

THE TORCH

CIVIL RIGHTS TEAM PROJECT NEWSLETTER

February/March 2008

Newsletter Editor: Amy Homans



MARCH IS NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

The history of women continues to be written every day, all over the world, sometimes for better and sometimes for worse. On the brighter side of things, a woman is fighting it out to the bitter end for the Democratic nomination for the presidency of the United States. In 2007, there were 16 female senators (and 84 male) serving in the United States Senate and 70 female congresswomen (and 365 male) in the U.S. House of Representatives. Girls' athletic teams exist in numbers equal to teams for boys and draw larger crowds every year, thanks in large part to Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Perhaps most encouraging of all is the fact

that more girls than ever are pursuing careers in fields that were once labeled "non-traditional" for female students.

As in past years, this issue of *The Torch* is dedicated to providing information, ideas and resources on the women who came before this current generation of girls and on resources available to help girls explore and reach their potential in a world full of more opportunities for them than ever before.



HARDY GIRLS HEALTHY WOMEN HAS IT ALL GOING ON!

It should come as no surprise to any Torch readers that Hardy Girls Healthy Women is Maine's go to organization for girls and young women seeking to maximize their gifts, defy stereotypes and thrive in a world that has more to offer women than ever before in history.

This year is the 10th anniversary of HGHW's *Girls Unlimited* Conference for girls in grades 5-8. This year's conference will be held on April 5th at various locations at REM Forum and at locations throughout downtown Waterville. In keeping with the theme for National Women's History Month 2008, this year's conference is entitled *Media Makeover*:

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Changing the Face of Art and it is designed to engage participants in creating media that reflects the lives of real girls. There are many excellent workshop choices including:

Drawing Sound with Amy Stacey Curtis

Participants will draw sound with Maine artist Amy Stacey Curtis. Each participant will be supplied with a cd player/headphones and a cd of sounds to interpret visually. The group will also draw sound produced spontaneously--individually and as a group. Drawing paper, charcoal, and pastels will be supplied. Participants will leave with a new way to view and hear their environment.

Self-Portrait Collage with Lori Kaley

Girls will create self-portraits in collage. Using instant cameras and media such as magazines to create self-portraits, the group will support each other in seeing who they are as individuals, recognizing their own beauty and unique qualities. Paper, instant cameras, magazines and other collage materials will be supplied. Participants will leave with an appreciation of who they really are as seen through the eyes of others and themselves anew.

The Poetry of Self with Kiri Guyaz

Words shape how we think of ourselves. Who are we? What are the stories we tell about ourselves? Are they true? Girls will create poetry as both an individual expression of self and as a shared discovery of identity. The workshop will explore the telling, writing, and defining of our innermost selves as well as the creation of visual representations of the poems on paper. With the use of pens, colored pencils, markers, and more you'll discover your truth and tell it through poetry.

The world needs your stories!

Changing the Message* with Bonnie Bishop

In this workshop each participant will be given a magazine. First we will consider the message that the ads and articles send about girls and women. Then we will cut the magazine apart and, using the same images and words, paste together a new magazine that projects our own messages about who WE are or want to be as girls and women.

* This workshop will meet from 12-3:15 to give participants time to create their own thoughtful and successful version.

Sculpture: Empowering Clothing with Beth Eisen

Create your own original wearable art! In this workshop girls will transform themselves into sculptural works of art by manipulating, attaching and cutting t-shirts into new wearable pieces of art that change the meaning and form of clothing. Choosing from images, girls will engage in conversations about the messages we receive about clothing, our bodies, and how we clothe ourselves as well as how we express ourselves through what we wear.

Love Yourself with Mixed Media with Laurie Proctor

Who are you? Do you know? Come and discover the true you. Come design your own one-of-a-kind self portrait using mixed media such as drawing materials, paint, paper and magazine pictures. Through paint and drawing we'll develop portraits about who we are on the inside as well as how media messages seem to surround us and how that affects us through the use of collage.

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Geeks, Goths, Preps, Jocks with Krisann Baker

What is in a label? Girls in this workshop will talk and write about what goes into our "image" and our identity. How do people label you? How do you label others? How might you transform around others to hide or show your true self? While learning how to use the program i-Movie and a webcam we'll look at how media reflects the people we know and how we reflect the images around us.

