

BEAUTY / STRENGTH / WISDOM / SUPPORT / CELEBRATE

womanhood

A survey asks women in 10 countries if they're beautiful – pretty much everybody says "No"

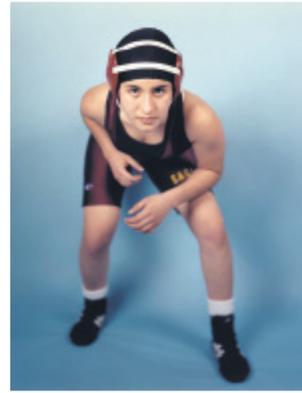
The imagery used in this special information supplement is from the Dove Real Beauty Photography Exhibit, a unique and powerful collection of images that appeared in venues across Canada in 2005.

The exhibit, which has also toured in the U.S. and Europe, aimed to inspire dialogue and challenge women to question beauty stereotypes.

In its entirety, the exhibit includes over 60 photos from acclaimed and aspiring female photographers from around the world. Among them are Canadians May Truong, Barbara Choit, Julie Moos, Bridget Farr and Sandy Pereira.

In addition to raising awareness of and support for appearance-related self-esteem issues, the Dove Real Beauty Photography Exhibit invited visitors to make a donation to the Dove Self-Esteem Fund, which develops tools that help women and girls build stronger self-esteem and provides resources to organizations such as the National Eating Disorder Information Centre that foster a broader definition of beauty.

For more information, visit www.campaignforrealbeauty.ca



The Real Beauty

BY JANE MUNDY

If beauty really is in the eye of the beholder, women around the world need to take a longer, harder look at themselves. Canadian women might want to do it twice.

More than 3,200 women in more than 10 countries were asked to define beauty in a report commissioned by beauty products maker Dove. The study, "The Real Truth About Beauty: A global report," which analyzed female perspectives on beauty and well-being, found that less than two per cent of women throughout the world thought themselves as beautiful and only one per cent in Canada.

The average Canadian woman might not be especially surprised by the results of the report, but its co-author, Harvard University's Dr. Nancy Etcoff, found them startling. "We know that women are having problems with their body image, but you'd think more women would describe themselves as attractive," she said.

Women were asked whether or not they were satisfied with how the media represents beauty. Dr. Etcoff said female respondents largely defined "beauty" as physical attractiveness, and went on to say that the media had an enormous influence on common perceptions of it. "Overwhelmingly, the media did not portray the true diversity of beauty and sets up an unrealistic vision," Dr. Etcoff said.

The statement "I wish media could portray beauty as more than physical" was endorsed by women in every country. In Canada, women wanted the media to portray women with a variety of body shapes and weights, use ordinary women as models, and choose those models from different age groups and backgrounds rather than the stereotypical selection of young and white women. Clearly, women want more realistic role models.

Although women's views about the media's unrealistic portrayal of beauty were unanimous, there were disparities between different countries' respondents in terms of what constituted physical attractiveness. For example, Brazilian women put more emphasis on sexiness and 54 per cent of the women there said they would consider cosmetic surgery, whereas only 23 per cent of Canadians would opt for such procedures. Thirty-six per cent of Canadian women used the word "natural" to describe themselves, whereas most U.S. women opted for "average."

Women were also asked what made them feel beautiful. The good news is that 75 per cent of women judge beauty as going beyond physical traits. Dr. Etcoff said, "When given the opportunity to reflect [by answering this questionnaire], women said beauty

came from their inner qualities and not just from the right hairstyle.

Women also believe they would have more opportunities in life if they were beautiful, noted Dr. Etcoff. "What kind of message is being sent when women equate success with beauty? Women don't look at themselves as successful or have the opportunities to be successful unless they have an inner belief in themselves."

Finally, women agreed that beauty was achievable at any age. Again, the double-edged sword: each generation faces a higher standard when it comes to beauty. Women today feel that they are expected to be more attractive than their mothers were at the same age. In other words, being over 40 is no longer an excuse to let their appearance slide.

Dr. Etcoff said this is probably why health problems such as anorexia and bulimia are on the rise across all ages. "We found that more older women are single, and women in their 40s and 50s feel pressure to be thin and look younger," she said. "Self-esteem is a huge problem in all age groups."

The report's findings don't come as news to people who spend a lot of time thinking about the challenges faced by girls. Lisa Naylor, counsellor at a women's clinic in Winnipeg, teaches young girls to be advocates for change.

"When girls learn how to be advocates and write letters to the media, they get a sense of power," she explained.

Women's low self-esteem when it comes to their appearance may be a classic issue, said Ms. Naylor, but it's still valuable for members of the media to address it.

As another result of this report, the Dove Self-Esteem Fund was established to help enhance young women's self-esteem – not an easy task. "On the one hand, you are supposed to support girls' self-esteem in general, and on the other hand, the whole feminist thing is that we de-emphasize looks," says Ms. Naylor.

She notes while society says looks are important, adults tell kids that it's what's inside that counts. Yet popular culture – from music videos to TV makeover shows – insists that for girls, looks are crucial. That dichotomy, in fact, is similar for both young girls and adults. The question is, how to best deal with it?

