, Weissler
Stephanie Sayfie, Host, StephSez
Audrey Solomon, Doctor, Audrey
Solomon, M.D.
Tara Solomon, Writer, The Miami Herald
Laurinda Spear, Principal, Arquitectonica
Marita Srebnick, President, Scott Notions
Inc.
Maria Elena Torano, President, MetaTech
Linda Vitale, Judge, Broward County
Courthouse
Diane Walder, Doctor, Diane Walder M.D.
Dahlia Weinstein, Editor, Advantage
Carole Weiss, Director, The Weiss Institute
Sherry Williams, Attorney, Kirkpatrick
and Lockhart
Tere Zubizarreta, President, Zubi
Advertising

Kathy Sarria, Age 15



"Having a steady boyfriend is great because if he's a worthwhile guy you can tell each other everything without hesitating. I feel special having someone I can just talk to and not be judged."

"I feel that being [physically] involved with a guy is a risky situation."

"I feel that drugs are incredibly bad and they shouldn't be so easy to get."

"The best part about being a girl is that it's more accepted to go the restroom together."

"I guess I look up to my older girlfriends the most because they help me out with problems and they've had more experience than myself in many fields of my life."

Taniel Marie Hoyle, Age 16

"Most people don't use the word teacher and friend in the same sentence, however, K. T. Curran is definitely an exception to the rule. When working with K. T. you not only learn responsibility and commitment, you learn leadership. She has given me the courage and knowledge to stand before my peers and community to share information and discuss issues that teens face today."

"When the question comes up, 'Who has influenced my life?', it isn't difficult to answer K. T. Curran!"

"My biggest concern with my school is how terribly crowded it is. I really don't understand how the school board expects students to excel when there are 38 people in a classroom meant for 25."

"Sometimes when I think about my future, I feel I want to be an actress, and other times a teacher or anchor lady."

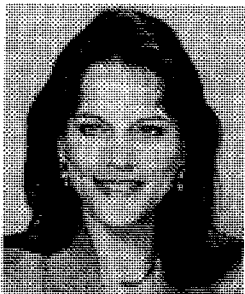
"In my opinion, it is much better to have a steady boyfriend, as long as he treats you right."

"If I had a problem with alcohol my mom would know before me. We are so close and so much alike that she would be the one I would reach out to for help. Then without any questions she would take it from there by getting me whatever help I needed."

"When I am alone and I have nothing better to do but think, I start to cry! I'm such a softy."

"Being a girl is hard work. I mean if you think about it, it seems that girls have so much more pressures and responsibilities that we have to undertake."

"It is just so much more stressful for girls than boys. Then we have boy pressures like sex, and going too far emotionally. I wish boys could trade places with girls for 1 month, then they would maybe understand."



Mentoring At-Risk Girls: Creating a Pathway of Hope

by Katherine Fernandez Rundle, Miami-Dade State Attorney

While prosecuting criminals, particularly violent criminals, is my job as Miami-Dade State Attorney, I also perceive my job as a constant striving to see fewer criminals to prosecute, in other words to reduce crime and add to the community's safety. The best way to end tomorrow's crime is by redirecting tomorrow's potential criminals, our at-risk children, away from possible criminal conduct. Mentoring, with its focused attention on girls who have been starved for any constructive attention and direction, is one of the most effective and least expensive ways to accomplish this.

We know that our at-risk young "Women of Tomorrow" need special help because of the changes that are occurring in the pattern of female crime. We want to help ensure that they do not fall victim to these patterns.

- When looking at violent crimes committed by girls, the national arrest rates have increased by 125% from 1985 through 1994 particularly due to rises in arrests for robbery and aggravated assault. The arrest rates for boys increased only 67% during the same time period. Simple assault (up 141%), motor vehicle theft (up 113%), and weapons violation (up 137%) also contributed to the significant increase in arrest rates of juvenile girls during these years.
- 10% of the membership in street gangs nationwide are girls. An estimated seven thousand (7,000) young girls are gang members in America.
- Of girls involved in America's juvenile justice system, 40-70% have a past history of family abuse (physical, sexual or emotional) compared to 23-34% of girls in the general population. Too many of these girls feel powerless and are plagued by feelings of guilt, anger, insecurity, helplessness, fear, confusion, and embarrassment. As a result they do poorly academically, behaviorally, and socially in school. These girls remain at high risk for eventually becoming abusers themselves and perpetuating an intergenerational cycle of violence and propensity for crime.
- 90% of adult prostitutes were sexually or physically abused during childhood. The average age of entry into prostitution is thirteen (13).

- Since 1991 there has been a 130% increase in the number of juvenile females committed for delinquency in Florida. This increase is almost double the 67% increase in male delinquency commitments.

There are also some surprising gender differences between the juvenile females and males in the juvenile justice system particularly in the family structure of both groups. Males reported living with their biological parents much more frequently than females. As part of a Florida Department of Juvenile Justice study group, 76 percent of a control group males reported living with both biological parents versus 61 percent of females. In the delinquent group the numbers were 40 percent for males and 18 percent for females.

This study appears to confirm a common belief that the social environment, specifically the family, provides much of the basis for learning pro-social behaviors. Based on family structure, females appear to be significantly more at risk of entering the juvenile justice system than males. This is where the "Women of Tomorrow" mentoring program fulfills an important need.

Mentors can provide the guidance and positive role model these girls so often lack. Too many at-risk girls are raised by one parent who may be working two or three jobs to make ends meet. Many times these parents are too busy taking care of everyday needs and they are too tired to deal with the problems of young girls. Add to this the potential abuse of drugs and alcohol that so often plagues single parents and the need for a mentor becomes even more apparent. A mentor can be many things to a young girl: simply a friend, or a confidant, or a career counselor, or a role model. They can help motivate their young charges to keep in school and develop business skills so essential to getting a job. Here again both studies and the sentiment of the common people agree, young people with jobs are less inclined to commit crimes. It is the mentor who can show such goals are not out of reach or a waste of time.

As the only female State Attorney in Florida, I feel that I have a role, as well as a professional obligation, to strongly encourage the mentoring of our at-risk young women. Each young life which is touched by a mentor has had access to a new environment which many of these young women may never have known even existed. The greatest gift of the "Women of Tomorrow" program is the gift of potential and hope which is freely distributed to girls who once may never have thought about the next hour let alone the rest of their lives. I am proud to be a part of the "Women of Tomorrow" program.

Erika Kubik, Age 17

"The best thing about being a girl is being able to talk to your friends about personal issues and not have to wonder if they are going to think about you differently if you had told them something very personal and embarrassing. The worst thing about being a girl is, after getting a job, wondering if you got it because you were qualified or if you got it due to affirmative action."

"My personal role model is my mother. I really admire and look up to her."

"I worry that so many kids my age smoke, drink, and do drugs."

"In all of my science classes, I feel that the boys were looked upon more highly and given special treatment."

"I plan to go to college and double major in Elementary Education and Spanish. I might minor in dance."

"In the past few years, I have grown close to my aunts and my grandparents."

"I'm against premarital sex."

"I worry about getting fat and being overweight. When I feel fat, I feel ugly and I have a low self-esteem."



Tiffany Sermon, Age 14

"My mother and I are so much alike that we often bump heads. She is very hard on me. I understand her reasons, but I don't think her reasons are necessary. I'm a good person and a good student. My mother thinks if she lightens up on me; I'll 'fall through the cracks.' I have a seven-year-old sister (Ashlyn), she's an honor student at NFCS. She's a good sister, but most of the time she pesters me, and my mother allows this because, 'she's my sister.' I love my sister very much, but sometimes I want to be left alone. I don't have a relationship with my father and I'm perfectly satisfied with the way things are."

"My relationships with friends and with family have different purposes, and each have their importance in my life."

"My mother chose not to marry my father, and now that I'm older I understand and I think she made the right decision. My friends and I don't spend a lot of time discussing our parents marital situations; we choose to focus on who we are and our ambitions in life. I am going to be successful no matter what situation I grew up in."

"I have a great relationship with all members of my extended family, including grandparents that I adopted."

"My mother is doing a great job of raising me. She's hard on me but I know its only because she loves me and wants me to be successful and I will be because my mother has taken the time to care about my future and how I present myself in it."

Family Issues

The Adolescent Girl: Family Structure and Identity

by Anneliese Doyle, Intern
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Female adolescence is a vulnerable transition from childhood into adulthood — a stage of reformulating the parent-child relationship and developing an independent sense of self. The two types of relationships in life become abruptly evident: the family to which we are born, and the friends whom we chose. Adolescence is a time when we assert our individuality and make choices, good *and* bad, about academics, friends, intimate partners, sexual activity, smoking, or drugs. Our family relationships are the foundation that future relationships are modeled after, and they unfold as a critical influence in the development of these adolescent years.

Today's family structures vary tremendously from the stereotypical family of the "Leave It To Beaver" heterosexual, nuclear family of a married couple and their own children. The high rate of divorce (nearly a 41% chance in each marriage) as well as unmarried parenthood and mere parental choice, account for the accommodations in family structure which we have become so familiar with. In the United States, about one-third of all children live in single-parent households (1997) and particularly within the state of Florida, about 81% of those are mother-headed households (1990) (U.S. Census Data). Families are now complex hybrids of the common family, allowing for remarried parents, stepfamilies, single parents, gay and lesbian parents, grandparents, extended family, and other adults to constitute the "atypical" family unit for the adolescent. For the most part, all responsible guardians agree: adolescent girls need dedicated, stable caretakers who can provide positive involvement in this time of change and perplexity.

In most families, regardless of structure, the child's legal mother or mother-figure, assumes primary responsibility for the practical care of the child. Legal fathers and father-figures generally take a secondary responsibility and are expected to provide financial support, although they do not always do so. Most of the time, the mothers who do the primary caretaking also do at least half of the breadwinning—with little or no caretaking support from the father, if one is indeed present.

It is important to recognize the roles of a stereotypical family so that we can better *investigate* what our culture demands from us as "good" parents:

Woman

Primary parent
Culturally low status

Parent role:

- Emphasis on caretaking
- Nurturing assumed
- Increasing economic role along with above responsibilities
- Many women and their families are struggling with the woman's increased role outside of the family while she retains much of her previous role within the family

Man

Secondary parent
Culturally higher status

Parent role:

- Emphasis on economic support
- If nurturing, seen as special
- Increasing but still limited direct caretaking role. Economic role unchanged or decreasing
- Many men and their families have not dealt with the economic, career advancement, and psychological consequences of men increasing direct caretaking

(Eagle, 54).

Our cultural assumptions of parenting are most definitely qualified by gender, which is reflected in our excess of single-mother homes and our scarcity of single-father homes. *Parents Magazine* reported in 1993 that 40% of kids who live in female-headed households have not seen their fathers in at least a year, and of the remaining 60%, only a fifth sleep even one night a month in their father's home (Louv, 54). The statistics are revealing: fatherhood is becoming a "volunteer commitment," leaving the burden of raising the children solely to the mother.

From the start, the father is misled to believe that the mother bonds with the baby in a way that he is completely incapable of — perhaps the beginning of the problem of paternal noninvolvement. The cultural standard of motherhood is one of selfless devotion and responsibility, whereas the standard for the father is one of *absence* (Burgess, 188). Whether the father is physically present in the family unit or not does not seem to be an issue; the stereotypical present father concentrates so hard on the breadwinning that he does not have time for his family, and in any time he does spend with them, he feels withdrawn — never fully involved in his child's life except for, perhaps, financial involvement.

Certainly we see the truth in the understanding of the term "working mother," in that she is someone who works *and* mothers; we rarely question if a father is a "working father," because the word "father" in itself implies employment *as* fathering. If he is not working, he is most likely not spending his time as a full time homemaker, as most mothers might, but rather continuing his norm of little or no participation in the family life. This "dead-beat-dad" type makes no contribution whatsoever — not physically, emotionally, or financially. We have vague expectations for fathers outside of keeping a job that can pay the bills. While financial support is an essential part of a child's valuable

resources, fatherhood should not be limited to that role. Caring, encouragement, and support from each parent figure is necessary for a developing adolescent to build a positive self-image.

During adolescence, when a girl's sense of self, as well as her physical self, are blossoming, girls need that intimate care and attention from their father figure so that they can develop healthy values of heterosexual relationships that are built on trust and respect. The high instances of fathers who progressively become less involved in their relationships with their children after divorce leave their daughters in detrimental circumstances which drastically lower their potential for success in their early adult lives and especially in their future relationships. Many times a stepfather, grandfather, or uncle can provide a suitable substitute for the natural father, although the issue of rejection will always be present, and in fact becomes magnified during the adolescent years, with the elevated self-perception and evaluation of identity that accompanies that period.

Parental divorce most often ends in father separation, since about 80% of divorces in the United States result in sole-mother custody (Miller, 1). Oftentimes, when fathers do receive a shared custody, many tend to gradually "back-off," with the perception that they are making it "easier on the kids." In fact, father absence is a leading source for problems arising in adolescence. Certain behavior and coping patterns arise in response to the absent father, the three most commonly occurring problems in adolescent girls being:

- 1) Subjective psychological problems (defined as anxiety, sadness, pronounced moodiness, phobias, and depression)
- 2) Poor grades or grades substantially below ability and/or recent past performance
- 3) Aggression toward parents (Frost, 60).

82% of pregnant teenage girls and a majority of drug and alcohol abusers come from father-absent homes (Miller, 1). Similarly, low self-esteem, precocious sexual activity, delinquency, and difficulty in adult heterosexual relationships are associated with father absence (Kalter, 57).