A Beat of your Own with Red Hawk Medicine Drum

If you thought drums were only for boys and rock bands - think again! In this workshop girls will learn and experience the art of Native American drumming with the all female drum circle Red Hawk Medicine Drum. Feel empowered to express yourself through the drum, which represents not only a musical experience but a cultural experience as well.

Step Up and Step Out with Escar Kusema and the Colby Step Troop

Join members of Coby's Step Dance Troop and learn about Step (a type of performance art that is central to African-American culture). Using Step girls will address issues that we all face as a result of the images portrayed by the media. Girls will Step away with the message and skills to express their power to define who they want to be and who they should be instead of the media.

[Register for this event online here!](#)

[Download the brochure for more information.](#)

For further proof that Girls Rock in Waterville!, Hardy Girls Healthy Women

is also sponsoring a film about a girls' rock'n roll camp that sounds like an incredibly good time. **[Girls Rock the Movie](#)** has been stirring things up at film festivals across the country and HGHW is thrilled that the movie is opening in Waterville on Friday April 4th, 2008 at Waterville's Railroad Square Cinema. Register for this event online **[here](#)**. **[See the film trailer](#)**.



Hardy Girls/Boys to Men Spring Film Festival

Hardy Girls is teaming up with the Portland group Boys To Men to host a powerful spring film series, *Oh Baby, Baby! How the Media Teaches Us to be Men & Women*. Featured will be compelling, and often startling, films produced by the Media Education Foundation, which explore the powerful effects of mass media on gender identities. These are must-see movies for parents, educators, and all those who work with youth. Screenings start at **7:00 pm** and will be followed by a Q&A panel discussion. Best of all, the film series will be playing in three different locations around the state over the course of the spring. See below for descriptions of each film and the dates for the showings in Orono and Farmington at the University of Maine campuses. The dates for the Bowdoin College showings have not yet been announced, but anyone interested in going to Brunswick to see these films can call Boys to Men at (207)774-9994.

Slim Hopes & What a Girl Wants Thin, juicy, hot. Weak, stupid, annoying. Today's media provide a narrow definition of who

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women and girls are and what they can do. These two short films take an unflinching look at female bodies in the media and include startling and brutally honest interviews with girls about the images they see each day.

Tough Guise Men in pop culture are shown as aggressive, dominating, and in control. Jackson Katz, former all-star football player, examines the relationship between what it means to "be a man" in American culture and widespread violence in our society, including fatal shootings in our schools and public places.

Hip Hop: Beyond Beats & Rhymes Byron Hurt pays tribute to hip-hop while challenging the sexual exploitation of women, glamorized violence and homophobia in the music industry. Interviews with Mos Def, Busta Rhymes and more.

101 Neville Hall, University of Maine, Orono

Mar 19: Slim Hopes & What a Girl Wants
Mar 25: Tough Guise
Apr 2: Hip Hop: Beyond Beats & Rhymes

Thomas Auditorium in Preble/Ricker Hall, University of Maine Farmington
Apr 3: Slim Hopes & What a Girl Wants
Apr 10: Tough Guise
Apr 16: Hip Hop: Beyond Beats & Rhymes.

newsletter sign-up

As you can see, there is always something happening at Hardy Girls Healthy Woman

and you can stay on top of it all by signing up for its newsletter and monthly e-zine. To

I'd like to sign-up!

sign up, click on so you do not miss out on activities, information and other opportunities from this outstanding local resource.



A super site for one stop shopping on all types of issues related to girls is at www.girlpower.gov/girlarea/index.htm.

Girl Power is a site created by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and is dedicated to helping girls ages 9-13 make the most of their lives by reinforcing and sustaining positive attitudes about their health. This site is a great example of your tax dollars being put to good use. There is a wealth of age appropriate, well written information directed at girls on the topics of body size and body image, sports and fitness, science and technology; alcohol, tobacco and drugs, and more. There is also support information for girls coping with alcoholism in their family or circle of friends, games and puzzles, and lots of internet resources for girls.



Another great site for girls is the National Academy of Sciences' *I was wondering ... A curious look at women in*

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sciences. One of the features at this site is a Travel Timeline that introduces visitors to 25 female scientists and describes the amazing things they have been wondering about. Go to <http://www.iwaswondering.com/timeline.html> to learn about a memory maven, a bone detective, a gene explorer, a social scientist, a nature mechanic and other women with fascinating careers in the world of science. This is a perfect site for anyone looking to educate and excite girls about the unlimited array of career opportunities available to them and the women who are paving the way for them.



