

Spelman Blueprint Conference for Middle & High School Girls

Saturday, June 6th

2009

The Boston Area Chapter of the National Alumnae Association of Spelman will host the 3rd Annual Middle and High School Girls Conference to provide Boston girls with a forum for open, honest dialogue between themselves and positive female role models.

“A Better Me”



NATIONAL ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION OF SPELMAN COLLEGE

Boston Chapter

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS CONFERENCE



The National Alumnae Association of Spelman College – Boston Chapter will host the conference.

The National Alumnae Association of Spelman College (NAASC) is the official organization that supports Spelman College through financial gifts, student recruitment, sisterhood, community service and recognition of Spelman women. The Boston Area Chapter was revitalized in 2006 to meet the needs of Spelman alumnae in the area. The Chapter sponsors events, works with the community, and serves as a representative of Spelman College within the Boston area.

The conference seeks to help girls define womanhood.

The media, hip-hop culture, and a lack of knowledge of self-worth are causing our girls to be victims of a male-driven society. They are struggling to define womanhood for themselves, many without using the direction of strong, positive female role models. They face anxiety, frustration, and rage as they toil with issues of race, class, sex, sisterhood, boys, and peer pressure. With these issues directly affecting their passage into womanhood, the Chapter seeks to create the arena to have open conversations with Boston area girls.

The conference is based on a Girls Group Curriculum.

As an outstanding historically Black college for women, Spelman empowers women to create positive social change with the support of a strong network and sisterhood. Through its first Middle and High School Girls Conference in March 2007, the Chapter was able to begin providing that same network and sisterhood for girls in the Boston community.

The overarching concept for the conference is based on a Girls Group Curriculum created by Laina Cox, Director of Instruction at the McCormack Middle School. The curriculum is based on her visits to other programs across the country and has already been implemented at Harbor School. In 2009, the Chapter will build on the success of the first two conferences to provide more girls of color the opportunity to connect with women in the Boston area.

The conference will serve 60 girls from middle and high schools in Boston.

Attendance will be limited to approximately 60 girls (30 middle and 30 high school students) from Boston area middle and high schools. In order to create a feeling of sisterhood and comfort between the girls, they will be separated into sections of 15 to attend workshops together. The conference will be publicized at middle and high schools in the Boston area through school administrators and guidance counselors.

The conference will be a day-long conference in May at Harvard Graduate School of Education.

The conference will take place Saturday, June 6, 2009 from 9:00am to 3:00pm

13 Appian Way
Longfellow Hall
Cambridge, MA 02138

The theme for the conference is “A Better Me.”

A workshop on mental health at the 2008 conference unearthed a variety of issues from the girls in attendance, causing the planning committee to restructure the day to provide more time for discussion. Noticing the need for girls to be able to talk more about life skills, this year’s conference will have an even greater focus on mind, body and spirit than in years past. In addition to highlighting the positive qualities of the girls in attendance, we more importantly hope to challenge them to identify areas of improvement in which they would like to see a different and better side of themselves, such as being an even better sister, daughter, student, citizen and friend.

Through participation in the conference girls will be...

- 1. Provided an intimate and open environment for **intergenerational dialogue** about the challenges facing girls in society;
- 2. Prepared with **personal advice** and tangible **action steps** on their personal path to becoming a woman;
- 3. Offered an opportunity to connect with and recognize **positive, female role models and peers**.

The conference has four major aspects:

- **Workshops:** The heart of the conference is the workshops, tailored for both middle and high school girls. Girls will be separated into sections of 15 to maintain a feeling of intimacy and trust.
 - 1. **Real Talk: Sisterhood & Sex** - The middle and high school girls will be separated for each group to dialogue with Spelman alumnae and other women about issues they are dealing with at their stage in life. The Circles will be an open discussion about the challenges and solutions encountered on the path to womanhood.
 - 2. **Self Esteem & Image** – Led by experts in self esteem building for teenage girls, this workshop will focus on the balance between inner confidence aligning with external image. The workshop will also include the new challenges girls face with their online image (through postings on Facebook and Myspace) as well as how to deal with cyberbullying.
 - 3. **Mental Health** – Building on the self-esteem workshop, the mental health session will be a completely confidential session for girls to talk about personal issues that surfaced at last year’s conference, such as depression and feelings of isolation. They will then receive advice from experts on how to cope with these issues in their daily lives.
- **Keynote Speaker:** During lunch girls will hear from a relevant keynote speaker who ties the sessions together and provides an interesting perspective on the issues they are facing and what it means to be a girl and woman in today’s society. Additionally, the girls will have also participate in a ceremony that marks their “graduation” from the conference.
- **Opportunities Fair:** To supplement the life skills focus of this year’s conference and to expose girls to other organizations that can provide additional support throughout the year, the conference will include an opportunities fair with local organizations. The opportunities fair will address important topics that were included in past conferences such as college preparation, financial management, and job preparation. Parents and guardians will be invited to the fair to attend with their daughters ensuring they take information away as a family.

8:30am	Registration & Breakfast
9:00am	Welcome
9:30am	Real Talk
10:30am	Self Esteem
11:15am	Snacks
11:30pm	Mental Health
12:30pm	Keynote & Luncheon
2:00pm	Opportunities Fair
3:00p	Closing



What we need...

People

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| 1. Keynote speaker | The keynote speaker will host the formal closing to the conference around 1:00pm |
| 2. Workshop speakers | Individuals or organizations who are experts in the fields described above are needed to present at workshops. Workshops will occur in 45 minute blocks from 10:00am to 1:00pm. |
| 3. Opportunities Fair Organizations* | We are looking for a variety of organizations and individuals to host tables during the opportunities fair with information relevant to conference attendees. |

Food

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| Breakfast | We are looking for money or in-kind donations for a continental or hot breakfast during registration time. Breakfast will need to serve approximately 80 people (60 girls and 20 volunteers). |
| Snacks | Because lunch will be late, the chapter would like to provide healthy snacks for the girls midday. |
| Lunch* | Lunch can be a simple box lunch to serve approximately 80 people (60 girls and 20 volunteers). The luncheon will be named for the sponsor, listed in all conference materials, and recognized during the ceremony. |

Souvenirs

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| Conference bags | The girls will have souvenir bags to carry conference materials. |
| Gifts | We would like to give the girls useful gifts such as journals, planners, pens, notepads, highlighters, or a motivational book geared toward teenage girls. |
| Giveaways | We would like to provide giveaways throughout the day and during the luncheon. These giveaways will be awarded to encourage participation and to reward good stewardship shown throughout the day. We will allow the girls to nominate a peer who she feels added value to her conference experience. |
| T-shirts* | We would like each girl to receive a conference t-shirt with their name on it. Girls will pre-register for the conference so we will have their sizing and name. High school attendees from former past conferences will assist in designing the shirts. We will need 60 shirts. Shirts can include the sponsor's branding as well. |

*Items marked are our highest priority needs

For more information about the conference, to participate, or to provide financial or in-kind donations please contact Bianca Tabourn, Blueprint Conference Co-Chair, at bianca.tabourn@gmail.com