Oftentimes girls blame themselves for their father's absence, believing that they are not good enough, pretty enough, or smart enough to have kept his attention, impressing the girl with little self-respect in relation to her value as a female. We see a growing instance of adolescent girls dating "older" men in attempts to make up for the absent father figure. Ultimately, this problem of father absence, or little father involvement, becomes a problem for the daughter in that she is typically unable to relate to men — an increasing problem as the girl ages into adulthood. Clearly, if a divorced couple or any other "atypical" family situation can arrange for equal involvement in the child's life, the child will benefit with a positive self-identity, which will carry with her throughout her life.

Any grown woman thinking back to her adolescent years can remember that sensitive and impressionable age of junior high and high school, when any affirmation or

encouragement was heaven-sent. These monumental emotional and physical changes of adolescence become even more difficult to deal with since we begin to turn away from our parents at this time in an effort to assert our maturity, and look to our peers for guidance. Peers' influence on each other have tremendous significance for the individual adolescent. It is important to understand that adolescents pay more attention to their peers than their parents during this time, but that the self-confidence that parents can encourage at home is what matters most. Adolescents take what they learned at home to their peer groups, so if they are confident girls with strong values, then they will seek out others with similar values to befriend, and will probably even maintain leadership roles within that group. Girls with poor self-image are prone to be "followers," likely to make poor choices about the groups they associate with and the values they represent. A study in 1990 revealed that at least 60% of 8 and 9-year-old girls are "happy the way [they are]," whereas only 29% of 16-year-old girls felt the same. This loss of self-esteem in adolescent girls cannot be ignored — families need to make a conscious effort to instill pride in their daughters so that they can grow into self-loving, responsible adults.

Although most single mothers do an exceptional job of raising and caring for their children on their own, it is inadequate to believe that relying solely on mothers to raise our children is what is in the best interests of the children. Certainly, many mothers choose to raise their children on their own because they feel that the care the child received in an unhappy and unstable situation with both parents present was unacceptable. However, those single mothers can rarely do it on their own; if they do not remarry, then they get by with the help of friends and relatives. Most frequently, the maternal grandmother steps in as the supplementary caretaker, which replaces the father as the "secondary caretaker." It is unfair for these women, mothers and grandmothers alike, to take all of the responsibility of child rearing merely because the father decides to be distant, if not absent altogether, from his parenting responsibilities. Indeed, it is these responsibilities of fatherhood that must be redefined and enforced, regardless of the actual mother-father relationship, whether it be unmarried, divorced, or remarried.

More than half of all children in the United States can expect to live in single-mothered households before they turn 18 (Louv, 54). This situation not only deprives the child of an indispensable relationship with its father, but also unnecessarily overburdens the mother with responsibility for the child's entire well-being. In Karen Johnson's "Trusting Ourselves: A Source Book on Psychology for Women," she provides a section titled "A Note to Fathers: A Guide to New Roles and Expectations." Her suggestions are insightful and should be taken as a fresh start, one which embraces fatherhood as consequential and valuable to a daughter's mental health.

Changing perceptions of fatherhood is an arduous, continuing cultural overhaul, but the benefits for our relationships are well worth the work. Our State needs to enforce quality parenting, perhaps by some of the following suggestions:

- Offer more financial and emotional support for our single-mothers

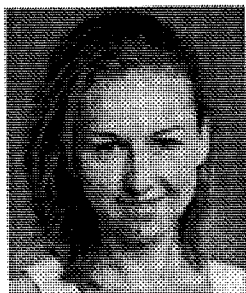
- Offer counseling, prenatal, and parenthood classes to prospective parents, as well as to existing parents with children of all ages
- Encourage community services such as parenting courses through schools, churches, and businesses, perhaps implementing parent-mentor programs which encourage responsible parenting
- Revise child support laws and collection techniques.

Our girls need nurturance and commitment from their families during their toughest years — those of adolescence. Parents work to redefine the “family” structure, whether it be stepfamilies, live-in grandparents, helpful neighbors, or any combination of caretakers that can best care for the children. However, it is impossible to ignore that women do most of the work here, with minimal involvement from fathers. Girls, as do all children, benefit from two nurturing parents, even if they are unmarried or divorced. The benefits outweigh the hard work, since men will be able to develop better, more trusting relationships with their daughters, women will be able to improve the quality of the daughter-mother relationship, and daughters will gain a fuller understanding of healthy, well-rounded roles for both men and women.

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Kelly Klauber, Age 16



"I hate walking through the halls at school and having guys look you up and down like you're some kind of art sculpture."

"We have a lot to live up to. With all of these skinny models in magazines with perfect skin and trendy clothes, that is what we think guys want."

"Women are coming back as role models for men too."

"My personal role model is Princess Diana. I look up to my mom the most."

"My major concern in school is that I'm getting the proper education in order to succeed in what I love to do ... which is sing."

"I think we should educate our children on these issues [drunk driving]. The more they know, the better decisions they'll make."

"If I want something bad enough, I can get it through confidence and strength."

"The divorce hasn't ever affected the relationship between me and my friends. It has actually brought me closer to my family, they've always been really supportive and loving."

"Of course this [divorce] has affected my family economically."

"My relationship with my extended family, especially aunts and uncles, has grown into a better, more trusting relationship."

"I think politicians these days tend to just focus on the bad things teens do and insult our intelligence. Judging us isn't going to make us learn from our mistakes."

"Boyfriends come and go, I'm sure there will be many in my life and I'm not rushing into any lifetime commitments. Just take one day at a time, that is how I get through life."

"My personal health care concern is losing weight. My skin has also been a frustrating problem. I just had to find my talents and areas I know I can excel in and work hard no matter what."

"My major health concern with someone my age is mostly safe sex (or abstinence) and the use of proper prevention methods."

Nicole Tippin, Age 16

"I am close with them [mother and grandparents] to a certain extent. I tell them what is going on in my life and how I am, but I don't really spend a large amount of time with them. At the moment, I feel closer to my friends, only because this is the first year I am very happy. I have friends that I know care about me not just people who need an acquaintance. My mom complains that I don't spend any time with her. But what she doesn't understand is that I need my freedom, and to experience life."

"My grandfather and I aren't extremely close, but in a sense we are. We're kind of like, two people who have an unspoken bond. And me and mother are just like mother and daughter. But me and my grandmother are like best friends. We have a very unique relationship."

Critical Issues in the Lives of Florida's African American Teenage Girls

*by Cheryl Rodriguez, Associate Professor
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Introduction

Although very diverse in terms of cultural influences, family structures, and individual perspectives, all African American girls embody the complex intersection of gender, race, class and youth. At a time when self-image and self-doubt engulf their daily existences, their race and gender are viewed as even greater liabilities. Thus, African American girls' distinctive transition from girlhood to womanhood warrants particular attention.

At early ages African American girls can learn to value their own unique multilayered experiences through family interactions, schooling and mentoring. Mentoring plays a particularly important role because girls can learn to establish rich and trusting relationships with women outside of their immediate families. Such relationships can expand girls' knowledge of the world. For example, during the 1997-1998 academic year, a group of eleven African-American girls gathered weekly in a quiet section of the Sligh Middle School cafeteria. Although some of the girls were reluctant to speak and others were occasionally disruptive, they were all curious about their adult mentor and the activities she would bring to their weekly meetings. These girls and small groups of African American girls at four other middle schools in Tampa, were participants in Sister to Sister, a mentoring program sponsored by the University of South Florida's Institute on Black Life (IBL). With a grant from the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice Girl's Initiative Program, the IBL enlisted African American women faculty who were interested in taking on the challenge of building trusting relationships with girls who are not always polite, quiet or cooperative.

Programs like Sister to Sister have the potential to affect positive change particularly for African American girls who are at risk for failure in school. However, initiatives that focus on the impact of gender, race and class on girls' health, self-esteem, and educational achievement are far too rare in Florida. The following discussion will focus on some of the critical issues that affect family life, health and education for African American teenage females. More importantly, this brief report will discuss the necessity of systematic programs that address the unique needs of African American girls as they make the perilous journey to womanhood in the 21st century.

Family Life

Historically, people of African descent have struggled to establish strong family bonds despite legalized, systemic and social oppression. These strong bonds encompassed nuclear households, extended family members and fictive kin. Today most African Americans continue the traditions of self-help, self-determination, and self-definition that historically contributed to family stability. However, certain societal stressors, particularly those associated with poverty, inordinately affect African American families. These factors can have a serious impact on African American girls' roles in families as well as their perceptions of the family as a safe haven and refuge.

The most powerful influence on girls' self-images comes from the women in their lives. Mothers, grandmothers, aunts and other female adults can serve as key role models in determining how girls see themselves. However, serious stressors on African American family life can affect the quality of the interactions girls have with female family members as well as the frequency with which positive interactions occur. For example, Gibbs (1995) argues that African American children are three times more likely to live in poverty than white children. Thus, African American children are at greater risk for familial stressors, including those associated with single parenthood, the frequent absence of adult role models, and the lack of formal and informal support systems necessary for families in need. Social stressors that can affect African American families living in poverty include unemployment, incarceration of a parent, sibling or other family member, and drug abuse. Environmental stressors can include inadequate housing, deteriorating and unsafe neighborhoods, and lack of access to social and recreational facilities.

For African American girls the intersection of these particular stressors can mean that they face tremendous pressures to become adults before they are ready. African American girls living in low-income, single-parent households are often unsupervised and left vulnerable to physical violence or sexual abuse. Moreover, the lack of parental presence means that at early ages African American girls can be forced to assume adult responsibilities such as child care. Environmental stressors mean that African American girls may feel unsafe in their neighborhoods and schools.

In articulating the critical needs of African American girls, Robinson and Ward (1991) argue that many of these adolescents are making the passage to adulthood "embedded within a family and community that is most often negatively impacted by a sociopolitical context framed by racial, gender, and economic oppression." These authors suggest that African American girls can be consciously prepared to thrive if they are provided with the necessary tools to think critically about themselves and their places in the world.

Health Issues

As Golden (1994) argues, "Good health, both physical and psychological, is fundamental to girls' ability to meet all their other challenges." However, many issues complicate girls' lives such that attaining healthy outlooks on life or engaging in healthy behaviors

are both major challenges. Some of the issues that challenge girls' health include rapidly changing health needs, socioeconomic status, low self-esteem, and a lack of educational resources targeting health. For African American girls health statistics reveal a continuing need for social and economic reforms. According to Edwards (1998), recent studies indicate that African American girls between the ages of 12 and 17 have more confidence than other girls their age, have better body images, are less likely to drink and smoke, and are having children at historically low rates. In fact, the National Center for Health Statistics reports that the birthrate among Black teenage girls declined 21 percent from 1991 to 1996, the lowest level ever reported. However, more African American girls report living and going to school in unsafe environments; one girl in ten reports being physically or sexually abused. Also, studies indicate that African American girls are more prone to be overweight than girls of other ethnic groups. Robinson and Ward (1991) cite poor nutrition and limited recreational resources as two of the many factors contributing to obesity in African American teenage girls. Another health-related finding is that African American girls are more likely to become sexually active before the age of 16. This means that African American teenage girls still continue to be at greater risk for pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases than girls of other ethnic groups.

Educators, scholars and advocates for girls cite contemporary music and television as two sources of erroneous and dangerous information about sexuality. Edwards suggests that African American girls can be strongly influenced by the blatant sexuality of hip hop music which often conveys the message that sex can be used as a means to achieve power and independence. Robinson and Ward (1991) argue that television either ignores or maligns African American girls. "The single, most frequent representation of African American adolescent women is the teen mother, who is generally depicted as a low-income future welfare recipient with minimal education and few transferable skills for the work place. She is assumed to be sexually irresponsible and emotionally bankrupt ..." (Robinson and Ward 1991:90). These pejorative images not only reinforce historical stereotypes of African American womanhood, they can also discourage girls from seeking factual information on health issues.

Advocates and mentors for African American girls must not only be willing to provide accurate information about health and sexuality, they must also be willing to challenge girls to identify negative and demeaning images. A primary responsibility of mentors and mentoring programs should be to encourage girls to embrace the admirable qualities of black womanhood, particularly the "unique wisdom, strength and perseverance of African American women" (Robinson and Ward 1991:92).

Education

Differential treatment of boys and girls by teachers has been documented through several studies, including those conducted by the AAUW (1992) and by Sadker and Sadker (1994). Fordham (1993) has documented factors influencing the differentiated performance of African American and white students. Further, Fordham's research indicates that African American school performance is gender differentiated at all grade levels and that

African American girls are doubly victimized by a system that rewards and supports whiteness and maleness. Fordham also asserts that academically successful African American girls often achieve such success by becoming and remaining voiceless, silent and virtually invisible so as not to appear threatening. Robinson and Ward affirm Fordham's findings and add, "... the subtle message to African American teens suggests the prescription for success for them requires neutralizing or separating from race-allegiances in order to join the white middle class and gain its acceptance" (Robinson and Ward 1991:93). Further, messages that frame academic failure as solely the fault of the African American student are inaccurate because the roles of gender, race and class in the distribution of rewards is not acknowledged. The messages that African American girls receive in school often contribute to their disconnection and alienation from the academic environment. Research by the AAUW (1991) indicates that African American girls' sense of pride in their schoolwork drops 43 percentage points between elementary and high school. Moreover, by the time they are in high school only 12 percent of African American girls believe their teachers are proud of them. These research findings indicate that the school experience is qualitatively different and often disempowering for African American girls. Further, we can conclude from these findings that positive and affirming educational experiences are those that allow African American girls to trust their own voices and perspectives.