She's Got It!: Women Inventors and Their Inspirations

The Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation at the Smithsonian Museum of American History has developed a wonderful resource featuring eight very clever female inventors. *She's Got It!: Women Inventors and Their Inspirations* is a terrific short film that is accompanied by a teacher's guide, all developed by the creative folks at the Lemelson Center.

The video is designed for use in the classroom and features women and girls who share a common creative spirit and have won invention prizes and awards. Many have appeared in the Lemelson Center's "Innovative Lives" series for middle school students. The DVD is 29 minutes long and is closed captioned as

well. It can be ordered free of charge, with a shipping fee of \$2, from the International Technology Education Association. If you would like to order the film there are a number of ways to do so. You can place an order by calling ITEA at 703-860-2100 with your credit card; by mailing your order to: ITEA, 1914 Association Dr, Suite 201, Reston, VA 20191-1539 or by faxing it to 703-860-0353. For more information on the DVDs, visit ITEA's online catalog at <http://www.iteaconnect.org/Publications/productguide.pdf> where you can also print an order form. The [Teacher's resource guide](#) is available for downloading at no cost. For even more information on women inventors, go to ["Exploring the History of Women Inventors"](#) in the Innovative Lives section of the Lemelson Center's website.

Consider ordering a copy of *She's Got It!* and the accompanying teacher's guide and make it available to anyone in your school community with an interest in using it as part of his or her Women's History Month activities. Make these (practically free) resources available in your school library as well as a gift to its permanent collection.

FYI: The last page of the teacher's guide also includes a list of great resources for young inventors, both male and female, that others in your school community might have an interest in learning about.

Maine Science, Math and Technology Camp just for Girls!

It's no secret that the road to a great career involves a lot of hard work.

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But it can also be a lot of fun. Science and math enthusiasts can enjoy a week of summer fun at the Maine School of Science and Mathematics' X Camp in Limestone, Maine. There are two sessions just for girls (and two sessions just for boys). The MSSM Summer Camp is designed to inspire and encourage middle-school students to pursue their passions in math, science and technology. Through hands-on interactive classes and thrilling eXtra activities, campers will be challenged to eXplore their favorite subjects, learning that there's more to math and science than meets the eye! Traditional summer camp activities are also part of every day at X Camp.

The dates for Summer X 2008 are as follows:

Girls' Camp:

Grades 7-9: Sunday, July 13 to Saturday, July 19

Grades 5-8: Sunday, July 20 to Saturday, July 26

Boys' Camp:

Grades 5-7: Sunday, June 29 to Saturday, July 5

Grades 7-9: Sunday, July 6 to Saturday, July 12

For more information, click on the following links: [Registration & Transportation](#), [summer camp application](#), [summer camp brochure](#), and [summer camp flyer](#). Additional questions or concerns about X Camp can be addressed to Danielle at (800) 325-4484, sumex@mssm.org, or 95 High St., Limestone, ME 04750.

If your school has not yet posted a flyer for X Camp, please print out the camp flyer and post it a prominent location. This camp provides an outstanding opportunity for students, both male and female, as well as exposure to the School of Mathematics and Science for students looking for an intensive math, science and technology experience after they complete middle school.



Be sure and check out the February 2006 and February/March 2007 issues of *The Torch* for more speakers, resources and activity ideas to celebrate Women's History Month.

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Sponsor a sexual violence awareness and prevention program by your regional sexual assault support center.

As the opening sentence of this issue of *The Torch* stated, women's history is being written every day for both better and for worse. Unfortunately, despite the enormous strides women have made over the past decades, the history of women still includes sexual violence. In Maine, the majority of murders in recent years have been the result of domestic violence. In America, someone is sexually assaulted every two minutes. One in six women have been the victims of rape in their lifetime. Forty four percent of rape victims are under the age of 18. Sixty six percent of female rape victims knew their assailant. In 2003, one in nine rape victims was male. (Sources for these statistics can be found at www.sarssm.org.) Educating students on the issues surrounding sexual violence and providing them with the tools to keep themselves safe is one way to try and change the future history of both men and women.

