

# Sister -to- Sister

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2009 AT PRESERVATION PLAZA, MARYVILLE

## EXCITEMENT!

That's what happens when girls come together to share their ideas and opinions. And

that is what's happening across the country at American Association of University Women (AAUW) Sister-to-Sister Summits. Launched in November 1997, these conferences give girls an opportunity to talk to each other about issues that affect their lives but are not always adequately addressed in school. Girls discuss the issues and create a Plan of Action to address their concerns. These Sister-to-Sister Summits are part of AAUW's *Initiative for Educational Equity*, focused on grades 6 through 12.

## Why a Summit?

### GIVE GIRLS A CHANCE TO BE HEARD.

AAUW's 1991 *Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America* and YWCA's *Safe Passage: Voices from the Middle School* show that in adolescence, girls often experience a significant decline in self-esteem, losing the strong voices they once had. In 1995, the AAUW Foundation followed up with *Growing Smart: What's Working for Girls in School*, showing that to thrive, girls need to be connected with caring adults, respected as central players, and empowered to realize their dreams.

Sister-to-Sister Summits give girls of all backgrounds an opportunity to discuss their frustrations, ideas, and dreams. What challenges do they face? What steps can they take to solve problems? What support do they need?

### CHANGE A GIRL'S LIFE.

With their concerns identified, girls will articulate the messages they want to convey, the services they need, and the changes they want to make. Adult facilitators then help the girls transform their thoughts into a platform for action. The platform on paper becomes an agenda for change in our schools and communities. By collaborating with local schools and organizations, we can help organize sustained responses to girls' needs.

## AN OVERVIEW OF OUR NINTH BLOUNT COUNTY SUMMIT

- This all day Summit is designed to bring together **75-100 girls in 7th-12th grade** from all three Blount County school districts to explore issues they identify as adversely affecting their lives and learning.
- Research shows that, by sharing experiences with one another, girls **gain confidence** to support each other, change risky behaviors, and establish new goals and dreams.
- Girls will be given opportunities to develop their own ideas for **concrete solutions** as they work in **small groups of 10 or less**, with facilitators trained in dealing with sensitive issues.
- **Topics** for the discussion groups will be chosen from answers the girls provide to specific questions on the registration brochure, such as "*What do you think are the 3-5 most important issues or struggles facing teens today?*"
- **Trained professionals**, such as LCSWs, guidance counselors, and teachers, help plan and facilitate the event. Parents, students, and other community volunteers are also involved in making the Summit happen.
- The day includes other activities to empower girls and foster a sense of cooperation and **teamwork**.
- **A free lunch and snacks will be provided. The luncheon will feature a keynote speaker to encourage the girls to work hard, set goals, and follow their dreams.**

## LOGISTICS

The Summit will be held from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and girls must stay for the entire day. They can register by completing a questionnaire, which will be available from the guidance counselor or contact person at each school. A parental permission slip is mandatory for attendance.

## THE BLOUNT COUNTY SISTER TO SISTER SUMMIT

Our Summit was the first in Tennessee and one of eight to receive national recognition. It is a project of community individuals and organizations including AAUW and the Center for Strong Communities at Maryville College. The Women's Equity Foundation serves as the fiscal agent for the Summit, allowing for tax-deductible contributions.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

[WWW.DISCOVERET.ORG/AAUWMVIL/S2S.HTM](http://WWW.DISCOVERET.ORG/AAUWMVIL/S2S.HTM)

OR CALL THE CENTER FOR STRONG COMMUNITIES AT MARYVILLE COLLEGE

981-8894

# Sister to Sister

~ A Summit by, for, and about Girls ~



## 9th Annual Blount County Sister to Sister Summit *Thursday, November 5, 2009* at Preservation Plaza in Downtown Maryville

- ♀ The all-day Summit explores issues girls identify as important to their lives and learning.
- ♀ One hundred girls in grades 7-12 from all the school systems in Blount County come together.
- ♀ Girls develop their own ideas for realistic solutions as they work in small groups with facilitators trained in dealing with sensitive issues.
- ♀ Topics for the discussion groups are chosen by the girls themselves.
- ♀ Girls will develop the messages they want to convey, the services they need, and the changes they want to make in their schools and communities.
- ♀ The Summit encourages girls to strengthen their voices, sister to sister!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT OUR WEB SITE, [www.discoveret.org/aauwmvil/s2s.htm](http://www.discoveret.org/aauwmvil/s2s.htm)

OR CONTACT:

MARYVILLE COLLEGE CENTER FOR STRONG COMMUNITIES, 981-8894