Recommendations

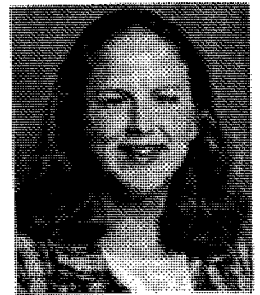
- More research is needed on specific aspects of life for African American girls. For example, in Florida, we need to know the impact of immigration on the lives of girls from Afro-Caribbean populations. There also needs to be more research on socioeconomic issues such as the impact of welfare reform on Black family life.
- From research findings, systematic programs that focus on African American girls should be developed. Nationwide, less than 8 percent of youth programs provide services to girls between the ages of 9 and 15; even fewer of those programs address issues specific to African American girls (Golden 1994).
- Academic experiences that include teachings about Black foremothers are critical to the curriculum of the 21st century. In order to attain success themselves, African American girls must have knowledge of the struggles and achievements of African American women. This history must include national, state and local components.
- Mentoring and advocacy programs such as Sister to Sister in Tampa and Girl Talk in St. Petersburg should be expanded. Moreover, Rites of Passage programs, such as those led by the Tampa Urban League, should also be supported and expanded. Families, schools, churches and community members should be aware of and involved in programs that will ensure the development of confidence, pride, leadership and success for African American girls.

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Allison Elliott, Age 15

"Well my mom because of her great attitude, her accomplishments, her love for me, and her ethics that she used to raise me. But I think my true role model would be a friend of mine. Her name is Vanessa and she is 11 years older than me. I've only known Vanessa for 2 years. She would be my role model because of how she overcame her past life and moved on toward a better life with Christ as her captain. I strive to become as great a woman of God, as she is. I long to have her faith and great relationship with God, and one day I'm sure I will."



"My relationship with my immediate family is great. I can talk about anything with any of them. They always listen and always try to help. I have a better relationship with my family than friends."

"I had a friend with divorced parents. I'm not affected. She found it sometimes hard to please both of them."

"After high school graduation, I'm going to college. My possible majors right now are English-Teaching, Drama, Business and Management."

"My parents understand that I have a lot of struggles and they can relate to some, but some they can't relate to. They also understand I have a lot more struggles than they did and they are a lot harder to deal with. This knowledge could be improved by classes for parents that fill in parents on what the major struggles are and how struggles have changed (or it could be a newsletter)."

"I can't stand politics because of all the lying."

"Major health concerns for someone my age would be: having an obsession with being perfect; being overweight; having an eating disorder; thoughts of having plastic surgery to look better; and not being motivated enough."

Ana Diodati

"I'm pretty happy with life, I don't need drugs to make me happy."

"As far as equality in math and science I think teachers are fair, as long as you participate."

"I joined the soccer team, student council, and junior board. I already have band practice a few days a week."

"I'm looking for a weekend job."

"I wish I could vote because decisions made effect me. Yet I have little if any say in them."

"Working out for soccer makes me feel good."

"My main concern is weight."

"Most people my age focus on weight and appearance. I hear even from my size 5 friend, I'm fat, look at my gut, it's so disgusting."

"We [mom and I] are a lot alike and most of the time she's more like a friend than an authority figure."

"My parents are separated. The divorce is being worked on now. Most of my friends parents are divorced."

"What relationship? I see my grandparents, aunts and uncles, once a year or so."

"Girls are allowed to show emotions, be sensitive, and not have society look down on them."

"My mom's my role model. I look up to her because she treats me like her friend, not someone she has to have parental control over all the time."

1998 Annual Report

Florida Commission on the Status of Women

Review of Current Issues Facing Florida's Teenage Girls

by Dr. Hilda C. Rosselli, College of Education, University of South Florida

Introduction

The lives of Florida's adolescent females are characterized by a myriad of dilemmas and challenges influenced by both societal and educational variables. This paper provides a brief overview of the factors that potentially influence school and life for this population. Young women are impacted by many of the same socio-cultural factors as young men, such as poverty, violence, illiteracy, and substance abuse. However, the outcomes differ for young women as they are often in the role of victims. This combined with society's history of differential treatment of men and women generally creates a more dismal picture for young women that is further acerbated when variables of race and class are also considered.

Differential Treatment in Schools

The characteristics and needs of girls have become a focused topic in the field of education and policy in the wake of national reports produced by AAUW as well as David and Myra Sadker's discussion of teachers' differential treatment of boys and girls. When published both studies not only provided fresh insights on gender equity, but they also pointed to the need for fostering academic achievement in girls, particularly during their adolescent years.

In the AAUW 1992 study entitled, *How Schools Shortchange Girls*, three thousand girls, ages 9-15 were surveyed and the following findings emerged:

- Girls show a dramatic decline in self-esteem during these developmental years;
- By high school only 29% say they are happy with themselves as compared to 46% of boys. When girls start school they are ahead of boys and by the end of high school that pattern is reversed;

- Boys are encouraged to be adventurous, ambitious, "Boys will be boys." We expect girls to be nice, neat and well-behaved. (As one popular magazine stated, "Boys learn that school is a place of opportunity. Girls are taught that school is a place of constraints" Harper, 1996.)
- Teachers tend to call on boys more and give them more constructive feedback. Some believe that this means males get a better education.¹

In the Sadkers' 1994 study, trained raters observed in more than 100 4th, 6th, and 8th grade classrooms in inner cities, rural areas, and affluent suburbs and found that:

- Boys call out in class eight times more often than girls.
- Girls receive less time, less help, and fewer challenges.
- Boys receive praise, correction, help or criticism from teacher more often than girls who often are told "OK."
- The area on the playground where boys play is 10 times larger than where girls play: "Girls huddle along the sidelines, on the fringe."
- While the same number of girls and boys now take algebra and geometry, more boys go on to take calculus.

Achievement/Aptitude Scores and Career Paths

Although recent reports indicate that gender differences on achievement tests are diminishing (AAUW, 1998; NCRW, 1998), the picture still is in need of fine-tuning. Some attribute these more recent findings to increased efforts devoted by test developers to eliminate item bias and new efforts to encourage girls' participation in math and science. However, researchers such as Stanley, Benbow, Brody, Dauber & Lupkowski (1992) believe that bright males still score higher than bright females, particularly in areas involving Math. Likewise, the new AAUW report released in late 1998 indicates that boys still outscore girls on Advanced Placement exams as well as math and science tests on large-scale exams, and they outnumber girls in physics courses. In addition to calling more attention to the need for examining how girls learn best in the mathematical area, these data have also fueled concern about the under-representation of females in the Math/Science pipeline, particularly those areas that involve physics, engineering.

Computer technology is the newest area that appears to reflect gender differences. According to the AAUW, girls are more likely to use computers in school for clerical and lower level entry skills and as they progress through high school, they feel less confident than boys in using computers (1998). One hypothesis offered to help explain this disparity revolves around the nature of many computer-based toys and video games. As And

Pollina, Head of Westover School noted, "... do you want your daughter to spend her afternoons dismembering and destroying her opponents?" (Pollina, 1998-99).

Lubinski, Benbow, and Sanders (1993) point out that adults working with adolescents need to be aware of these patterns and trends. If bright females decide to enter fields other than the physical science areas (where the data points out the most glaring absence), it is not of concern as long as they are aware of their full potential. Thus, counselors in Florida's schools should seek to expose female students to a variety of career areas in ways that allow them to assess their own aptitudes and interests before selecting from the growing number of summer programs offered and specialty programs available through magnet schools.

Gender-based Pedagogical Approaches

Concern over achievement differences and differential treatment in schools based on gender has spurred researchers' interest in how girls learn and how they should be educated. Recently ETS (Ross, 1998) announced findings by Ann Gallagher who has been studying gender differences in cognitive processing that may help explain differences in mathematical reasoning based on problem solving approaches. In addition to using such insights to explore a broader scope of questions for commonly administered standardized tests, similar research has spawned new ways of approaching instruction for girls. Not so long ago, formal education was thought to be medically dangerous for young women and formal education was a male privilege. When girls and women did finally enter schools, the approaches were primarily proven on boys and men. At first when girls did not perform well in certain areas of education, they were encouraged to become more like boys. Educators are now acknowledging the work of Ruddick (1987), Gilligan (1982) and others which recognize that some of the attributes identified with girls and women such as mothering, caring, interconnections, and justice based on relationships may have merit for the education of both genders.

In 1995, AAUW released a report entitled, *Growing Smart: What's Working for Girls in School*. A synthesis of more than 500 studies and papers, this report recommended the following actions be taken to strengthen girls' confidence and achievement:

- Offer single gender classes to address girls' lagging self-perceptions in math and science.
- Eliminate competitive classroom practices in favor of more cooperative learning group activities.
- Provide mentors and role models by using multi-grade classroom models and looping (teachers stay with their classrooms for consecutive years).
- Make sure that boys do not dominate in activities that involve hands-on learning and the use of lab equipment.

- Involve girls in community and business opportunities that extend their success beyond that which occurs only in the classroom.

More attention also needs to be paid to the sometimes subtle and not so subtle forms of bias in curricular materials that misrepresent or fail to represent the contributions of women. Teachers in Florida are unprepared to integrate women's history into curriculum and are in need of professional development similar to that which relates to the Holocaust and to the history of Africans and African Americans.

Single Gender Schools

Both social policy and anti-discrimination laws have been tested lately by the growing increase in single gender schools and classrooms. Although the research studying the impact of these schools is often flawed by its nature, AAUW convened a scholar's roundtable and comprehensive literature review as part of its 1998 report entitled, *Separated by Sex: A Critical Look at Single-Sex Education for Girls*. Single-sex education was found to produce positive results for some students in some settings, although the report was quick to point out that there was no evidence to suggest that single-sex education in general was better than coeducation. The authors also encouraged educators to look beyond gender as the variable that would determine a school's effectiveness and to recognize that no learning environment could provide a sure escape from sexism.

Single-sex Catholic schools were noted in the report as being effective on girls' attitudes toward academics and educational aspirations, but Lee (1998) points out that other characteristics of the schools such as their smaller size, communal organization, and more female principals may be the more important variables. On the other hand Riordan (1998) stated that single-sex schools were effective but only for students considered disadvantaged by virtue of their low social class or low racial or gender status.

Although single gender schools have not been embraced wholeheartedly, they do provide a working laboratory to study how girls learn best, a mission that should not be ignored by the summer programs offered in Florida for young adolescent women.

Sexual Harassment

Although alarming numbers of both boys and girls are sexually harassed in schools (4 out of 5 or 81%), a gender gap still exists (AAUW, 1993).² In terms of frequency alone, 31% of the girls responding to a national survey reported that they were often harassed as compared to 18% of the boys. The data further magnified that although there were racial differences among boys who reported being sexually harassed, there were few differences among white girls (87%), African American girls (84%), and Hispanic girls (82%).

Although all students suffer from such an incident, girls suffer greater effects than boys. Unlike boys, girls are much more likely to not want to go to school, not want to talk as much in class, find it hard to pay attention in school, stay home from school or cut a

class, make a lower grade on a test paper, find it hard to study, or make a lower grade in a class. These findings point to a silent crisis in schools: particularly when schools are reluctant to acknowledge the frequency and impact of sexual harassment.

Counseling and Mentoring Needs

Although girls seem to be attaining higher grades than males throughout school, it still prevails that girls express lower educational and occupational aspirations than male students. Much has been written about the role that mentors can play in this process. In an age when more young women may become breadwinners and possibly the heads of single parent families, it is important for mentors to explain the benefits of economic independence and flexible schedules that accommodate family needs (Florida School-to-Work and Gender Equity, 1996).

Walker, Reis, and Leonard (1992) found that gifted girls also expressed many of the same frustrations regarding the ineffectiveness of schools to encourage achievement beyond their K-12 education. In a survey of women who had participated in gifted programs during their years in school, common concerns included: "lack of challenging curriculum, lack of role models, little organized mentoring and few networking skills, and unhelpful, unchallenging and perfunctory guidance counseling."

For many young women the choices they make during their late adolescent years can create clear limits on their achievements as adults. Both the U.S. Department of Education (1992) and the U.S. Department of Labor (1995) have clearly shown that males who achieve a lower level of degree than women are still more likely to be paid more than the same women. Thus, occupational choice may be more influential in determining wages than one's level of education. Counseling and mentoring is needed in Florida's schools to help young women recognize the impact on career choices of culture based stereotyping that starts as early as infancy. They also need more assistance in understanding the "gatekeeper" role that higher level mathematics courses play.

Teen Pregnancy

Not limited to only academic decisions, a young woman's decision to engage in early sexual activity, early parenthood or even an early steady relationship all have consequences that can influence subsequent life events. Teenage pregnancies are again on the increase according to some reports. Only 12 states have higher teenage pregnancy rates than Florida (Florida Kids Count, 1996). In Hillsborough County alone over 5,055 babies were born to unwed mothers in 1993 alone and the rate of births to teens (per 1,000 female population age 15-19 years) was 70.3 in 1993 (Florida Kids Count, 1996). On a national level, the Alan Guttmacher Institute (1994) shared that 11% of all girls between the ages of 15 and 19 become pregnant. As a result, there are obvious ramifications on the lives of teenage girls that relate to their subsequent educational and economic attainment in life. Additionally, babies born to teenage mothers tend to be lower in birth

weight, experience more childhood health problems, and require more frequent hospitalization.

On the issue of teen pregnancy, the National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education (NCWGE, 1995) have rated changes over the past 25 years resulting from Title IX as earning only a C+ grade. They report that many schools still have policies that require pregnant teens to attend separate programs which may be less academically rigorous and that restrictive attendance policies may still penalize pregnant students.

Other At-Risk Factors

While girls appear to be catching up with boys in terms of achievement scores, they are also smoking, drinking and using drugs as often as the boys. One explanation for the shrinking gap in these data is offered by Susan McGee Bailey quoted by National Council for Research on Women (1998). "It's an extension of the fact that, in a culture that places value on things that men and boys do, it's understandable that more girls want to do things that boys do than boys want to do things that girls do." Girls also report smoking cigarettes in an effort to control their weight, a problem which still continues to haunt girls more than boys.