Maine is fortunate to have ten regional sexual assault support centers, most of which provide school based K-12 educational programs. The free programs offered by these organizations focus on

bullying, teasing, intervention and empowerment with the younger grades and on issues directly and indirectly relating to sexual abuse awareness, sexual harassment and sexual assault with the older grades. For example, the school programs offered in southern Maine by Sexual Assault Response Services of Southern Maine (www.sarssm.org) are:

Grades 3-5: Bullying and Teasing. This program uses role play, realistic scenarios, and games to empower students to intervene when they see bullying happening around them.

Grades 5-7: Sexual Abuse Awareness. This program uses storytelling, role-plays, and age-appropriate scenarios to help students understand sexual abuse and the process of grooming. Students leave with an understanding of two important messages: **always** tell a safe adult, no matter what; and sexual abuse is **never** the fault of the victim- no matter what.

Grades 5-6: Internet Safety. This program educates students on how to stay safe from sexual predators on the internet. It uses age appropriate scenarios and interactive activities.

Grades 7-8: Media Literacy. This fun and interactive program helps students identify ways the media increases our tolerance for sexual violence by making it seem normal and acceptable. The program teaches students to become critical observers as well as what they can do to take action.

Grades 6-8: Sexual Harassment. Depending on the grade level, the sexual harassment presentations focus on: gender stereotyping; the differences between flirting and harassment; the ways sexual harassment

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and sexual assault fit into a larger continuum of sexual violence.

Grades 9-12: Sexual Assault and Acquaintance Rape: This highly interactive program helps students identify myths and realities about sexual assault. Students participate in role play and discussion about acquaintance rape, as well as a force choice activity about power dynamics and rape myths in our society. The role of alcohol and date rape drugs is discussed and students brainstorm ways they can support a friend who has experienced sexual assault.

The other regional organizations around the state offer a range of programs. All are free although donations are welcome as these organizations are non-profits. Most, if not all, of the programs meet the Maine Learning Results standards and all are provided by trained educators. The ten sexual assault support centers that comprise the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault are:

AUGUSTA—Sexual Assault Crisis & Support Center (SAC&SC)

www.silentnomore.org

Hotline: 1.800.871.7741

Area served: Southern Kennebec, Knox & Waldo Counties

BANGOR—Rape Response Services (RRS)

www.raperesponseservices.com

Hotline: 1.800.871.7741 / 207.989.5678

Area served: Penobscot & Piscataquis Counties

BATH/BRUNSWICK— Sexual Assault Support Services of Midcoast Maine (SASSMM)

www.sassmm.org

Hotline: 1.800.871.7741 / 1.800.822.5999

Area served: Eastern Cumberland, Sagadahoc & Lincoln Counties

ELLSWORTH— Downeast Sexual Assault Services (DSAS)

www.downeasthealth.org

Hotline: 1.800.871.7741 / 1.800.228.2470

Area served: Hancock & Washington Counties

FARMINGTON— Sexual Assault Victims Emergency Services (SAVES)

www.savesrapecrisis.org

Hotline: 1.800.871.7741 / 207.778.0110

Area served: Franklin County

LEWISTON/AUBURN—Sexual Assault Crisis Center (SACC)

www.sexualassaultcrisiscenter.org

Hotline: 1.800.871.7741 / 207.795.2211

Area served: Androscoggin County

PORTLAND— Sexual Assault Response Services of Southern Maine (SARSSM)

www.sarsonline.org

Hotline: 1.800.871.7741 / 1.800.313.9900

Area served: Cumberland & York Counties

PRESQUE ISLE— AMHC Sexual Assault Services (SAS)

www.amhc.org

Hotline: 1.800.871.7741 / 1.800.550.3304

Area served: Aroostook County

SOUTH PARIS —Rape Education and Crisis Hotline (REACH)

www.reachmaine.org

Hotline: 1.800.871.7741

Area served: Oxford County

WATERVILLE— Rape Crisis Assistance & Prevention (RCA&P)

www.rape-crisis.com

Hotline: 1.800.871.7741 / 1.800.525.4441

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Contact the regional organization that serves your area for more information about the programs they offer that would be appropriate for your school community.



