

Calendar of Events

Coalition Meetings for 2008

(Meetings take place on the fourth Wednesday of the month)
12:00 pm- 2:00 pm

- January 30th: Annual Meeting/Business Meeting
- February 27th: Discussion
- March 26th: Presentation /Business Meeting
- April 23rd: Regional Meeting (Newport, OR)
- May 28th: Presentation/Business Meeting
- June 25th: Discussion
- July: No meeting
- August 27th: Discussion/Business Meeting
- September 24th: Presentation/Business Meeting
- October 22nd: Discussion
- November 19th: Presentation/Business Meeting
- December: No meeting

We want to help spread the word about other Girls' Programs, Events, or Trainings on our website: www.equalaccessforgirls.org
Contact Sydney Linden at sydney.linden@morrisonkids.org if you would like to include a link to your program on our website.

The Coalition Honors Dick Smith



There was one person whose term was up and who was not on the nominations list at the Coalition's Annual Meeting--he is a man who has been with the Coalition since the beginning, standing up fearlessly and loudly for the girls of Oregon. He is a board member who has agreed (sometimes with a little pressure from us), for many, many years after his retirement from the Youth Guidance Association to stay on the Coalition's Board. As a founding member of the Coalition, "it is our honor to recognize Dick Smith with deep appreciation for his life-long and enduring commitment to the girls and young women of Oregon."

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Coalition of Advocates
For Equal Access
For Girls
1500 Ne Irving St. Suite 250
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The Girls' Advocate

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Be the best advocate that you can be!

Volume 9, Issue 1

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The Girls' Advocate is published three times yearly. Submissions and calendar events may be e-mailed to: sydney.linden@morrisonkids.org or sent to: Sydney Linden, 1500 NE Irving St. Suite 250, Portland, OR 97232

For more information about *The Girls' Advocate* or to become a member of the Coalition of Advocates for Equal Access for Girls, contact Pam Patton at 503.258.4167. Help us be a voice for girls and girls' needs in Oregon!

Check out our website!

www.equalaccessforgirls.org

Editing, design and layout by:
Sydney Linden

Annual Meeting's Keynote Speaker Shares Seven Reminders for Advocates

by Jeannette Pai-Espinosa, President of The National Crittenton Foundation

As committed activists and advocates, it's *between our passion/vision and our actions*. Our easy for us to become obsessed and narrowly talk and walk need to be consistent with each other. focused about "the" cause, about what we are As a child growing up in a small town outside of passionate about. As people who work so hard Kansas City I grew up in the loving grip of my first generation Korean family. I resoundingly rejected to support the empowerment of girls and young women and advocate for justice, it's all too easy speaking English in kindergarten, which led to my to lose perspective or become a martyr. *There are a few simple things that will help us stay focused, balanced and realistic.* parents prohibiting me from speaking Korean - to this day I do not speak it. I remember the birth of hope and the deaths of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr., the war, and Watergate--these are the markers of my childhood. I learned at an early age that commitment to a vision required sacrifice - whether it was my mother tongue or a leaders life it women of, at least my generation am a was clear to me. **Third: No one said it would be easy to be an activist and/or advocate so we have to guard against becoming a martyr for the cause, or becoming righteous or self-indulgent.**

I have a daughter and three sons and I spent the greater part of my life pouring myself into their positive growth and development while, I might add, working full time. You see, I like most women of, at least my generation am a superwoman, that is... until I have a melt down because I can't figure out what clothes to put on in the morning or can't find my keys, or break my glasses. **Here is our first reminder: We are not, nor do we need to be super women!**



We all have passions that drive what we do, how we spend our time and why we make the choices we do. But there are ways to pursue your passion and vision for the world that contribute to those ends, and there are ways to pursue them that create more dissonance and strife along the way. So while we're busy following our passion we have to be mindful of the character and nature of how we do our work not just what we do. **So the second reminder is: We must be willing to be accountable for the consistency or inconsistency**

was born. Nevertheless, I turned out all right. Why? In a nutshell: my parents and other adults never stopped believing that I was a good person who would one day find my way and even positively contribute to society. Today we'd call that positive youth development. But in the end the lesson is simple, and **this is our fourth reminder: We all rise and fall to the level of expectations that we have of ourselves and others.** We're pretty good about remembering this about the girls and young women we serve, but we need to remember this about our colleagues, allies, partners and even those we oppose.