Additional studies examining girls' self esteem indicate that African American girls may not suffer from low self confidence as much as was previously attributed to gender but rather the context plays a part as well as whether they expect their views to be supported (NCRW, 1998).

A 1996 report by AAUW entitled *Girls in the Middle* pointed out that girls at the middle school level are trying out a variety of strategies to help them negotiate school successfully. However their efforts may sometimes backfire on them. They "speak out" voicing their views freely but may be perceived as troublemakers, they "do school" but may be overlooked for leadership opportunities, and they "cross borders" acting as translators between racial, cultural and generational groups but they may feel overwhelmed by the responsibilities they assume.

Societal Messages Given to Young Women

Brumberg's recent book entitled *The Body Project*, explores ways in which girls' images of themselves have been influenced as maturational levels change in society and media and popular culture continue to define women through a lens of body image and sexual appeal rather than self-worth or accomplishments. Brumberg (1997) contends that the external controls of the female body have been replaced by internal controls which are manifested in girls' dieting obsessions and resulting eating disorders. The "protective umbrella" that used to shelter young women has been shattered as they become the poster children of our sexually explicit and increasingly violent society.

Brown and Gilligan (1993) observed the phenomena of “self-silencing” during girls’ adolescent years during which they verbalized “I don’t know” more often and learned to be “nice.” One finding of interest was the importance of a girls’ involvement in leadership positions and the role of even one adult in a girls’ life who could help them find their voices (characterized as “meeting at the crossroads”).

One way to identify what solutions might be needed to help adolescent girls succeed in school and later in life is to study successful women and identify interventions and support structures that could be implemented earlier in their school careers. For example, Kerr (1994) has identified a number of factors that were present in her study of successful women that could have implications for school age students. For the purpose of this paper these are presented with concomitant implications.

Factors that Distinguish Successful Gifted Women	Implications for Education
Successful women appear to be comfortable with spending time alone.	Schools may need to recognize that socialization is not the most important goal of a young woman’s education.
Successful women are voracious readers.	Schools need to continue encouraging girls to read (e.g., book clubs).
Successful women possess the ability to fall in love with an idea.	Girls as well as boys need to be encouraged to identify their interests and to select opportunities for learning and growing that continue to hone their interests.
Successful women learn how to grow from the challenges they face in life.	Counseling should move beyond coping skills to include problem solving and ways to grow from failures and disappointments.

Those concerned about the development of self-identity in young women might also consider using the following list of elements offered by Phelps (1991) as an organizer for helping young women develop a sense of identity through seminars, guidance services, or parenting:

- Developing competence (especially in interpersonal areas)
- Managing emotions (expressing emotions)
- Developing autonomy
- Establishing identity (personal appearance and sexual identity)

- Freeing relationships (less dependency and less anxiousness)
- Developing purpose (may include childbearing and marriage issues)
- Developing integrity (values clarification).

Programs such as the USF Governor's Summer Leadership Program for Young Women and the USF Fledgling Program are but two examples of single gender programs in Florida that support young women by providing a challenging academic environment, mentoring experiences, and an affective milieu that emphasizes the skills necessary to make wise choices. When young women are given the chance to participate in short but intensive experiences such as these, they have the chance to redefine their future dreams, to celebrate the richness of women's heritage, and to return to their home school environments strengthened with a belief in themselves. This is but a small investment for Florida's future, but one that will have tremendous payoffs when these young women mature and assume productive and satisfying lives in society. Geraldine Ferraro once said, "Some leaders are born women." Whether or not Florida's young women live up to their potentials depend on the messages that they are given by schools, families, and the community. The examination of these messages as reviewed in this paper still point to a need for more positive action and more support for Florida's young women.

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¹It should be noted that this criticism of teachers was omitted from the AAUW's latest report, "Gender Gaps: Where Schools Still Fail Our Children," due to lack of new data on the subject.

²Sexual harassment was defined as "unwanted and unwelcome sexual behavior which interferes with your life."

Elizabeth Sussman, Age 15



"The best part about being a girl is the gift of being open-minded and emotional."

"I look up to my parents the most because both of them work full days and both are involved at my synagogue and on boards of different things and still have a lot of time to spend with me and we all do a lot of stuff together."

"My educational concern about myself is the pressure from my parents to do as good as my sister in grades."

"I want to go to college at the University of Georgia, NYU, or University of Chicago. I want to major in advertising."

"Most teenagers just want to be heard, understood, and paid attention to."

"I think my main health concern would be skin cancer."

What's Happening and Affecting Girls of Today

by Shirley Haglund, Development Specialist, Citrus Council of Girl Scouts

Girls' voices need to be heard. They have issues that are affecting them and they even have possible solutions, if adults would listen.

Sexual harassment, gang violence and teen sex are not your run-of-the-mill topics for dinner conversation in homes across America. Nor are they addressed in middle school classrooms along with history and English composition. Yet these and other issues such as substance abuse and body image can pose serious dilemmas for girls and ultimately hurt their educational experience.

In 1991 American Association of University Women (AAUW) released *Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America*, a nationwide survey revealing that adolescent girls experience a dramatic drop in self-esteem and lose the strong confident voices they once had. The AAUW Educational Foundation's 1992 study, *How Schools Shortchange Girls the AAUW Report*, synthesizing more than 1,300 studies on girls and education, identified a range of issues that are central to students' lives but that schools touch on only briefly, if at all. Coined the 'evaded curriculum' these issues included teen pregnancy, substance abuse, sexual activity/contraceptive use, sexually transmitted diseases, depression, and suicide.

The Central Brevard Branch of AAUW in partnership with Citrus Council of Girl Scouts, Crosswinds, the Coalition for Women's and Children's Issues, and the Child Care Association held a Sister-to-Sister Leadership Summit on October 3, 1998. This summit is part of a nationwide series of meetings planned to listen to girls. The mission was to hold a forum where girls, aged 12-14, may interact, express concerns and develop a community action plan to address their issues. The concerns that the girls discussed in the chat rooms confirm the findings of AAUW; topics included drugs, teen pregnancy, harassment, violence, peer pressure, and prejudices.

The objective of the girl driven planning committee was to produce an action plan that both girls and adults would implement together. Comments heard while girls were leaving the event: "thank you for the opportunity to be heard," "there are other girls who feel the same as me," "I like what we did today" and "let our voices be heard!"

I worked closely with the girl planning committee, which consisted of five girls (four of whom were Girl Scouts) selected for their leadership qualities. Seven months of

planning gave me the opportunity to watch these girls evolve. They began as five individuals who developed into a team of strong girls with a purpose. The skills they learned benefited them while they managed their tasks on the day of the Summit.

We all need to work together and provide opportunities for girls' voices to be heard. Also, we should listen to what teenagers are saying and not turn away when the discussion moves to sensitive issues. Girls' voices need to be heard. They have issues that are affecting them and they even have possible solutions, if adults would listen.

A Summary of Findings A Report on the Physical and Mental Health of Female Youth

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Section I: Introduction to School Health in Miami-Dade County

Miami-Dade County is the 4th largest school district in our Nation. Children hail from 173 countries and speak 98 different languages. These 345,234 students bring with them a richness of diversity that is probably unparalleled anywhere else in the world today. On any given day, at one of our middle schools one might be fortunate enough to catch a Hispanic Heritage Celebration, to enjoy an African American display of customs and culture or to sample the delicacies of Haitian-Creole cooking. Miami-Dade's school system is progressive not only academically but also culturally.

While our youth are exposed to a world full of history, culture, athletics and technology, they unfortunately are faced with many disturbing situations, issues and risk factors. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified six areas of major concern: drugs and alcohol use and abuse, teen sexuality, nutrition and physical inactivity, intentional injuries, unintentional injuries and tobacco product use. According to an Educational Packet entitled, *Community Action Days*, developed by the Florida Children's Campaign, Florida fares worse than the national average in several key indicator areas: low birth weight babies, infant mortality, school dropout rate, teen birth rate, percent of teens not attending school, juvenile violent crime arrest rate, children in poverty and single-parent homes.

With these facts in mind, the Miami-Dade County Health Department (MDCHD), Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) and community partners are receiving the challenge and "stepping up to the plate" for youth in Dade County. Despite the most rigorous efforts on the part of School Health leaders in Miami-Dade to secure grants and community partners there are still approximately 76% of schools with no regular school health services (with the exception of "on-call" services for emergencies such as a communicable disease outbreak). What is the value of a school health nurse, social worker or health room aide?

A School Health Nurse

Deborah Chernoff, a Nursing Supervisor in Miami-Dade County describes the need for a school health nurse: Most of us grew up confident that our school nurse would be there to care for us, be it a runny nose or a playground mishap. Yet most of us are unaware that our own children and grandchildren no longer have the security of knowing their school nurse is there for them. Due to funding changes over the past generation-span, our school nurses have almost disappeared from our schools. Yet, school nurses are critical to our educational system. Only healthy children can optimally learn. A nurse on staff assures medical management for children whose education would be greatly compromised by their physical condition. A nurse completes the educational team by supporting our teachers with a ready referral source for handling those physical problems our teachers so keenly observe daily in their classrooms. A nurse in the school frees up our teachers to teach and our children to learn ... and it's our children who are the biggest winners.

A School Health Technician or Aide

A school health room aide is also a highly valuable team member. These individuals allow for nurses to be freed to provide health education while they monitor the health and safety of students visiting the health room or clinic. They review records, contact parents and serve on health and safety committees.

The School Health Social Worker

Research shows that children who are physically and emotionally healthy, and who are educated in safe and clean environments, have higher levels of self-esteem, perform better in school and enjoy better relationships. Today violent and abusive behavior exacts a large toll on the physical and mental health of Americans. Child abuse, domestic violence, rape, gang involvement and other forms of interfamilial violence threaten the physical and mental health of thousands of American families.

At least 2.2 million people are victims of violent injury each year. Numerous factors underlie the forms of violent and abusive behavior. Among youth, factors such as poor self-esteem, poor impulse control, prior history of family violence, poverty, and alcohol/substance abuse are substantial contributors of teen violence.

The goal of the social worker is to provide a range of preventive program services. The social worker functions as a support system/teacher for the student and family. They provide family, individual and group counseling as well as psycho-educational classes which address topics such as date rape, self-esteem, conflict resolution, substance abuse, etc. The team approach supports the fact that mental and physical health go hand in hand. One cannot be effective without the success of the other. Unless the needs of the family are met as a whole, the cycle of poor mental and physical health will continue.

Knowing the value of these school health individuals to the health and mental health of our young ladies and young men, why then doesn't every school have a "team" inclusive of these individuals? Despite the commitment of Miami-Dade to "step-up to the plate"

there will be no homeruns scored until our youth have the resources they so desperately deserve and need.

Section II. Brief Overview of Optimal Adolescent Health and Mental Health

Adolescent Physical Health

Bio-psychosocial interaction is critical to the general health of adolescents. The two cannot be separated in theory or in practice. The World Health Organization defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being". The physical health of today's adolescent should be viewed within a holistic framework. Preadolescents and adolescents are facing greater health challenges than ever before. The need to empower them, to educate them, and to allow them to become educated, healthy care consumers is critical. Providing the adolescent with a solid framework on what health truly means will go miles at preventing chronic health problems in the future.

For purposes of this report the focus is on early adolescence in the female. Adolescence is a challenging and exciting time yet a time marked by change, uncertainty and at times anxiety on the part of the little girl suddenly becoming a young woman. Sequences of changes are very similar for all girls within a wide variation in tempo.

The time of normal growth and maturation known as puberty is marked by the adolescent growth spurt, maturity of reproductive organs, increased strength and endurance among others. The noticeable physical changes are a reflection of the underlying hormonal happenings. The typical start of puberty for girls is age 10-11 with a range of 8-13 years.

The growth spurt, where the greatest amount of rapid growth occurs is at age 12, with a range of 10-14 years for girls. With their average male counterparts waiting to enter the growth spurt at age 14, its no wonder school dances can be awkward with many 12 years old girls towering over their companions. The average young lady will commence the menarche or her menstrual period any time from age 10-16 with 12-13 being the average. And for girls, the puberty lingers on about a year longer than for boys.

During this time many physical changes occur. Concerns that many girls share include: Am I too early? Too late? Am I normal? Being the "first" to show obvious changes. Being the tallest. Along with puberty several "expected" events occur such as an increase in noticeable body odor, acne and sexual urges. All of these may be stressful to the young lady who is grappling with so many new changes (source: Center for Continuing Education in Adolescent Health, 1994).

Section III: Risk Factor Associated with Pre and Adolescent Females

As mentioned earlier in the introduction, adolescents are challenged with 6 major risk factors. Turning each of them into a "positive" rather than a risk factor, a "healthy" teen-profile or preteen profile would look something like this; for a young lady

- She would have been offered comprehensive sexuality education programs and related mentorships that would empower her to delay sexual involvement avoiding any chance of a teenage pregnancy or sexually transmitted infection. She would know that ½ of all teens are virgins until age 17.
- She would have been saturated with tobacco education, not exposed to 2nd hand smoke in the home, and totally "turned off" by the media messages that glamorize the cigarette. She would know that smoking each cigarette would slice 12 minutes off her life.
- She would hopefully have been exposed to adults who have led her by example; abstaining from alcohol and other drugs. She would know that alcohol goes directly to the bloodstream and has an effect on every system in her body.
- She would be well versed on general safety, aware of the many subtle dangers in the home, on the roads and in the overall environment. She would use those preventive techniques such as vigilant use of seat belt helmets and other protective gear while biking/roller-blading. She would exercise water safety while enjoying Florida Beaches, among others. She would know that in Florida, bicycle-related deaths are 3 times the national rate.
- She would ideally never have been exposed to handguns, sexual abuse or any other form of violence. In school and at home she learned about "fighting fair," using conflict resolution and other techniques. She would know that date rape is real and that nearly all female teen victims know their attacker!
- The healthy preteen or teen girl would have received nutrition education at home and at school and practice "balanced" eating. She would exercise regularly and understand that physical inactivity and poor nutritional habits lead to many long-term health problems. (Statistics taken from Miami Children's Hospital Conference Guide.)

