

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Anti-bullying Program Event Brings Community Together
“SOCIALIZING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE”
Improving the Lives of Girls & Women

Delaware, OH- HelpLine of Delaware and Morrow Counties, Inc. (HelpLine) and Youth to Youth hosted “Socializing for Social Change” on December 5, 2011. It was a memorable night celebrating the extraordinary girls of the Thank Goodness I’m Female (TGIF) program which tackles relational aggression amongst girls within the Buckeye Valley and Westerville school districts. The night consisted of youth-led and developed presentations about relational aggression (female bullying) & the TGIF programs’ accomplishments and future plans.

Special guest speaker, Debra Penzone from Charles Penzone Salon, encouraged the girls to uncover their personal beauty and style from the inside out by sharing her own memories of relational aggression. At the end of the evening Debra said, “Tonight’s event has been very empowering to see the next generation of girls fighting relational aggression and supporting each other to make a difference.”

The room was full of TGIF Buckeye Valley and Westerville middle and high school students, their parents, family members, school administrators and Delaware & Franklin County community leaders. Although the program focuses on females, many dads were present at the event as well, showing their support for their daughters. Lloyd Rutledge, Father of Alison Rutledge a 7th grader at Buckeye Valley Middle School expressed, “I grew up with four sisters and I have three daughters so I have witnessed first-hand the fighting that goes on between girls. It is nice to see people encouraging change and witnessing the after effects.”

Attendees participated in interactive activities encouraging cross-generational sharing and crafted pledges to stand-up against female bullying. Robin Kuebler, mother of Maddie Kuebler a 6th grader at Buckeye Valley Middle School, shared the impact TGIF has had on their relationship as she said, “It has given us an opportunity to share our common experiences.”

TGIF is made possible by the Women’s Fund of Central Ohio and is gaining momentum as it just received the Ohio Department of Education’s 2011 Asset Builder Award to School-based Youth Group award. The ultimate goal of the TGIF project among Genoa and Buckeye Valley Middle Schools’ girls is to catalyze long term social transformation through open dialogue, skill building, a social-norm campaign, and social networking “Youtube-like” videos to change aggressive attitudes as well as behaviors among girls. Additionally, The Community Foundation of Delaware County is funding a mini-conference for TGIF.

Candice Dobbins a 7th grader at Genoa Middle School is excited about the future of TGIF and continuing the relationships that have been built as she stated, “Ever since I have been a part of TGIF my school friends have turned into family.”

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About HelpLine

HelpLine of Delaware and Morrow Counties, Inc. is a private, non-profit organization that provides a 24-hour crisis support hotline, information and referral to direct services and advocacy, and serves as the area's only volunteer center. Committed to empowering people through knowledge, support and resources, HelpLine facilitates stability and self-sufficiency through linkage to services, crisis management, and mental health related & violence prevention education in Delaware and Morrow County communities.

HelpLine is a contract provider of the Delaware-Morrow Mental Health & Recovery Services Board and partially funded by the Council for Older Adults. A United Way Agency, HelpLine is accredited by the American Association of Suicidology, National Alliance of Information & Referral Systems and certified by the Ohio Department of Mental Health. For more information, please visit: www.HelpLinedelmor.org.

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