The Director's Corner

By Thomas Harnett, Director, CRTP

A Visit to Lewiston Middle School

On Tuesday, February 12th I spent just about the entire day working in Lewiston. It was a great day. In the morning I conducted a workshop on civil rights and a question and answer session with over 65 bus drivers who transport students to every private and public school in the City of Lewiston, one of Maine's largest school districts. My time spent with the drivers was eye-opening on many levels and will be the topic of an article in a future issue of *The Torch*.

Right now I want to talk to you about the wonderful afternoon I spent at Lewiston Middle School. The school has only two grades, 7th and 8th, with well over 700 students. One of the best parts of my job as Director of the Civil Rights Team Project is meeting with members of Civil Rights Teams and speaking to students and faculty. Meeting the many members of the Lewiston Middle School Civil Rights Team and then speaking to over 700 students and faculty was no exception. For those of you who have never been to Lewiston Middle School, it has this amazing traditional style theater that can probably hold about 1,000 people.

It is also equipped with a huge stage and every inch of that stage was needed on February 12th. It is one of the largest stages I have ever spoken from.

When I arrived at the school, I was met by Shayna Malyata. Ms. Malyata teaches language arts and is also the Faculty Advisor to the school's Civil Rights Team, and what a team it is. Before I even took to the stage to speak, the members of the school's Civil Rights Team stole the show. They were a very hard act to follow. The assembly began with the team presenting a video of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivering some of his most powerful speeches. The audience of over 700 was so quiet nothing other than the words of Dr. King could be heard. It was both powerful and inspirational for the audience. For me, it was that and more. If you have ever heard me talk you might remember that I always quote Dr. King. Outside of my family, Dr. King is the single greatest influence in my life and his words and actions have played a role in almost everything I have done since I was a child. I found myself mesmerized and a bit worried that my voice would crack from emotion when it was my turn to talk.

Fortunately for me, the Civil Rights Team was not yet finished. Once the video ended, over 50 members of an even larger Civil Rights Team took to the stage to the sound of music they had put together. At this point the theater was rocking to the music and in appreciation of the team. After the team filled just about every nook and cranny of the stage, team members, sometimes alone and other times in pairs, read aloud their hopes and dreams while painting a blueprint for fair and just schools and communities that would be free from bias, hatred and discrimination. As they spoke, one-by-one

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the speakers revealed panels to the audience spelling out one of Dr. King's most recognizable lines:

I HAVE A DREAM

To top it off, the Civil Rights Team presented a preview of its recently created website. Though the site is still under construction, the parts I saw told me it will be fabulous. As soon as it is completed, *The Torch* will print its web address.

As I said earlier, the Lewiston Middle School Civil Rights Team was a very hard act to follow but I was still there to talk and so talk I did to a pretty special student body and staff. But my memories of that visit were not the words of my speech. They were the passion, courage, commitment and creativity of the members of the Civil Rights Team on display in Lewiston that day. With the effort shown by the team members and the student body, aided by the support provided by Ms. Malyata and other members of the Lewiston Middle School community, I left the school with no doubt that with Civil Rights Teams, concerned students and supportive staff like these, Dr. King's *dream* will soon be a reality.

Thank you Lewiston Middle School!

I HAVE A DREAM – also appearing at Garrett Schenck Elementary School

Another school that performed Martin Luther King, Jr.'s I Have A Dream Speech was Garrett Schenck Elementary School in Anson. According to FA Sandy Weston, the team divided the speech up into parts and performed it for the quarterly Honor Roll assembly. Channel 11, one of the local public access television stations, sent someone to tape the performance and it was aired on February 15-17, twice each day. The tape, which was approximately 30 minutes long, included an interview of Sandy and her co-FA Brenda Mullin during which they explained what the CRT was all about and the affect they feel the CRT has had on the school's atmosphere. Channel 11 sent copies of the DVD to public access stations in Waterville, Fairfield, Oakland and Farmington.

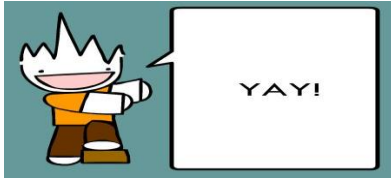
Involving the public access television station in this event was a perfect example of bringing the work of the CRT out into the greater community. Positive events like this one are a wonderful showcase for what our team members are doing and they help to educate municipal community members on the important function that a CRT plays in its school community and beyond. Public access stations and local weekly papers are frequently looking for this type of event to report on so please do not overlook these important communication channels when planning an event at your school.