"The first step [toward higher self-esteem] is to reclaim a positive view of yourself and halt the quest for impossible ideals. Women aren't going to abandon the quest for beauty, but rather find a way to embrace it," said Dr. Etcoff.

As The Real Truth About Beauty report shows, the concept of beauty is being redefined. It is becoming less physically competitive and more about inner qualities – knowing yourself and celebrating everything you've got. In other words, move over, makeovers – women are already beautiful. □

May Truong – "Andrea and Dang"

Canada

"This image redefines the stereotype of Asian women, who are often portrayed as an eroticized fantasy."

ANNA GOODSON MANAGEMENT INC.

Eve Fowler – "Untitled"

United States

Ms. Fowler chose to photograph people she saw as iconic, powerful and brave. "This girl was co-captain of her high school wrestling team."

Georgia Kokolis – "Woman"

Greece

"The woman in this image has a certain look of ease and comfort, as if being looked at makes her feel good."

BEAUTY / STRENGTH / WISDOM / SUPPORT / CELEBRATE

Mothers, daughters, sisters, friends

BY LORI BAMBER

As students of the Women's Studies program at the University of Ottawa, Tatiana Fraser, Willow Scobie and Stephanie Austin shared a common regret: They wished their new knowledge of women's lives, in the context of social dynamics, had been available to them as girls.

Out of that wish came POWER Camp National, a Montreal-based organization that provides the "Girls Club" program locally and facilitates a national network of 60 organizations that share its mandate. "We do violence prevention work with girls and young women," says Ms. Fraser today, "from a very holistic perspective. We create a safe space, where girls can share their realities and experience in ways they may not otherwise be able to.

"Our programs address skill-building and critical thinking, and then we move toward more action-oriented strategies. Safe space is an important part of the magic – these girls are often very isolated in their experience, so when they can talk about this among their peers and realize they are not alone, it is very powerful.

"We learn to 'unpack' the messages that girls receive," says Ms. Fraser, "and look at the different layers and influences behind them. This information is explored and can then inform future decisions."

While the challenges of adolescence can be heart-breakingly difficult for boys and girls (as well as their parents), girls often struggle, additionally, with unrealistic body images created by media and enforced by peer pressure. And while physical violence is still relatively rare among girls in Canada, bullying by gossip, intimidation, ostracizing and verbal abuse is all too common. Online cultures such as MSN and Nexopia may even allow bullying into the home.

Girls without the tools to transcend these challenges may turn to self-destructive 'coping' methods: inappropriate sexual behaviours, self-harming (cutting themselves) or drug use.

In Vancouver, the Go Girl! series and YWCA's Girlz Unplugged

program teach the vital skills needed to survive these pressures. Saleema Noon, co-founder of the Go Girl! series and a facilitator with Girlz Unplugged, says, "Personally, for me, grade five was hell. I was bullied all year by my so-called best friend, and I didn't have the skills to deal with it. My mom had no idea what to tell me.

"(Go Girl!) was kind of based on what we were lacking in our own childhoods. Support is required from all aspects of the girl's life, but sometimes hearing the same positive messages from different people at the same time is what works.

"I believe it all comes down to self-esteem and self-confidence," she says. "If girls feel good about who they are, and feel they're worth making smart, good decisions, they're going to do that when it comes to bullying, peer pressure, when it comes to relationships."

She suggests that parents work to open communication channels early on. Rather than asking personal questions that may be embarrassing, she suggests a more general approach. "If you want to talk to your 13-year-old daughter about health, you may want to avoid asking her about changes in her own body. Instead, try something like 'Let's talk about the changes that happen to girls at puberty – what have you heard about that?'"

She also suggests that parents pick their battles.

"Fight as hard as you need to," Ms. Noon says, "to make sure your girls are appropriately dressed and not at risk. But if your daughter wants to shave, you may just want to show her how to do it properly. If she wants a piercing, that's probably a no-go, but if she wants to dye her hair, that may be negotiable."

Mentoring and role-modelling play a key role. Denise Coutts, executive director of the Minerva Foundation, says, "If young women have strong mentors and role models in their lives, particularly women, it can help them make informed decisions, face adversity, and find in themselves qualities and strengths that will assist them during difficult periods in their lives." □

For more information, visit www.powercampnational.ca or its girls' community site, www.kickaction.ca. The YWCA (www.ywca.ca) has been supporting women and girls for more than 100 years; Saleema Noon's website (www.saleemaanon.com) provides links to programs, workshops and alternative magazines that can help.



You are unique

BY NICOLE DUNSDON



DANA



EMMA



ROBIN

Sometimes it is better to be unique and proud than to follow the crowd.

Three vibrant and independent young women talk about their own experiences with resisting peer pressure, living down embarrassing moments, as well as the qualities they most admire in each other and their role models.

They've discovered the art of rising above other people's expectations and the value of living up to their own, instead.