Finally, there are many preventable diseases and yet there are those life-threatening illnesses for which there is little or no prevention. Frequent health care and dental visits can often detect serious problems early-on, improving survival rates. The young lady of the year 2000 in an ideal world as defined by the World Health Organization is one who is surrounded by nurturing, is grounded in self-esteem, is a contributing member of a caring community. She is healthy and strong, tolerant of her parents and peers. She is

happy. She is part of that ideal world that we as adults must create, if not in time for her, then for her daughters.

Adolescent Mental Health

When we think of the mental state of preadolescents and adolescents, we often think of a group of people who are difficult to communicate with, frequently confused about their needs and desires and who present with a myriad of complex psycho social problems. However, disruptive family conflict is not the norm. Mundane everyday issues preoccupy the adolescent's thinking. Issues such as clothing, hairstyles, how do I look, friends and chores are the usual source of conflict.

During this period, thinking abilities move from concrete to abstract thought. This allows the adolescent to translate experiences into abstract ideas and to think about the consequences of their actions.

Also during this stage of development there are three types of autonomy that preadolescents and adolescents strive for:

- Emotional autonomy — the establishment of close relationships
- Behavioral autonomy — the ability to make independent decisions and follow through on them
- Value autonomy — the development of a set of principals about right and wrong.

As they struggle for autonomy and their hormones fluctuate to find a level of stabilization, it is no wonder they are often viewed as fickle and temperamental. When we talk about the development of preadolescents and adolescents we must explore the risk behaviors involved in producing healthy or unhealthy individuals.

Until this decade little was known about the prevalence of behaviors practiced by young people that put their health at risk. The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) was developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in collaboration with other Federal, State and local agencies. This survey organizes these behaviors into six categories of priority health issues:

- Behaviors that result in unintentional injuries
- Tobacco use
- Alcohol and other drug use

- Sexual behaviors that result in HIV infection, other sexually transmitted diseases, and unintended pregnancies
- Dietary behaviors
- Physical activities.

When we look at risk behaviors nationally, it is evident that youth throughout the nation are in dire need of health education and intervention. According to statistics, every day more than 3,000 young people take up smoking. Daily participation in high school physical education classes dropped from 42% in 1991 to 25% in 1995. Three-fourths of young people do not eat the recommended number of servings of fruits and vegetables. Every year, more than 1 million adolescents become pregnant, and more than 3 million become infected with a sexually transmitted disease. Every year more than 30,000 young people die in automobile accidents.

When we focus on females between the ages of 12 and 15 the data from the YRBS points out some interesting statistics. The following is a summary of the statistics.

- 10% of females carried a gun on school property
- 51% were in a fight one or more times
- 03% were injured to the extent that they had to be treated by a doctor
- 17% smoked a whole cigarette before age 13
- 47% had their first drink of alcohol before age 13
- 04% tried marijuana for the first time before age 13
- 01% tried cocaine in any form for the first time before age 13
- 13% used inhalants to get high during their lifetime
- 27% described themselves as slightly or very overweight
- 49% were trying to lose weight
- 07% recently took diet pills to lose/maintain weight
- 30% who ate five or more servings of fruit and vegetables yesterday

- 64% ate no more than two servings of foods typically high in fats
- 42% attended physical education class one or more days during the week
- 30% seriously contemplated suicide
- 16% actually had a plan on how they would commit suicide
- 14% actually attempted suicide
- 12% have had sexual intercourse
- 06% had intercourse before age 13
- 03% had intercourse with multiple partners
- 90% have received HIV/AIDS infection education
- 74% have talked with their parents or other adults about HIV/AIDS
- Fewer than 100 cases used a condom.

Let's take a look at these statistics that affect girls between the ages of 12-15 in chart and graph form.

Table I. Intentional and Unintentional Injury

Percentages	Statements
10%	Carried a gun
51%	In a fight 1 > times
03%	Injury treated by doctor
17%	Smoked before 13
47%	Drank first drink of alcohol before 13
04%	Tried marijuana before 13
01%	Tried cocaine before 13
13%	Used inhalants

Table II. Physical Health Issues

Percentages	Statements
27%	Described self overweight
49%	Trying to lose weight
07%	Took diet pills
30%	Ate five+ servings fruit and veg.
64%	>2 servings fatty foods
42%	Attended phys. ed. 1x or ^

Table III. Sexual Behaviors

Percentages	Statements
12%	Have had sex
06%	Sex before 13
03%	Sex with multiple part.
90%	HIV/AIDS ed.
74%	Talked parents/adults HIV/AIDS

Table IV. Mental Health Issues

Percentages	Statements
30%	Ser. contemplated suicide
16%	Actually had suicide plan
14%	Actually attempted suicide

Section IV: Report on the Focus Groups Conducted in Dade County

History: There were two focus groups conducted by the Miami Dade County Health Department (MDCHD). One group was held in the south area at Homestead Middle School and consisted of school personnel who provided direct service to students and PTSA/PTA members. The other focus group was held at a MDCHD location in the North and was attended by various community service providers. Due to a need for parental consent and other issues of concern we were unable to include any young ladies ages 12-15 in our focus groups.

Each group was lead by the same facilitator who presented two main questions for discussion. The two questions were: 1) What do females between the ages of 12-15 see as physical and mental health concerns for themselves? 2) As service providers what are your concerns for females between the ages of 12-15?

Most of the themes were common themes for both groups. In response to question number one, girls talked about problems of being unable to communicate with their parents about sex, relationships and their growth and development. These girls are often afraid to talk to their parents for fear of physical recourse. They often present with feelings of being unloved and unfulfilled and seek ownership of their self or another person. Hence the premature pregnancies.

Females who are being physically or mentally abused often have difficulty finding appropriate services. Females feel that their parents, they themselves and peers have inadequate information on health issues. They long for parental involvement but complain of a lack of sensitivity of adults to adolescent issues.

There is confusion in preadolescent and adolescent females as a result of the conflicting messages regarding physical and mental health and religion. They have concerns related to dating men who are often much older, and are concerned about STDs and HIV/AIDS. Many teens have become homeless and are prostituting. They express concern over the inability to manage their anger. They need assistance with homework because parents don't speak English. Lack of jobs, not enough money, as well as transportation to existing after-school programs is a problem.

Girls feel that they are unaware of services to prevent pregnancy and that there should be more money for prevention of pregnancies. It appears that when females are provided with a safe holding place to share their needs, they are well able to articulate what they feel would make their lives better.

As service providers the genuine care and concern for the community is evident. The service providers share many of the same concerns and frustrations as they seek to provide their clients with the highest quality of service with little resources.

In the focus groups they were able to share vignettes of problems they experienced in trying to provide service. One story was told of a home visit to a student who was missing from school due to pregnancy. As the student and family were interviewed it was found that the father had impregnated the student as well as two of his other daughters. You see it is customary in his country for the father to be the first sexual contact/teacher for his daughters. In this country this is sexual abuse, but how do you get people to understand that some of the things they do in their country are not acceptable here in the United States and also be culturally sensitive.

Another story was told of a female who had been barred from attending any Dade County Public Schools. She was currently seeking admittance into an alternative program. During the interview with the student, the mother, and an unidentified male, the counselor was sharing some of her views and the consequences of the girl's behavior. She had been accused of trying to sell drugs in the schools. As the interviewer spoke she reprimanded the young lady for her behavior, and then asked the adults in the room why they allowed her take the drugs to school.

Her mother stated that she told her not to, the adult male stated that those were not his drugs but her other boyfriend's. You can imagine the shock of the interviewer. These were the adult role models in this child's life. Here is a classic case of exploitation by the mother and the adult male boyfriends in her life.

Then there are the daily examples of severe and harsh treatment that results in beatings due to the different styles of child rearing that vary from not only country to country but also within various religions.

Some of the concerns faced as they attempt to provide services for their girls are:

- Increased alcohol and substance abuse among girls
- Peer and media pressure to explore homosexuality
- The teen pregnancy rate/abortions
- Increased violence among girls — girls on girls/boys on girls
- Increase in female gang membership
- Females dating too early
- The lack of parenting skills of females 12–15 — they lack moral guidance/supervision
- Media message that girls should be sexual objects
- Lack of housing for pregnant teens
- The need for more friendly user hours of clinics for girls
- Exploitation of 12–15 year old girls by parents and men for money and items
- Barriers of service providers on communicating with parents
- A need to include the religious community in more than the abstinence message
- The ability to provide more realistic or real life teaching to girls
- Lack of positive female role models

- False media messages of body image/physical and mental health; AIDS medications (Protease Inhibitors)
- Comfort level of teacher with the Human Growth and Development curricula
- Girls lack of knowledge in reference to their bodies and their level of comfort with their bodies
- Lack of emergency contraception.

Service providers felt that if these barriers were met, their ability to provide service to their client would increase.

Section V: Solutions and Recommendations

Many of the health challenges facing young people today are more complex than those of past decades. Our interventions and solutions must be reflective of this decade. Program goals and objectives must be inclusive of the needs as stated by our youth. Programs must be modified to address the behavioral differences presented by the differences in cultures. Heightened awareness of the extent of these risk behaviors and how they ultimately affect the lives of our young people must be a priority. Specific health education curricula and support services must be made available to all of our children and not just a select few. We must take a leadership role in securing Federal, State and local funding to ensure the availability of school health services for all of our students. What are the benefits of such interventions? Reduced school absenteeism, fewer behavior problems, safer learning environments which help to improve student performance, higher levels of communication between parents and students, teachers and organizations, mental and physical health awareness that is made a part of the fabric of children's lives. And most importantly, young people are more prepared to become productive members of society.

Section VI: Summary and Conclusion

Today, the health of young people and the adults they will become is critically linked to the health related behaviors they choose. The data show that these behaviors are established during youth. Our Nation's schools present a unique opportunity for enhancement and empowerment of these precious lives. Every day in Florida alone approximately 450,746 females between the ages of 10-14 and 239,807 females between the ages of 15-17 attend our schools and matriculate throughout our communities. By increasing health services availability in our schools and community agencies we can make an enormous positive impact on the health of our Nation. You and I have the responsibility to see that it happens.

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Newspaper Articles

Girls face technology gap

By Tamara Henry
USA TODAY

Technology has become the new "boys club" in public high schools even as the gap narrows between boys and girls in math and science, a report said Tuesday.

Experts say the report by the American Association of University Women (AAUW), is the first to document the enrollment of girls in high school computer sciences and the types of such courses they choose.

During the past six years, more girls have enrolled in algebra, geometry, precalculus, trigonometry and calculus, the report says. But girls make up a significantly smaller percent-

age of students in computer science classes.

The finding surprises researcher Cheryl Sattler of American Institutes for Research, which analyzed 1,000 studies for the report titled *Gender Gaps Where Schools Still Fail Our Children*.

"You would think that technology would get rolled into math and science," she says.

"Technology is now the new 'boys club' in our nation's public schools," the AAUW's Janice Weisman says. "While boys program and problem-solve with computers, girls use computers for word processing, the basic version of typing."

Linda Roberts, technology expert at the U.S. Department

of Education, acknowledges the problem but predicts that the gap will be temporary, judging by the number of elementary school girls becoming proficient at computers.

"I would expect that over the course of the next five years we should start to see changes (in high schools)," she says.

The AAUW Educational Foundation is the same group that put gender inequities in education on the front burner with its 1992 report on how schools shortchange girls.

The new report warns that the technology gap threatens to put girls at a disadvantage as they prepare for the 21st century.

► Students' frustrations 4D

Girls lagging as gender gap widens in tech education

By Tamara Henry
USA TODAY

Frustrations with her computer literally drove Anne Cortina underneath her desk at Hunterdon Central Regional High School in Flemington, N.J.

"The computer wasn't working the way I wanted it to," explains the 17-year-old senior, who last year joined an after-school pilot technology program that produces the on-line magazine *Electric Soup*. She was tackling her first issue as editor.

"I just hid under the desk and called a friend over and said 'please do this for me.'"

Now laughing at the memory, Cortina says the friend, a boy, worked out the problems. "It was just a little glitch, but it was very frustrating when I had no idea why it was doing that."



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Cortina's experiences underscore findings in a report released Tuesday by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) Educational Foundation that points to a major new gender gap in technology. Boys clearly outnumber girls in higher-skill computer courses, says the report. But it also notes a puzzling drop in enrollment by both sexes. Of those who do take such courses, girls tend to cluster in lower-end data entry and word processing classes — the 1990s version of typing.

"A competitive nation cannot allow girls to write off technology as an exclusively male domain. Teachers will need to be prepared to deal with this issue," says the report, researched by the Washington-based American Institutes for Research.

Cortina believes a lot of girls suffer similar anxieties when first confronted with the complexities of computers and other technology. "It's been touted primarily as a man's field. It's the whole math, science, technology thing goes together with the left brain, and that's for men. Women can sit and write the poetry and men can put it on the computer. I think that's the general stereotype."

AAUW director Janice Weinman says there are subtle messages for girls interested in

computers, such as video games with violent and sports themes aimed at boys. The study said boys tend to take more challenging roles, such as computer programming and problem solving.