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Seven Reminders Continued...

Before I became a mother - I just knew that with all my life experience, education and training I would be able to protect by daughter and sons from sexism and racism. But the reality is that no matter what my husband and I did, we could not shield them from going through life perceived as different from the norm. Moreover, we couldn't shield them from internalizing some of the stereotypes and assumptions that are communicated through the media and other social forces about various groups of people. Today, they are wise, funny, critical thinkers, advocates in their own rights and adults. But I had hoped we could protect them more. **So number five is: Never stop trying to instigate change but be realistic because there is only so much we can do.** We have to constantly remind ourselves of this otherwise we may lose the hope and energy to continue. In the end number five is about cutting yourself some slack.

There have been many times in my professional career and personal life when I was sure I was right. But people are complex, we never truly know the motivation or values that compel someone to speak or act as they do. Someone can take an action that I don't agree with, to achieve a goal I share with him or her. Does this make them right, or me, or both of us? We'll never really know. I've met lots of activists and advocates who couldn't see the assumptions they were making because they were too consumed by "being right." **I dedicate our sixth**

reminder to them: Doing the right thing doesn't mean you are always right, so check your assumptions at the door.

After devoting years and years to the advancement of a cause it's easy to believe that we know all the answers, but we don't. In fact we may be unwittingly contributing to sustaining the status quo. To solve an issue or right an injustice we have to let it go, to morph, to grow and change so that others can adopt it, shape and move it ahead. This can be hard and taxing because we become comfortable with our position, our ideas, our solutions, our struggle and the opposition. If we do not address this challenge then we become part of the problem. **Seventh, the last and final reminder is: Be courageous enough to honestly consider how you may be contributing to the problem.**

So let me close by saying that we can make the world a better place for girls at risk. We can implement effective equal access laws like Oregon's across the United States. We can, as women of color and white women, come together in meaningful ways to address the dynamics of race and gender in our lives.

In April, the National Crittenton Foundation will celebrate its 125th anniversary and will launch a series of monthly Conversations for women on gender and race in Oregon. I invite you to join us.

To find out more, email the National Crittenton Foundation at inbox@TNCF.org.

Two Young Women from Salvation Army White Shield Share their Stories at the Annual Meeting
Robin Triest Carlson, MSW, LCSW, Executive Director

Asleigh, the 20 year old mother of an adorable 22 month old son, who has resided at White Shield for about 18 months and Amber who is 18, she and her beautiful toddler daughter had resided at White Shield Center for almost 13 months and transitioned to the community this past October spoke passionately about their experiences at the White Shield Center.

Since the late 1800's, the White Shield Center has served adolescent girls who need a safe, secure, and nurturing environment while receiving counseling and skill building, mental health services, substance abuse treatment, and education.

The challenges faced by these young women are many and include histories of domestic violence, law violations, substance abuse, emotional and behavioral issues, and limited community and/or family support. All of our clients have access to individual, group, and family counseling. Prenatal clients receive extensive childbirth education and all Parenting Program clients receive daily parenting classes.

One of the unique aspects of The

White Shield Center is that it also provides couples counseling and parent education services to teen fathers who are involved, safe partners. This kind of program is rare in adolescent facilities-a young woman currently living at the White Shield Center expressed that learning how to have a healthy relationship with the father of her child is extremely important to her.

Some of White Shield's most successful services have been those offered through our Youth Development Program. The Youth Development Program provides enhanced independent living skill building services for our Parenting Program clients. The program includes life skills for teen mothers through one-on-one mentoring with caring women, the opportunity for young women to shadow professionals in a variety of industries, and access to professional clothing that helps young women gain confidence and self-esteem on their journey toward success.

