

Many teenage girls have low self-esteem

Center opens



ALL ABOUT
FAMILIES
ALICE
MC CARTHY

Self-esteem, simply put, means being satisfied with yourself, with who you are as a person. Self-esteem is not measured by looking good, or even feeling good, but by knowing that you are enough, just as you are.

For adolescent girls today, the cost of low self-esteem is painfully obvious. Despite today's great opportunities for life and career development, adolescent girls are at greater risk of depression and eating disorders than boys of the same age and are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol. Girls are at greater risk for suicide. Girls are more likely to drop out of school. One million girls a year, a number greater than the population of the state of Montana, become pregnant each year.

Concern about appearance and

weight points to another, more subtle way that girls lose life direction during puberty. Fifty-one percent of 13-year-old girls are unhappy with their bodies. By age 17, the figure goes up to 78 percent. For many American girls, the transition to womanhood and opportunity for personal and career fulfillment is cut short by decision-making patterns that put image ahead of well-being and realistic goals.

In "The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls" (Random House, 1997), Cornell University professor Joan Brumberg documents how an increasingly younger age at the time of menstruation shapes girls' perceptions and attitudes. Due to better diets and less disease, girls begin menstruating earlier than girls 100 years ago. Sexual awakening today begins in middle school rather than high school, or even college.

According to Brumberg, "Many young women today may look mature at age 12 or 13, but they still evidence ways that are essentially childlike." This lag between girls' emotional and

intellectual development comes at a time in our social history when critics from every side of the social and political spectrum have noted when girls are less nurtured and less constrained socially than ever before. Children are not born with self-esteem. Helping girls set attainable, realistic goals by focusing on who the girl is, rather than how she looks, is an important beginning for parents, caretakers and educators.

Parents especially need to be sensitive about their attitudes. Don't tell a girl to "go for it" but only reward her when she is a "good girl" or "cute." Don't criticize the media for sexualizing adolescents and then announce that you are going on a crash diet to lose 10 pounds before the upcoming holidays.

Families, teachers, administrators, coaches, social workers, all those who care about the development of young people, can help girls develop the following characteristics:

- A feeling of connection with caring adults other than parents, especially in school and in the

community.

- A can-do attitude toward activities and challenging tasks.
- A sense of life's possibilities, especially in developing relationships with mentors and career role-models.

- The ability to use a well-grounded decision-making process, tested with the help of family and mentors.

- An ability to experience control regarding decisions related to her body, at an early age.

- An understanding of the biological, emotional and social forces that affect adolescent girls.

RESOURCES
For your pre-adolescent daughter:

- "Brave New Girls: Creative Ideas to Help Girls Be Confident, Healthy and Happy" by Jeanette Gadeburg (Fairview Press, 1997, \$12.95). Thought-provoking, creative, fun exercises empower girls to take initiative and stand up for themselves. Straight-talking guide by clinical social worker with two daughters.

- For families, professions, mentors:

"Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls" by Mary Pipher (Ballantine Books, 1996, \$12.60). Case studies make clear how much daughters need both parents. Suggests strategies to help daughters thrive.

"Healthy Teens: Success in High School and Beyond" by Alice R. McCarthy, Ph.D. (Bridge Communications Inc., 1450 Pilgrim Road, Birmingham 48009, 1997, \$9.20 including shipping). Authoritative, easy-to-use reference about 60 important health, developmental and social issues facing teens today. Concise, accurate.

All About Families runs every other week in The Eccentric Newspapers. Birmingham resident Alice McCarthy is a nationally known parent educator, writer and editor. She is the mother of five children and grandmother to eight young children. To leave a message for McCarthy, from a touch-tone phone, call (313) 953-2047, mailbox 1894, or write her at The Eccentric, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009.

Beaumont Hospital has opened a new Comprehensive Breast Center, bringing together in one location leading medical experts and state-of-the-art technology to diagnose all types of breast diseases and treat breast cancer.

The center is in Beaumont's Imaging Center, on Beaumont's Royal Oak campus. It provides comprehensive care in one location. Parking is available in the adjacent South Parking Deck, with covered walkway access to the center.

A full team of specialists, consisting of a surgeon, radiation oncologist, diagnostic radiologist, pathologist and nurse practitioner gather in one room to consult with each patient and to coordinate aspects of care.

The center is designed to meet the medical and personal needs of today's patients, who are typically very busy women, and sometimes men, who have a lot of demands on their time between family and career," said John Ingold, Beaumont breast surgeon.

Christmas Tree Guide



Roberts Hill Farm
New Farm This Year
Open 12-Dark - 7-Days
From Nov. 28, 1997
Choose & Cut your own Blue Spruce
\$35.00
1-75, Pine Knob exit (exit 89),
Sashabaw Rd.
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Braun's Tree Farm
Fraser Fir • Douglas Fir
Blue Spruce • Scotch Pine
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We cut and wrap
Location: 796 W. Main Rd.
Between Pontiac Trail & White Pine
Exit 82, In Ann Arbor Area
Wednesday - Friday 5-dark, or by appt.
(313) 663-2717

HOWELL NATURE CENTER
Cut your own Scotch Pine \$30.00
Fresh cut Douglas Fir
Spruce & Pine
Free Skating • Live Music Tables
on weekends • Hot chocolate • Free hot
wings, snacks, coffee & refreshments
All proceeds benefit the Nature Center
Hours: 9-5, starting November 28th
• Santa arrives 1st 2 weekends in December
• Have breakfast with Santa on December 13th
517-546-0249
(at the end of the Rd.)

WATERLOO TREE FARM
Take 1 Mile W of M-24 South 2 miles, left on Waterloo Rd.
1 mile to Village of Waterloo, then follow the signs
PICK FROM 35 ACRES OF TREES
• Spruce • Pines • Firs • Potted Trees
• Balled & Burlapped • U-Cut & We Cut
Weathters • Hot Chocolate • Hot Drinks
Sat. & Sun. In December Santa comes to
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Dancer & Prancer
Sat. - Sun. 9-dark, Wednesdays 1-dark
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