Other studies confirm the technology gap. For example, a 1997 study by the New York City consulting firm Find/SVP says girls spend more time on the home computer than boys until age 11, but by age 13, the trend is reversed. The National Center for Education Statistics says 28% of college graduates in computer science were women in 1994-95. While women accounted for 14% of graduates with computer science degrees from 1970s to the '80s, the percentage has dropped from the early '80s, when the level reached 37%.

In the MathCounts National Competition, which pits teams and individual students against each other to answer difficult mathematical questions quick-

ly, only 27 of 228 seventh- and eighth-grade math students were girls.

But Rosanne T. White, national director of the Technology Student Association, boasts that 40% of that group's 100,000 K-12 members are female. Since the association began in 1978, more than 2,500 chapters have been established in 45 states.

New Jersey's Hunterdon Central has been an active association member, and Cortina has blossomed there. She works now as a directing editor of an *Electric Soup* feature and has her own special writing project with a nearby district.

Florence McGinn, program developer at Hunterdon, says some of the girls react more emotionally to some of the initial frustrations of technology. "Some of the boys may know more at first, but when the girls have the opportunity to be exposed to it, they all love it," McGinn says.

Keep to the middle

By Karen S. Peterson
USA TODAY

ground in middle school

Take it slowly, middle-schoolers. Don't lose your own identity while trying to fit in. And even though these seem like very bumpy years, try to keep a sense of humor.

Those are just three of the suggestions from USA TODAY's Teen Panel about negotiating early adolescence. Many suggestions make sense for older teens as well.

"Enjoy your time in middle school while it lasts," says Will Shelton, 16, of Knoxville, Tenn. "When you get older, I'm not saying things get harder, but there is a lot more responsibility in high school. Don't be so quick to want to be adults."

Ari Goldberg remembers when he was 12. "When I look back on those years, they are just so strange. Take a step back from the hard reality and realize how much of this is all really funny," says Ari, 16, of Boca Raton, Fla.

Pay attention to the friendships you make, says Jennifer Twitty, 17, of St. Louis. "In high school, you go your separate ways from your middle-school friends. And you might just wish you had held on harder to your friendships. You miss the people you used to hang out with," Jennifer says.



By Robert Deaton, USA TODAY

Be true to yourself: "Making friends is hard. You want to fit in," says Michelle Chin, 17, a USA TODAY Teen Panelist from Haworth, N.J.

Teen panelists know making new friendships in middle school can be intimidating. But don't sell out to fit in, they caution. "You don't have to worry so much about impressing others and what your own personal image is," says Evan Mathews, 17, of Parlin, N.J. "Just go

with what you feel is right. Everybody is different. You don't all have to dress the same, or drink to impress others or cave in to peer pressure."

Be yourself, says Mike Daab. "Never let yourself get diluted by what others want you to be," says Mike, 16, of Seattle. "The

USA TODAY's Teen Panel currently has 16 active members; another four have moved on to college. Panelists were selected from 600 applicants. The group reflects the USA's geographic and ethnic diversity. The paper checks with them occasionally about issues from the controversial to the mundane.



By Tom Carrigan, AP

Keep old friends: Hang on tight, says Jennifer Twitty, 16.

phony a mile away."

"Making friends is hard," acknowledges Michelle Chin, 17, of Haworth, N.J. "You want to fit in, especially when you are younger, but you don't give up everything real about yourself."

Ten and 11 is just too young to be thinking about smoking and drinking, trying to go along with the crowd, says Monica Dupre. "You'll see the commercials with it and it looks cool. And you'll see people who are older doing it, and you'll want to be cool," says Monica, 16, of New Orleans. "But if you actually talk to them, they'll be like, 'I smoke and I'm trying to quit. I wish I'd never started.

Don't be freaked by the older kids in school, panelists say. "Now that I'm in high school, I realize that eighth-graders are still kids," says Aygemang Clay, 15, of Plantation, Fla. "They are not as big as I thought they were. Sixth graders don't have to feel so stressed."

The panelists' message to relax applies to dating and sex.

"Concentrate on your studies for now," Evan says. "Hang out with your friends and have fun together. Don't rush into dating at all. You are not thinking about marriage!"

He also warns, "Don't get sex mixed up with dating. You can go out with somebody and you don't have to have sex. That is a common misconception that you have to score with somebody to look cool."

Actually it is quite fine to remain a virgin, Monica says. "I'm proud to say I'm a virgin, and I plan on staying that way. It is nothing to be ashamed of. If you think the boys won't like you, you are probably wrong. If they are looking to buy a car, which do you think they prefer: a used one or a new one?"

It is a good idea to become acquainted with the habits of the opposite sex at this age, though, Ari says. "Don't be an outcast. Make sure you are familiar with them, be able to interact. Take it slow. Believe me,

this is a learning process, and you'll mess up a lot. You have to be able to laugh."

Even though you may hear it way too often, it pays to work on your communications skills.

"I wish I would have known that communication is the most important thing with your friends, your boyfriend, your teachers, your parents," says Stacy Christensen, 17, of Albuquerque, N.M. "Begin to understand and express your feelings. Be a good listener. You just have to have the skills to get along with people."

Greg Bailey suggests being "straightforward with your parents, because they can figure out when you are lying. In return they will be more lenient, more liberal in what they let you do," says Greg, 18, of Dallas.

Parents who can rely on you let you do more, several panelists agree. "My parents trust me. They know that I will be honest," says Jenifer Scheyer, 16, of Northbrook, Ill. "In return, I get more responsibility."

Molly Heimert encourages middle-schoolers to not give up on their dreams. "You say you want to be an astronaut," says Molly, 16, of Cincinnati. "And somebody will say, 'Oh, that is stupid.' But reach for your dreams, set some goals and you will get someplace in life."



By Wade Payne, AP

Go with the flow: Enjoy your time," advises Will Shelton, 16.

most unique people are the ones who are respected. They are comfortable with themselves and are not phony. Teens and even little kids can smell a

Navigating the middle-school years

Reforms try to smooth rough seas

By Tamara Henry
USA TODAY

MT. PLEASANT, Mich. — White Pine Middle School has been the epitome of chaos. At least that's what Principal David L. Nizinski thought.

Seven times a day, every 45 minutes, the bell at the 65-acre school in Saginaw Township would launch nearly 1,200

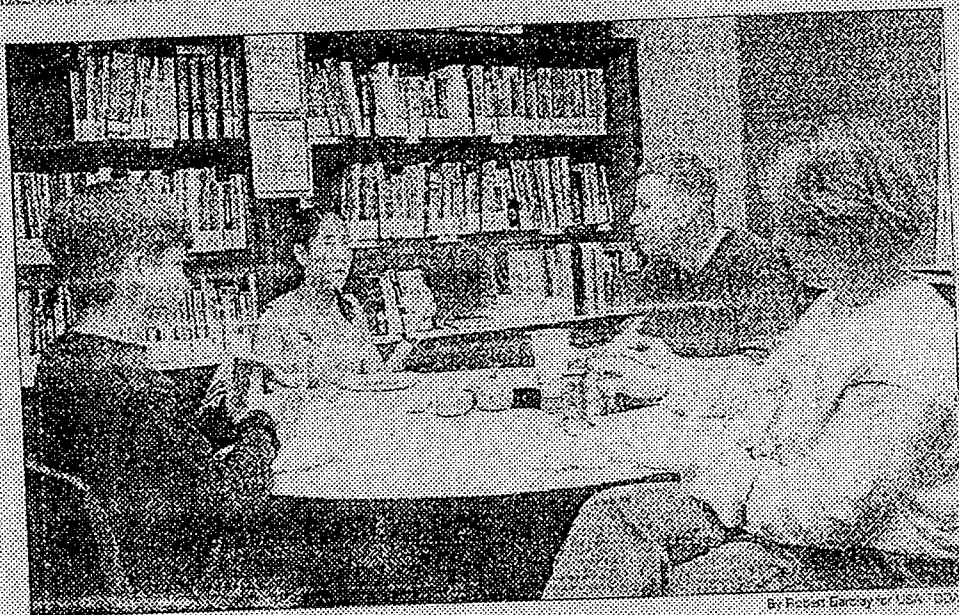
COVER STORY

sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade students to far-flung classrooms in six separate buildings. Subjects were divided into departments, and teachers basically worked in isolation. The average day in the life of a White Pine student was frantic and fragmented.

The result? Widespread discipline problems, for one thing. Nizinski calculates the school handed out more than 900 hours of suspensions in one year, with fighting and stealing topping the list of reasons. Standardized test scores were OK, but Nizinski says students "weren't being successful on a daily basis"; 30% were getting grades of C's and D's, and 40% got at least one D.

That changed six weeks ago when Nizinski restructured his school to handle what experts describe as "a roller-coaster time" for early adolescence.

White Pine is among more than 12,000 middle schools in the USA serving students in grades seven and eight, sometimes in combinations with sixth- and even fifth-graders. Virtually all of them have taken



By Fabian Garcia for USA TODAY

Roundtable talk: Michigan sixth-graders Noah Davis and Allison Kraft, at left, talk with Matt Prinz and Sarah Hagan, both students at Central Michigan University, where school reforms were discussed.



By Pam Wingo for USA TODAY

In the classroom: Middle-schoolers require much nurturing and reassurance, says Linda Bushell of Corpus Christi, Texas.

some steps to change the educational experience of students in that tumultuous time between the ages of 10 and 14.

The nation's middle-schoolers are in that developmental netherworld, young enough to need the warmth of the ele-

mentary school, but reaching an age when they want independence in social relationships and need it to prepare for high school. It's also a period of trial and error during which many first experiment with alcohol, drugs and sex, and risk

addiction, pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

Critics argue that schools have bungled the needs of middle-schoolers both emotionally and academically. For instance, results of last year's Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) show that the big dropout in U.S. student performance begins at the middle-school level.

"Teaching the middle-school child has its own challenges and rewards," says Linda Bushell, who taught eighth grade U.S. history at Baker Middle School in Corpus Christi, Texas, before moving into administration. "They require much nurturing and daily reassurance that they can do it, whatever the 'it' might be. They are at a time in their lives when they crave individual freedom, but still seek structure and support. That mix makes for a very interesting day."

Please see COVER STORY
next page ▶

Flexibility a necessity

Continued from 1D

When the new school year began at White Pine, Nizinski kicked off a program devised during nearly three years of work with the Michigan schools in the Middle program at Central Michigan University. Now, White Pine teachers are grouped into teams that work exclusively with a certain number of students throughout the school year. Teachers in these "learning communities" teach joint lessons that deal with subjects in more depth, and focus more on problem-solving, analyzing and summarizing. Instead of short class periods, teaching teams have the flexibility to adjust classroom hours, giving more time to science one day, another subject the next day.

"Kids are connected now," Nizinski says proudly. "And these people in the learning communities know them."

The notion that the education of middle-school children needs special attention has been slow to take hold. And even experts like Kenneth McEwin, professor at Appalachian State University in Boone, N.C., are reluctant to predict the pace of reform, although McEwin is "optimistic." Educators, bolstered by new research confirming the academic and emotional needs of young adolescents, have been drifting away from the elementary/high school divisions. New structures that typically up middle-school students that at least grades six and seven are together.

COVER STORY

New York sees another problem. The curriculum of young adolescents has been sort of dumbed down on the theory that raging hormones and other dramatic changes that they are undergoing make it difficult for them to concentrate. In fact, what we discover is the opposite effect, that we are losing a lot of kids because we don't have the right kind of curriculum for them that's both challenging and supportive."

For this reason, Sondra Cooney, director of the middle-grades education initiatives at the Southern Regional Education Board, a group formed to monitor the education of Southern states, cautions middle schools against doing "the right things for the wrong reasons. I call them 'checklist' middle schools. They've put all the middle-school features into place. They have team teaching, block scheduling, advisory home rooms and other typical middle-school strategies. But they haven't taken the next step and figured out how to use these characteristics in ways that raise the achievement of all students."

Cooney says a recent study found nearly half of the eighth-graders in 15 Southern states never write a science report. And about one-third read fewer than five pages a day, says the report funded by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, which also focuses a lot of its work on middle schools.

Not all are on board with this theory, though. Marc S. Tucker and Judy B. Coddling, in their book *Standards for Our Schools*, say there is a distinct advantage in districts that use a system of K-8 schools, followed by a four-year high school. Tucker notes that the current practice is to uproot middle-schoolers to attend schools outside their neighborhoods.

Tucker's feelings are shared by educators in Cincinnati and Baltimore, where middle schools are being phased out in favor of the K-8 structure. Tucker also stresses that worldwide, K-8 schools show the greatest student achievement gains.

"Middle schools are the wasteland of our primary and secondary landscape," Tucker says. "Caught between the warmth of a good elementary school and the academic seriousness of a good high school, middle-school students often get the least of both and the best of neither."

White Pine's new structure was first developed about eight years ago by the defunct Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development in New York City. The Michigan program promotes only the approach implemented at White Pine, called the Carnegie model, now in 225 schools in 16 states.

McEwin estimates that 80% of all middle schools have some form of interdisciplinary teaming, and "the research is showing us clearly that where teachers teach on teams, adolescents make higher scores."

Even with the different teaching strategies, Avery Russell of the Carnegie Corp. of

Despite this, optimism over the newer approaches to middle school is growing.

"Middle-school reform is taking hold in this country," says Carnegie's Russell.

Even Peggy Gaskill, project director of Michigan Schools in the Middle, is upbeat, although she admits that frustration with the neglect of middle schools led her to create Central Michigan's program in 1994. She says one of the key issues for schools, teachers, staff and parents is how to understand middle-school children. The task is difficult, she stresses, because even though the young adolescent years cover just a four-year span, ages 10 to 14, developmental variations in children at this age can make them seem as much as 10 years apart emotionally and physically.