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A Successful No Name Calling Week Activity at M.L. Day School

FA Pat Tracy reported that the Civil Rights Team at M.L. Day School in Arundel sponsored a poster contest in order to work on a theme for its No Name Calling Week. Students created posters and then each classroom selected what it considered to be the best poster by a student in that room. The CRT then displayed the selected posters in a hallway where everyone in the whole school would be able to see them as they went to lunch or to a special (art, music, gym, etc.). A winning poster was selected from each of the three grades and the classrooms with the students who produced the best posters won a No Name Calling celebration for the whole class. At the celebration, CRT members showed a short CRT video, conducted interactive games that promoted working together in new ways, and served healthy snacks, fruit and popcorn. In addition, the winners were announced at the Student of the Month Community Meeting.

The team is also planning to put on a play of "The Band-Aid Chicken for K-2 students later this month.

Keep up the good work M.L. Day School and keep sharing your successes!



Maine Jewish Film Festival

The annual Maine Jewish Film Festival will take place from March 29-April 6 at various venues throughout the Portland area. This year's festival theme is Labor. Festival organizers chose this theme in hopes that it would be a "catalyst for both Jewish and non-Jewish audiences to seek greater understanding of the Jewish Labor movement through the powerful medium of film."

Some highlights include the story of Clara Lemlich who endured arrests and beatings as a result of her efforts to organize garment workers in Manhattan's Lower East Side; the inhabitants of the "Coops" one of four cooperative apartments built in the Bronx in the 1920s by visionary Jewish garment workers; the anti-Nazi and rescue activities of the American Jewish labor movement, including their aid to the Underground fighters of the ghettos of East Europe; and Gertrude Berg, star and producer, of the 1950's sit-com The Goldbergs who took a stand against McCarthyism.

For information about the films that will be shown during the festival as well as show times, dates and venues, go to www.mjff.org.

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Ice Breaker of the Month:



Chatterbugs is a quick moving ice breaker that allows participants to get to know everyone in the group through brief mini chats with each other. The length of time it takes to complete this ice breaker depends on the number of people in the group and the amount of time available. The only items needed for this activity are a Chatterbugs handout with suggestions of subjects to talk about (more explanation on that in a minute) and a whistle (or other noisemaker).

To get started, divide participants up into two equal groups. One group will be the “Lightning Bugs” and the other will be the “Dragon Flies.” Have all Lightning Bugs form a circle with their backs to the center of the circle. Have all Dragon Flies form a larger circle around the Lightning Bugs, with everyone facing a partner. If there is an unequal number of participants, the leader can participate.

Start by having each set of partners introduce themselves to each other. Then the Chatterbugs leader chooses a topic from his Chatterbugs handout and announces it to the group. For example, the topic might be “My favorite television show is...” Each Lightning Bug and then each Dragon Fly gets 30 seconds to chat about that topic with their partner.

After one minute, the leader blows the whistle to signal time is up. Lightning

Bugs rotate to the next Dragon Fly on their right and form a new partnership with that person. Introductions are made and then the leader announces another topic of conversation, such as “If I could do anything I wanted, I would...”

The leader calls out a different topic and has participants repeat the process until they have completely gone around the circle and met everyone. If time allows, the leader can give a few minutes of free time at the end of the activity for participants to mingle and discuss the things they did not get to cover with people they would like to get to know better.

Teams interested in doing a Chatterbugs ice breaker can use the list of chat ideas below for their Chatterbugs handout.

Chatterbugs Topics

- 1) My favorite thing is...
- 2) My favorite television show is...
- 3) My favorite type of music is...
- 4) If I could travel any where new I would go to...
- 5) The thing that makes me the happiest is...
- 6) My family...
- 7) The most important thing in my life is...
- 8) For a hobby, I...
- 9) I like or hate technology because...
- 10) I have or would like to have a pet...
- 11) I like to read...
- 12) If I could do anything I wanted, I would...

