

Turn Beauty Inside Out!

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May 17th, 2006 is the sixth annual "Turn Beauty Inside Out (TBJO) Day," an international celebration of media images that promote healthy behavior for girls and boys. TBJO is a public education effort sponsored by New Moon Magazine (www.newmoon.org) and run by the "Mind on the Media", a non-profit organization (www.mindonthemedia.org). New Moon's editorial board, which is comprised of 20 young girls, said, "Girls get so much pressure to be 'beautiful' on the outside. We want to get to know the whole girl—girls who care strongly about something and about themselves, girls who can overcome something, even if it's really hard."

There is tremendous pressure for people, especially women and girls, in the U.S. to be thin and much of this pressure comes from the media. Our culture believes that unless you are thin you cannot be happy, successful, attractive, powerful or accepted. The constant barrage of these messages sets people up to be dissatisfied with their bodies and chips away at their self esteem leading them at times to take drastic and unhealthy measures to try to control their bodies sizes and shapes.

Some interesting facts:

- ❖ **50% of 9-year-old and 80% of 10-year-old American girls are on a diet**
- ❖ **The number one magic wish for young girls age 11-17 is to be thinner**
- ❖ **Young girls are more afraid of becoming fat than they are of nuclear war, cancer or losing their parents**
- ❖ **Girls of dieting mothers are more likely to diet and develop eating disorders**
- ❖ **50% of young girls have substantially disordered eating attitudes. More than 5 million Americans suffer from eating disorders**
- ❖ **Between elementary and high school, the percentage of girls in the U.S. who are "happy with the way I am" drops from 60% to 29%.**

In honor of TBJO day, we are inviting people everywhere to join in celebrating Inner Beauty—the beauty of good works, good hearts, and activism. The following are tips to help girls and boys (not to speak of women and men) create a

definition of beauty that focuses on who they are and what they do, not on how they look!

- ❖ **Send a card to a friend telling them why they have Inner Beauty (i.e. You listen to me when I need you, you make me laugh, you care about others, you stand up for what you believe).**
- ❖ **Write a list of adjectives that describe your strengths, what you can do, and who you are on the inside.**
- ❖ **Write aspects of your inner selves on a t-shirt (i.e. "I like poetry," "I like sunsets," "I like hugs," etc.) to symbolize "It's what's inside that counts."**
- ❖ **Write a song – or poem – that expresses your views about the media and the cultural pressures. A popular song, which does this, is TLC's *Unpretty*.**
- ❖ **Look at advertisements with a critical eye. Ask yourself what are the subtle and not so subtle messages the ad conveys.**
- ❖ **Log onto www.mindonthemedia.com which is a national website that celebrates media images that promote healthy body image and expand the definition of what makes people beautiful.**
- ❖ **Read an issue of *New Moon* magazine and discuss the concept of beauty with family and friends.**
- ❖ **Avoid negative comments about your or anyone else's body.**
- ❖ **Make a mobile with affirmations of why you are beautiful**
- ❖ **Tell each person you see today what you appreciate about him or her.**

Traci Hawkins is a clinical psychologist with offices in Brooklyn and Ann Arbor. She has 15 years of experience and specializes in eating disorders, weight loss, depression, anxiety, marriage repair and enrichment.

grief and loss, Christian therapy, and goal achievement.

For more information on how parents and educators can teach our young people how to think critically about the media and how they can develop healthy relationships with their bodies, please feel free to contact Traci Hawkins at 517-414-0065 or T_Hawk@comcast.net.