Getting teachers to understand these children is the main focus of Central Michigan's program, Gaskill says. So the college preparation involves doses of the emotional, physical and psychological characteristics of preadolescents, even as prospective teachers learn subjects such as math, science and English.

"It doesn't make any difference how much math, social studies, language arts and science we know if it doesn't get to them," says program professor Norma Bailey, emphasizing the importance of knowing how to relate to the children. "The only way to get to them is to have meaning in their lives. At this age, particularly, their need is to have it be relevant. We're producing kids who may be able to spit out stuff on a test but drop out of school or get engaged in destructive behavior."

Give teen girls the basics of health-care education

Susan Guber, a former state legislator and a health-care lobbyist, is a member of the Florida Commission on the Status of Women.

TWEENAGE girls should mature free of sexual exploitation, abuse, and misinformation. Though this community has made progress, too many young women have few places to turn for guidance.

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women's 1998 report focuses on girls from 12 to 18. Its findings are disturbing. Remedies, where in place, are effective. But they often are missing, leaving too many girls uninformed, isolated, or confused about sexual rights and wrongs.

Nancy Humbert, chief of school nurses in Miami-Dade County, and Kathy Malone, the head of social work for public schools, conducted focus groups in which health-care providers, teachers, and parents discussed young women's conflicts within themselves and with their peers, teachers, and parents.

Their findings? Girls from all walks of life are bombarded with conflicting messages regarding sexuality. At the same time many have trouble communicating frankly with their parents — if parents are around. Many feel unloved, pregnancy becomes a road to belonging and self-worth.

We have an obligation to educate girls on their mental and physical health. For instance, some girls believe that it is a sin to touch themselves, therefore they won't do a breast self-exam. We teach abstinence, but girls who are sexually active get little or no encouragement to engage in safe sex and to use contraceptives — they cannot get birth control in school clinics.

Teens think that new drugs have eliminated AIDS. They must be taught that it simply is not true.

Sometimes cultural traditions must be confronted. In one focus group, we were told of a man who had impregnated three of his daughters because in their country it was customary for a father to be his girls' first sexual con-

tact. While the mother condoned it in the name of religion, such behavior is considered rape and sexual abuse in this country.

We found that too many girls do not know where to obtain services for health care and are unaware of how to prevent pregnancy. The Dade County Department of Health has made a heroic effort to increase the number of school health facilities, yet 75 percent of our schools have no campus-based health office.

How do we educate girls on what is acceptable and what are good health practices when the schools must get permission from parents who are abusive and not educated? Why can't decent health care be included in school curriculum? We cannot blame this completely on

a lack of funding. With tobacco-settlement money and matching funds from a booming economy, there has been an increase in money.

We have made some progress in the last decade. School health offices take care of children's physical and psychological needs, supplementing and often replacing parents as mentors or guides. To discourage pregnancy, some school health programs have girls care for dolls that behave like wet, crying babies. The dolls are programmed to wake up the girls in the middle of the night, and if not picked up, they cry louder. There are also heavy "maternity aprons" to simulate pregnancy.

Five Miami-Dade middle schools — Madison, Ponce de Leon, Mays, Allapattah, and Campbell Drive — have full-service health programs. Licensed clinical social workers and nurse practitioners are employed full time. A full range of health-care specialists is on call. But such clinics are rare, especially in inner-city schools.

Only healthy, well-adjusted girls are ready to learn and participate in society. We must be willing to step in to give girls the basics of health-care education if we expect them to improve their lives.



SUSAN GUBER

Women's History and the Florida Women's Hall of Fame Committee Report, 1998

by Doris Weatherford, Historian, FCSW

In March, Governor Lawton Chiles issued the last Women's History Month proclamation of his administration. The proclamation was notable not only because it would be his last, but also because of the special significance of the year: 1998 marked the 150th anniversary of the organized movement for the vote and other civil rights for women. The proclamation recognized a number of Florida's historically outstanding women, including some who have yet to be nominated for the Hall of Fame. In April, the Florida House of Representatives passed a similar 150th anniversary proclamation.

In July, thousands of women converged on Seneca Falls, New York, where the first women's rights convention was held in July of 1848. The Commission sponsored a commemorative ceremony for Floridians on July 16. Governor Chiles, Attorney General Butterworth, and other officials joined the FCSW in unveiling a plaque on the history of the suffrage movement in Florida. This hangs near the Hall of Fame in the Capitol rotunda.

The anniversary of the 19th Amendment that gave women the right to vote was celebrated on August 26 with a press conference announcing the winners of the Commission's first essay contest. Almost 300 essays were submitted and judged by the committee. Cheryl Morris of Dunnellon won the adult category with a paper on Dr. Mary A. Safford, an Orlando minister who headed the suffrage movement in Florida for most of its existence. Nicole Ciccirelli of Wellington was the senior high school winner, with a paper on Glades County agriculturist Rose S. Wedgeworth. The junior high winner was Teela McGee of Madison, who wrote on Dr. Florence Seibert, a Pinellas County retiree who developed the first test for tuberculosis. Finally, the elementary school winner was Natalie Riera of Miami Lakes, who wrote on Florida's first female mayor. Marian Horowitz O'Brien of Moore Haven. Except for Natalie, all winners were able to be in Tallahassee to accept their plaques and checks, which were generously donated by Frances Shaw Stavros of St. Petersburg.

Finally, the Commission received 64 nominations for the Florida Women's Hall of Fame in 1998, and again chose ten finalists to be forwarded to the governor. They were: Maxine Baker, a state representative in the 1960s whose "Baker Act" set new standards in the treatment of the mentally ill; Martha Barnett, who is president-elect of the American Bar Association; Leona Cooper, an African-American immigrant activist; Sen. Helen Gordon

Davis, who sponsored much of the feminist legislation of the 1970s and 1980s; Judge Mattie Belle Davis, the second woman nationally to be elected as a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation; Alene Duerck, who was the first female admiral in the U.S. Navy; Christine Fulwylie-Bankston, who published work on women and children; Dorothy Glisson, the first woman to serve on the Florida Cabinet; Sen. Mary Grizzle, the first female Republican in the legislature; and Dessie Prescott, a pioneer and environmentalist who inspired the Pulitzer Prize winner, *The Yearling*.

Of these ten, Gov. Chiles chose Helen Gordon Davis of Tampa, Mattie Belle Davis of Miami and Christine Fulwylie-Bankston of Pensacola. Their induction ceremony was held on November 16, with a reception following at the top of the Capitol. The Commission wishes to express its appreciation to all those who funded the reception's costs. Major contributions were through the Florida Women's Consortium and its president, Jean Harden. Additional contributions were made by Gooderham & Associates (Commissioner Kate Gooderham), Commissioners Susan Gilbert, Mona Reis, Elsie Crowell, Marsha Griffin Rydberg and Lisa Tropepe and Executive Director Nancy Clemons, and we thank them all.

Less than a month after the ceremony, both Gov. Chiles and inductee Christine Fulwylie-Bankston had died. She passed away in Pensacola on December 9, and he died in the Governor's Mansion on December 12. Their loss reminds us of the ephemeral nature of life, and it shows again how important it is that we recognize achievements while we can and that we preserve our history, which can so quickly be gone.

Acknowledgments

Florida Commission on the Status of Women extends its appreciation and thanks to following individuals for their effort and support.

- Governor Lawton Chiles and Lt. Governor Buddy MacKay.
- Attorney General Bob Butterworth and his staff.
- Senate President Toni Jennings, former Speaker of the House of Representatives Daniel Webster, and Members of the Florida Legislature.
- Commissioner of Education Frank Brogan, Commissioner of Agriculture Bob Crawford, Comptroller Robert Milligan, Secretary of State Sandra Mortham, and Insurance Commissioner Bill Nelson.
- Christopher Boyden, J.D.; Eileen Nexer Brown, Women's Fund of Miami-Dade County; Barbara Goldman, Ph.D.; Shirley Haglund, Citrus Council of Girl Scouts; Nancy Humbert, Miami-Dade County Health Department; Kathy Malone, Miami-Dade County Health Department; Cheryl Rodriguez, Africana Studies Program, University of South Florida; Hilda C. Rosselli, Ph.D., College of Education, University of South Florida; Katherine Fernandez Rundle, Miami-Dade State Attorney; Jennifer Valoppi, WTVJ NBC 6; for their expertise and contribution to this report.
- Marjorie A. Horwin, C.P.A.; Linda S. Lutz, C.F.P.; Adis C. Martinez; and Raquel Rammos, panelists for *Show Me the Money*.
- Dr. Jean Bryant, Director of Women's Studies Program, Florida State University.
- Dr. Sue Rosser and Dr. Pam Vetro, Center for Women's Studies and Gender Research, University of Florida.
- Tara Donohue, Anneliese Doyle, and Wendy Juran, Interns, University of Florida.

1998 Annual Report

Florida Commission on the Status of Women

Appendix 1 Representative Recruiting Screener

Screener for Middle School October 15th; Matheson Historical Center

Hello, my name is _____. I am calling from the Irwin Research Group a local market research firm here in North Florida. We are calling because the Florida Commission on the Status of Women is sponsoring focus groups of both Middle School and High School girls to learn their thoughts about the future in the areas of education, family, health, politics, and society. We think that your daughter might be a good candidate for the middle school group with other girls aged 12 to 14.

The focus group will start at 5:15 PM, on Thursday, October 15th, and will take an hour or less. The group will be held at the Matheson Historical Center. There will be two moderators: a woman lead moderator and a male assistant. You may view the session from a nearby area via closed circuit TV. As is standard in focus groups, each participant will be paid an incentive. Your daughter and the other participants will receive \$15 for their time and effort. The parents also receive a \$25 coop payment for their time and transportation efforts. If she qualifies, could your daughter participate?

Great, Let me ask you a few questions about your daughter.

1. Does she currently participate in any school related, community related, or church related extracurricular activities? (examples include, school clubs, girl scouts, dance, soccer, music lessons of various types, a church youth group. Activities that involve them with other girls their age.)

YES Note the group _____

NO

2. Is she willing to speak out in a group of her peers when she has something to say?

YES

NO

*If the parent answers no to either one of these questions, thank and terminate.
If both answers are yes, ask to speak to the girl.*

Hi, my name is Ms. _____, I just spoke with your Mother/Father about you joining us for a discussion with five or six other girls your age. They said that you might be interested. Can I tell you about the meeting?

(Wait for an answer. If you have to prompt, that is a warning sign that the girl might be a little shy for the group. After she says it is O.K., continue.)

There is a group that is part of Florida's government whose job it is to find out ways to help girls and women get ahead. It is called The Florida Commission on the Status of Women. They decided that the best way to find out how to help girls get ahead is to ask girls what would help them. They are holding a meeting on Thursday, October 15th at 5:15, at the Matheson Historical Center, with about six girls your age to talk about what girls think about the future. We will talk for about an hour about education, family, health, government, and society. Participants in groups like this are normally paid something as a "thank you" for their time and participation. Participants in this group will receive \$15 for their time and effort. Does that sound interesting?

(Again, wait for an answer or some response. Note the level of interest in the response and how well she has understood what was just said in the last paragraph, then continue. If she asks questions at this point, that is a good sign. It is an even better sign if she understood everything and is very interested.)

Great, let me ask you a couple of questions.

1. First, are you in any clubs or groups in school or somewhere else?

If she says yes, continue.

If she says no, ask about the group that her parent just mentioned, then continue.

If she still says no, TERMINATE.

Would you tell me what you do there?

(Listen to her answer. If she can explain what she does in full sentences and answer a question about it she will be OK for the session. If she is halting, shy, retiring, very quiet or in some other way seems unlikely to contribute in a group she should not be invited.

At the finish of your conversation with the girl, regardless of whether she accepts or not, ask to speak to her parent again. [see next page])

Back to the parent for close.

If You Invite the Girl — Middle School (Save this Info Sheet)

Your daughter seems well spoken and thoughtful. She is interested in taking part and we would like to have her. Again the group will be held on Thursday, October 15th at 5:15 P.M., at the Matheson Historical Center. Please try to be there about 10 minutes early. We will have relatively healthy snacks and a waiting area if you want to stay.

I will send you a confirmation letter, directions to the site, and a permission slip. We are also asking each girl to write just a sentence or two about her thoughts on each of the five topics. I will include a one page sheet with headings for the different areas of discussion for your daughter to use. Please bring the sheet to the with you on the 15th because they will be used to help start the discussions.

Let me ask you a few background questions.

1. How old is your daughter (note: You can ask this at the beginning if you are not sure she is in the correct age group. This is for exact data.)

Age _____

2. What school does she attend? _____

3. Does she have any outside activities other than (the one they told you earlier)?

4. Of which of the following ethnic groups are you a member?

Anglo-American African-American Hispanic-American

Thank you very much, we look forward to seeing you at the Matheson Historical Center on Thursday, October 15th at 5:15 P.M.

Contact telephone number: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Girls name: _____

Age: _____

Grade in school: _____

Outside activity : _____

Thank you very much.

**If the Girl is not a Good Candidate (One Suggested Approach)
for use with Both High School and Middle School Candidates**

Your daughter seems well spoken and thoughtful. She is interested in taking part. We will put her name in the pool and make our choice tomorrow morning. I will call you later tomorrow and let you know the outcome. Thanks for your time. I'll speak with you soon.