Our Parenting Program clients remain at White Shield an average of one year giving us the chance to watch young teens transition into capable, delightful young women and the opportunity to share in the amazing developments that occur with the infants and toddlers. We feel truly blessed to have this privilege.



President's Notes

Pam Patton
President of the
Coalition of Advocates
for Equal Access for Girls



The Coalition is here to support the adults who empower girls and to give a voice to girls and to their issues and needs. We do this through advocacy and education. For years we have distributed our "Ten Ways You can Advocate for Girls," which is available on our website. I would like to highlight a few of these advocacy tips here. First, I would like to highlight #7 of the 10 Ways--"Vote, and get all of your family, neighbors, colleagues and friends to vote as well!" One of the ways you can give girls the power of their voice is to encourage and assist young women in your life to register and to vote! With a ground breaking Presidential election approaching and with state and congressional elections, not to mention ballot measures that could effect the well being of young women this is your opportunity to empower young women with the power of their voice, their vote. In discussing voting with young women it is important for us to remember and for young women to be educated about the long road women traveled to get the right to vote. In case you need some reminders-

"In 1848, like-minded women banded together to gain equal political rights and power and held the first women's rights convention -- the Seneca Falls conference -- in upstate New York. The Seneca Falls Conference jump-started the women's movement, eventually resulting in the formation of the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Led by Stanton, Susan B. Anthony and Lucy Stone, the association worked tirelessly to gain support for an amendment granting women's suffrage, only to be repeatedly rebuffed by Congress. After the Civil War, for example, the 14th and 15th amendments to the Constitution granted citizenship and suffrage to African Americans but ignored women and suffrage. Then along came America's entry into World War I, which the suffrage association publicly supported in the hopes of reaping political reward when it ended. Yet it wasn't politics but the practical contribution women made to the war effort that would be crucial to their cause. Millions

of women, including large numbers of suffragettes, worked in hospitals, office buildings, relief agencies, businesses and even factories, both military and civilian. Wherever a void was left by men sent to fight in Flanders and France, women filled it. And filled it so well that when the war ended, their desire for equality could no longer be denied. Having proved they could shoulder the responsibilities of citizenship, they deserved to share in the rights of citizenship. As a result, Congress finally passed, and sent to the states for ratification the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote. It was ratified this week in 1920, when Tennessee became the 36th state to give its approval. At long last "the ladies" were men's equal in the voting booth." -Bruce Kauffmann, historian and former writer for TV news anchor Dan Rather, 2003.

Advocacy for girls and young women with elected officials goes beyond the election and doesn't stop during the interim. In fact now until November is a critical time for you to set the groundwork for introducing your legislators and candidates to your girls' issues, invite them to your programs so they can put a face to the budget lines and policy bills impacting girls in the 2009 Legislative Session. Write personal letters introducing yourself, sharing with them your concerns about issues that impact the young women you know and/or work with. Share a success story with your legislators and other advocates about how your relationship or your program made a difference in the life of a young woman and her family.

Do something active today to give girls and girls' issues a voice-it could be the answer to making your day meaningful and motivating. Getting involved in little ways can make a big difference in maybe one girl's life and together we can make a huge difference in lots of girl's lives in Oregon. Take the little steps to get involved! Work side by side with other advocates and young women and **make a difference, experience the power and the collective voice that can help change the future!**

OYA Opens a Facility for Young Women

We are excited to announce that culminating years of effort by the Coalition, other partners, and OYA, the Oak Creek Youth Correctional Facility in Albany is re-opening as an all-female facility. OYA is totally committed to utilizing a gender-specific treatment approach and creating an environment at Oak Creek that is responsive to young women's unique issues and needs. After 7 months of intense planning and remodeling, Oak Creek held an Open House on February 20th and is in the process of a staged transfer of the young women from Hillcrest to the Oak Creek 75 bed facility. It is expected that all the young women will be transferred by the end of February. OYA says they will strive "to be a national leader in effective correctional services to young women."