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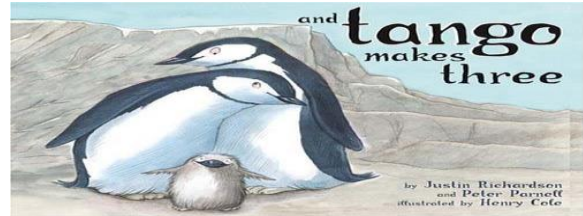
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- 13) My dream car is a...
- 14) My favorite type of food is...
- 15) If I could say whatever I wanted to generations past, I'd say...
- 16) My favorite actor or actress is...
- 17) My best piece of advice is...
- 18) If my car could speak it would say...
- 19) My dream job is...
- 20) In ten years I will be...
- 21) Did I ever tell about the time I...
- 22) If I were a millionaire I would...
- 23) My favorite movie is...
- 24) My favorite place is...
- 25) The craziest thing I ever did was...

This is one of many activities that helps students to find common areas of interest and to break down barriers that can result in isolation and loneliness. It also demonstrates that it gets easier and easier to talk to someone you do not know very well if you just have an opener for your conversation.



Update on *And Tango Makes Three*. Some of you may recall this multi-award winning book from the November 2007 Book Corner about two male chinstrap penguins who were given an egg to hatch by the zookeepers at the Central Park Zoo and ultimately raised a baby penguin named Tango. Just last week, another school district, this one in Virginia, removed *And Tango Makes Three* from the shelves of its school libraries, making it available only to teachers and adults. This action was taken after a parent complained that the book, which admittedly is about a non-traditional family, promoted “the gay agenda.”

For those of you who take pride in reading books at the center of such controversies and sharing them with your students, Simon and Schuster Publishing Co. has developed a set of questions that can be used in discussions about *And Tango Makes Three*.

The questions are thoughtful, well-designed and appropriate for any age.

To review the discussion questions as well as a number of suggestions for projects, activities and research, go to <http://www.simonsays.com/content/book.cfm?tab=22&pid=505791&agid=21>.

One has to ask that if we cannot discuss issues in the context of a true story from the animal kingdom, how can we possibly make students who come from families

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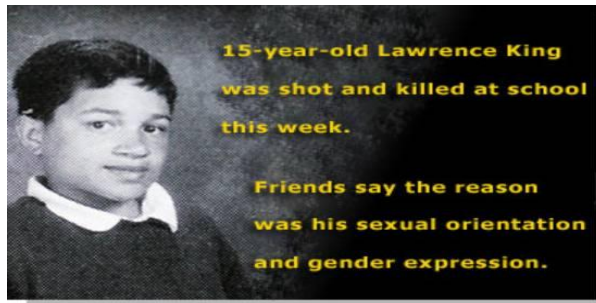
CIVIL RIGHTS TEAM PROJECT NEWSLETTER

February/March 2008

Newsletter Editor: Amy Homans

that differ from the norm, whatever that might be today, feel accepted in their school community?

Why WE Do What We Do



The February 12 killing of a 15 year old boy at his middle school in Oxnard, California highlights why we all do the work we do when we sign up for a stint with the CRTP. Lawrence King had recently told friends at his school that he was gay and had begun wearing feminine accessories with his school uniform. A fellow male student, who was 14 years old, allegedly reacted to King's recent disclosure that he had a crush on the boy by bringing a gun to school and shooting King.

According to King's family and friends, he was a sensitive boy with a beautiful singing voice who loved to draw and paint and who hoped one day to pursue his love of insects by becoming an entomologist.

As all of you know, everyone involved with the CRTP works hard to create safe school environments for every child so that tragedies that led to the death of Lawrence King do not happen in our schools. The fact

that we have not had a killing at a school should not overshadow the fact that every year or so we hear of students who committed suicide after being targeted based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation. There is still much work to be done, but much has been accomplished through the continued efforts of dedicated faculty advisors and team members around the state over the past twelve years. For that, we thank you.



“Extra, Extra, Read All About It!”

Has your team just completed a successful project, read a great book, had a good fundraiser, listened to an inspiring speaker, seen a compelling video, or done something that was just plain fun that you would like to share with other teams? Send your news to amy@maine.rr.com with the subject heading: Newsletter item.

This newsletter is written and distributed by the Civil Rights Team Project, a state-wide program under the auspices of the Maine Office of the Attorney General. The mission of the Civil Rights Team Project is to increase the safety of high school, middle school and elementary school students and to reduce the incidence of bias-motivated harassment and violence in schools.

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