Be sure to call back and tell them that they were not chosen

Contact telephone: _____

Screener for High School October 15th; Matheson Historical Center

Hello, my name is _____. I am calling from the Irwin Research Group a local market research firm here in North Florida. We are calling because the Florida Commission on the Status of Women is sponsoring focus groups of both Middle School and High School girls to learn their thoughts about the future in the areas of education, family, health, politics, and society. We think that your daughter might be a good candidate for the high school group with other girls aged 15 to 18.

The focus group will start at 3:30 PM on Thursday, October 15th, and will take about an hour and fifteen minutes. The group will be held at the Matheson Historical Center. There will be two moderators: a woman lead moderator and a male assistant. You may view the session from a nearby area via closed circuit TV. As is standard in focus groups, each participant will be paid an incentive. Your daughter and the other participants will receive \$25 for their time and effort. The parents also receive a \$25 coop payment for their time and transportation efforts. If the girl drives herself she will receive the \$25 for her time and an additional \$10 to offset her transportation expenses. If she qualifies, could your daughter participate?

Great, let me ask you a few questions about your daughter.

1. Does she currently participate in any school related, community related, or church related extracurricular activities? (examples include, school clubs, girl scouts, dance, soccer, music lessons of various types, a church youth group. Activities that involve them with other girls their age.)

YES Note the group _____

NO

2. Is she willing to speak out in a group of her peers when she has something to say?

YES

NO

If the parent answers no to either one of these questions, thank and terminate.

If both answers are yes, ask to speak to the girl.

Hi, my name is Ms. _____, I just spoke with your Mother/Father about you joining us for a discussion with seven or eight other girls your age. They said that you might be interested. Can I tell you about the meeting?

(Wait for an answer. If you have to prompt, that is a warning sign that the girl might be a little shy for the group. After she says it is O.K., continue.)

There is a group that is part of Florida's government whose job it is to find out ways to help girls and women get ahead. It is called The Florida Commission on the Status of Women. They decided that the best way to find out how to help girls get ahead is to ask girls what would help them. They are holding a meeting on Thursday, October 15th, at 3:30, at the Matheson Historical Center, with about eight girls your age to talk about what girls think about the future. We will talk for an hour or so about education, family, health, government, and society. Participants in groups like this are normally paid something as a "thank you" for their time and participation. Participants in this group will receive \$25 for their time and effort. Does that sound interesting?

(Again, wait for an answer or some response. Note the level of interest in the response and how well she has understood what was just said in the last paragraph, then continue. If she asks questions at this point, that is a good sign. It is an even better sign if she understood everything and is very interested.)

Great, let me ask you a couple of questions.

First, are you in any clubs or groups in school or somewhere else?

If she says yes, continue.

If she says no, ask about the group that her parent just mentioned, then continue.

If she still says no, TERMINATE.

Would you tell me what you do there?

Listen to her answer. If she can explain what she does in full sentences and answer a question about it she will be OK for the session. If she is halting, shy, retiring, very quiet or in some other way seems unlikely to contribute in a group she should not be invited.

At the finish of your conversation with the girl, regardless of whether she accepts or not, ask her parent for close.

If You Invite the Girl — High School (Save this Info Sheet)

Your daughter seems well spoken and thoughtful. She is interested in taking part and we would like to have her. Again the group will be held on Thursday, October 15th at 3:30 P.M., at the Matheson Historical Center. Please try to be there about 10 minutes early. We will have relatively healthy snacks and a waiting area if you want to stay.

I will send you a confirmation letter, directions to the site, and a permission slip. We are also asking each girl to write just a sentence or two about her thoughts on each of the five topics. I will include a one page sheet with headings for the different areas of discussion for your daughter to use. Please bring the sheet to the with you on the 15th because they will be used to help start the discussions.

Let me ask you a few background questions.

1. How old is your daughter (*note: You can ask this at the beginning if you are not sure she is in the correct age group. This is for exact data.*)

Age _____

2. What school does she attend? _____

3. Does she have any outside activities other than (*the one they told you earlier*)? _____

4. Of which of the following ethnic groups are you a member?

Anglo-American African-American Hispanic-American

Thank you very much, we look forward to seeing you at the Matheson Historical Center on Thursday, October 15th at 3:30 P.M.

Contact telephone number: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Girls name: _____

Age: _____

Grade in school: _____

Outside activity : _____

Thank you very much.

Screener for Educators
October 15th; Matheson Historical Center

Hello, my name is _____. I am calling from the Irwin Research Group a local market research firm here in North Florida. We are calling because the Florida Commission on the Status of Women is sponsoring focus groups of both Middle School and High School girls and educators. The purpose of the groups is to hear the thoughts of both the girls and the educators about the future in the areas of education, family, health, politics, and society. The groups will be held at the Matheson Historical Center on Thursday, October 15th. We would like for you to participate in the educators focus group that will begin at 6:30 P.M., and last about an hour and a half.

This is a focus group, a discussion session. We are not selling anything, we only care about what you think. And, as is standard practice in focus groups, we will give you a \$60 compensation payment for your taking the time to participate. Would you join us?

(If they want more info: *The Florida Commission on the Status of Women is a Commission appointed by the Governor and supported by the Attorney General's office. The Commissioners are private citizens. The mission of the Commission is to study and make recommendations to the Governor, the Cabinet, and the Legislature, on issues effecting women in Florida. The Project: This year the Commission's focus is on issues facing young women growing up in Florida. This project is one of four initiatives including Open Forums on several college campuses, a journal project with 50 girls between 12 and 18, and a review of the published literature regarding educator's views on the subject. The focus group findings will join findings from the other initiatives in the Commission's formal report published in January 1999.*

Great, let me ask you a few questions.

1. Where do you teach?

(Public & private are O.K., but mostly public. Good mix of middle and high schools)

2. Are about half of your students girls? _____

(Most should be 50/50 but a few can be much higher or much lower, don't go over 80/20 either way.)

3. Of which of the following ethnic groups are you a member?

Anglo-American African-American Hispanic-American Other

(Once again a good mix relative to the local area.)

Fine. Again, the group will be held at the Matheson Historical Center on Thursday, October 15th. It will begin at 6:30 P.M., and will take between 1½ and 2 hours. I will send you a confirmation statement and directions. Thanks.

Appendix 2

Participant "Homework" Sheets

Focus Group Thoughts (Middle School)

You and the other girls at the focus group will be discussing your opinions about these five subjects. In order to collect your thoughts so you are ready for the group, it would be helpful if you would just write a sentence or two (No more! This is supposed to be easy.) about what you think the future holds for you and other girls your age in these areas. There are no incorrect answers; you can define these terms any way you feel like. Thanks.

Education

Family

Health

Politics

Society

Thanks

Focus Group Thoughts
(High School)

You and the other girls at the focus group will be discussing your opinions about these five subjects. In order to collect your thoughts so you are ready for the group, it would be helpful if you would just write a sentence or two (No more! This is supposed to be easy.) about *what you think the future holds for you and other girls your age in these areas*. There are no incorrect answers; you can define these terms any way you feel like. Thanks.

Education

Family

Health

Politics

Society

Thanks

Appendix 3 Participation Agreements

Florida Commission on the Status of Women Participation Agreement Regarding Participation in a Focus Group — Educators

This is to acknowledge that I, _____, have been invited to participate as a focus group participant for the Florida Commission on the Status of Women (Commission). *The purpose of the groups is to provide information for the 1998 Annual Report.* I understand that educators with similar experience will participate in a discussion about their views of the future, as they relate to girls ages 12–18, on the topics of education, family, health, politics, and society. I further understand that the discussions will be led by a team of professional focus group moderators and that the sessions will be audio taped. I will be compensated \$60 for my time.

I understand that the opinions and perceptions of any focus group participant might be used in the Commission's Annual Report. I also understand and consent to the use of the information I provide as a focus group participant for use in other Commission communications including publications, news accounts or other media presentations covering women's issues; and in programs presented by the Commission or individual commissioners. I understand that specific comments will not be attributed to me or any individual participant, but that my participation in the focus group and the subsequent findings from the group will become public records available, upon request, to anyone. The Commission is in no way responsible for public reaction to comments made by the focus group participants.

My signature below indicates my understanding of these conditions, including the receipt of the compensation noted above. It also indicates that I release the Commission from any claims or liability related to my participation in the focus groups and the related use of the opinions and comments I make during the group.

I have read this information and understand its terms. I am signing voluntarily and with full knowledge of its significance.

Print (name and date)

Print

Signature

Date

(focus group participant)

Florida Commission on the Status of Women
Participation Agreement Regarding Participation in a Focus Group
— Middle School

I, _____, of _____
(parent or guardian) (address)
and _____, of _____
(parent or guardian) (address)

have agreed to allow _____, a minor, to participate in a focus group to collect information for the Annual Report of the Florida Commission on the Status of Women.

I (or we) acknowledge that my (or our) daughter has been invited to participate as a focus group participant for the Florida Commission on the Status of Women (Commission). The purpose of the groups is to provide information for the 1998 Annual Report. I/we understand that five to eight girls of similar ages will participate in a discussion about their views of the future on the topics of education, family, health, politics, and society. I/we further understand that the discussions will be led by a team of professional focus group moderators that will include both a female and a moderator, and that the sessions will be audio taped.

My/our daughter will be compensated \$20 for her time and I/we will also be compensated \$20 for my/our time and transportation.

I/we understand that the opinions and perceptions expressed by any focus group participant might be used in the Commission's Annual Report. I/we also understand and consent to the use of the information my/our daughter provides as a focus group participant for use in other Commission communications including publications, news accounts or other media presentations covering women's issues; and in programs presented by the Commission or individual commissioners. I/we understand that specific comments will not be attributed to my/our daughter or any individual participant, but that our daughter's participation in the focus group and the subsequent findings from the group will become public records available, upon request, to anyone. The Commission is in no way responsible for public reaction to comments made by the focus group participants.

My/our signature below indicates my/our understanding of these conditions, including the receipt of the compensation noted above. It also indicates that I/we release the Commission from any claims or liability related to my/our daughter's participation in the focus groups and the related use of the opinions and comments my/our daughter makes during the group.

I/we have read this information and understand its terms. I am/we are signing voluntarily and with full knowledge of its significance.

Print	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
(focus group participant)		
_____	_____	_____
(parent or guardian)		
_____	_____	_____
(parent or guardian)		

**Florida Commission on the Status of Women
Participation Agreement Regarding Participation in a Focus Group
— High School**

I, _____, of _____
(parent or guardian) (address)

and _____, of _____
(parent or guardian) (address)

have agreed to allow _____, a minor, to participate in a focus group to collect information for the Annual Report of the Florida Commission on the Status of Women. I (or we) acknowledge that my (or our) daughter has been invited to participate as a focus group participant for the Florida Commission on the Status of Women (Commission). The purpose of the groups is to provide information for the 1998 Annual Report. I/we understand that five to eight girls of similar ages will participate in a discussion about their views of the future on the topics of education, family, health, politics, and society. I/we further understand that the discussions will be led by a team of professional focus group moderators that will include both a female and a moderator, and that the sessions will be audio taped.

My/our daughter will be compensated \$25 for her time; I/we will also be compensated \$25 for my/our time and transportation. My/our daughter will receive \$10 for transportation if she drives herself. I/we understand that the opinions and perceptions expressed by any focus group participant might be used in the Commission's Annual Report. I/we also understand and consent to the use of the information my/our daughter provides as a focus group participant for use in other Commission communications including publications, news accounts or other media presentations covering women's issues; and in programs presented by the Commission or individual commissioners. I/we understand that specific comments will not be attributed to my/our daughter or any individual participant, but that our daughter's participation in the focus group and the subsequent findings from the group will become public records available, upon request, to anyone. The Commission is in no way responsible for public reaction to comments made by the focus group participants.

My/our signature below indicates my/our understanding of these conditions, including the receipt of the compensation noted above. It also indicates that I/we release the Commission from any claims or liability related to my/our daughter's participation in the focus groups and the related use of the opinions and comments my/our daughter makes during the group. I/we have read this information and understand its terms. I am/we are signing voluntarily and with full knowledge of its significance.

Print	Signature	Date
_____ (focus group participant)	_____	_____
_____ (parent or guardian)	_____	_____
_____ (parent or guardian)	_____	_____

Florida Commission on the Status of Women Survey Response Form

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women represents all citizens residing in the State of Florida and is very interested in your opinions regarding issues facing women and families in this state. Your response to this survey will help us to identify key areas of concern and to determine future priorities for the Commission.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone No.: _____

Gender: Male Female

Race: Hispanic White Native American African American Asian

Education: High School Some College College Degree Some Graduate/Graduate Degree

Age: 16-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+

Are you a resident of Florida? Yes No If yes, how long? _____

How did you become aware of the Commission? _____

Do you have a local county or city Commission on the Status of Women? Yes No

If yes, please provide the name and address: _____

Would you be interested in starting one in your county/city? _____

Are you a member of a woman's organization? Yes No If yes, please provide the name and address: _____

Please indicate the five most critical issues you believe are facing women and families in Florida today. For the most critical, place a "1" in the box to the left of the item. For the next most critical, place a "2," and so on. Use the blank lines to write in additional critical issues not listed.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health Care | <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Violence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of Jobs | <input type="checkbox"/> Child Care |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Age Discrimination | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pay Equity | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Harassment | _____ |

If you would like additional information about the Florida Commission on the Status of Women and/or would like to provide your expertise to the Commission, please call the Commission office at (850) 414-3300, or FAX (850) 921-4131.

Thank you for taking the time to respond to our survey. Your views are very important to us.

Please detach this sheet from the report and return to: FCSW, Office of the Attorney General, The Capitol, PL-01, Tallahassee, FL 32399-1050.

place
stamp
here

**Florida Commission on the Status of Women
Office of the Attorney General
The Capitol, PL-01
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1050**
