

# Morning Sentinel

Local

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## Girls Unlimited!

### 5th annual conference set Saturday in Fairfield

By AMY CALDER  
Staff Writer

WATERVILLE — Helping girls develop into healthy, hardy, confident adults will be the focus of the 5th annual Girls Unlimited! conference to be held Saturday at Kennebec Valley Technical College in Fairfield.

Hosted by the group, Hardy Girls, Healthy Women, the conference is for girls in fifth through eighth grades and will be held from 9 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

The event includes workshops on everything from mime and yoga to wilderness survival skills and making your own magazine.

"It's to provide an opportunity for girls to be challenged, develop connections with other girls and explore areas of interest in a safe environment — what we call 'hardiness zones,'" said organizer Karen Heck, who also is a founder of the event.

The cost is \$15 at the door or \$10 in advance. One may register in advance by calling 861-8131 or by downloading an application on the

Web site [www.hardygirlshealthywoman.org](http://www.hardygirlshealthywoman.org).

Heck said that this year's conference was planned by five Waterville high-schoolers who are previous Girls Unlimited! attendees. They are Elise Rich-Colton, Emily Naber, Kerri Knights and Jackie Mannocchi.

"They're leading the morning activities, too," Heck said. "That's what we've always wanted — that girls start out in an organization, move through it and give back."

She said the teens were asked what message they wanted to issue to the girls attending the conference.

"They all said, 'Don't let cliques get you down — you can survive them — don't worry about what you weigh and what's really important is on the inside,'" Heck said.

The theme of Saturday's conference is "Turn Beauty Inside Out," an idea originated by the girls editorial board of New Moon Magazine, according to Heck. According to the theme, a person is defined as beautiful if she has a good heart, performs great works and practices activism, Heck said.

Girls on Saturday will take part in activities designed to get them thinking about the power of cliques and what they can do to overcome them, she said.

Participants also will have the opportunity to make quilt squares for the "Just Me" quilt which will hang in the resource center at Hardy Girls, Healthy Women on Common Street.

Ninety girls from Indian Island to Bath and West to Kingfield have signed up for the conference, which can accommodate about 125, according to Heck.

"It's open to girls anywhere," she said.

A workshop for women will be offered entitled "Dreams for Our Daughters." Participants will create a dreamscape.

The conference is sponsored by Mid-State Machine, the state Department of Transportation, KVTC, PaperMoon Graphics and the Women's Luncheon Lecture Series.

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## Films explore effects of media violence on boys

By JONATHAN HUMPHREY  
Staff Writer

WATERVILLE — The effects of the media and of video violence on boys' development will be explored in three film presentations over the next two months organized by Hardy Girls, Healthy Women.

The film series begins at 10 a.m. Saturday at Railroad Square Cinema with the film "Tough Guise." Other films will include "Game Over" on March 15, and "Wrestling with Manhood" on April 5.

Admission to each film is \$5.

"The intent of this movie series is to raise peoples' awareness about the impact the media and video games have on boys' development," Karen Heck, an organizer of the series, said. "In raising awareness about the issue we talk about some strategies that can be used as an antidote to the problem."

Film discussions will be led by Mark Tappan, a Colby College professor of Education and Human Development.

Tappan also led film discussions last year, which was the first year the series was offered, Heck said.

"Tough Guise" explores the relationship between media images and how men and boys develop their concept of a masculine identity based on what they see on television and in movies.

"After awhile you begin to think all men are tough and they are action-oriented and they can solve every problem with violence or with strength, and that's not true," Heck said.

The documentary "Game Over" explores gender and race in video games, as well as the controversial topic of the effects of video

game violence.

"Wrestling with Manhood" addresses the huge popularity of professional wrestling among male youth and its relationship to real-life violence, and offers a new perspective on violence against women and bullying in schools.

All films can be borrowed from the the Hardy Girls, Healthy Women library. Anyone wanting more information on the film series may call 861-8131.

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