ON RESISTING PEER PRESSURE:

Dana Hagg, 13 years, Grade 8 student, Calgary, AB:

"Silly kinds of peer pressure happen, like a friend telling you they'll give you a dollar to go over to a guy that's been shunned and tell him he's a hottie. Some see that as their ticket into the group and do it, even though it's not nice. People know I won't do that because I have enough confidence to just go my own way."

Emma Rokosh, 14 years, Grade 9 student, Calgary, AB:

"I make friends outside of school and spend probably 90 per cent of my time doing sports and music. That way, if someone from school is mad at me for something stupid, I have friends to fall back on that will stick with me."

Robin Steedman, 16 years, Grade 11 student, Calgary, AB:

"If anything, I've made a group of friends that are all unique and different. It's more interesting that way. I see groups that all look the same and act the same, then one will leave and the rest of them all pick her apart. My friends like me for who I am, not because I'm wearing a certain label."

ON LIVING DOWN AN EMBARRASSING MOMENT:

Emma: "When I was going up in front of the whole school to get the Citizen of the Month award, I tripped over someone's feet and lost my shoe. I just giggled, laughed it off, got my shoe and carried on to the stage."

Dana: "I was at a birthday party with a group of people I didn't really know. While we were watching a movie, I said, 'That looks like the girl I did a duet with at piano camp.' Everyone burst out laughing because the concept of piano camp sounds kind of dorky. A friend stood up for me and said, 'Actually, she's really good.' It was a chance to show that you don't have to do things just because they are cool...but because they will benefit you."

Robin: "I was at a neighbour's cabin, with about 25 other people out on the deck, and walked straight into their screen door, completely breaking it off. At first I just thought, 'Oh no!' Then people started laughing and I started laughing and offered to help put the screen door back on."

ON QUALITIES THEY ADMIRE IN THEIR PEERS:

Robin: "I appreciate my friends because even if we make different choices than each other, we still try to respect one another."

Dana: "I admire people who really believe in everything they do and don't just do what they think their friends will find acceptable."

Emma: "I admire people who can get sports scholarships out of school to college and still manage to get really good grades."

ON STRONG QUALITIES IN A ROLE MODEL:

Robin: "My kick-boxing teacher, Phillip, will call people on things and tell them they can do better. He doesn't get upset if people aren't good, just if they don't try their hardest."

Emma: "My parents both rowed while they were in college and graduated with something like three degrees each."

Dana: "My youth group leader, Amanda, has cystic fibrosis but didn't just settle or take the easy way. Instead, she went after – and got – a role in an opera." □

Katie Murray – "Dixie Evans"

United States

"I chose this photo of famous 1950s entertainer Dixie Evans, because beauty is often not associated with older women."

Desiree Dolron –

"Cerca Neptuno- Te di todos mis sueños 2002"

Cuba

Barbara Choit – "Untitled"

Canada

From a series of publicity photographs of all-girl rock band The Organ. "I chose this photograph of Deb because she was one of the shyest in front of the camera, with no pretensions of rock stardom."

Margi Geerlinks –

"Mirror (Close up)"

The Netherlands

Dear Fashion Magazine Editors,

Our grade 7 class at the Calgary Girls' School is writing to you due to our concern about what societies image of beauty is. People need to know that beauty is not only skin deep. People that read these magazines see the pictures of underweight models and are socialized to believe that this is the only real image of beauty. We know that fashion magazine editors can help change this image and give people, especially women, their self confidence back. Most people don't that they're beautiful because they compare themselves to the airbrushed and photoshoped pictures of models in magazines, and because societies image of beauty isn't often questioned, this image isn't being changed.

We are writing to express how we occasionally feel when we are exposed to your magazines. As teenagers, we find that pressure is often put on us. We feel that your magazines add to that pressure. Some of the pressure that we experience is from always having images portraying the so called "perfect" models, who are often skinny. Only having certain sized models, decreased many girls' self-esteem. We are always comparing ourselves to models, as a result we continuously find flaws in ourselves and each other. Please take what we have said into consideration.

Now that you know how we feel about when we look through magazines we would like to tell you what we enjoy reading in magazines. We like seeing and reading about celebrities and hearing about people's real lives stories. We enjoy seeing ads, when they don't include people or when the people look like real people. We also like doing the quizzes. Magazines have influenced teenagers in negative and positive ways.

In our class we have been learning about how the Media affects society. To have a healthier society we need to change women's and girl's perspective of beauty. Magazines are affecting the way females of all ages view their body. Many women feel that they have to change the way they look to be accepted by society. Showing only one look of women makes other feel that they must look that way. This is sometimes out of their control. Most women are very self-conscious

We have many concerns with the way fashion magazine editors, like yourselves, don't often advertise a variety of women in certain advertisements. We also have some concerns about how you take pictures of celebrities and put them in order from the hottest to not so hot. We think that advertising clothing that is overpriced is unacceptable because the average woman does not have as much money as celebrities, and can't afford that expensive clothing. We think that touching up models faces and bodies on photoshop is unnecessary because some women feel bad about themselves by looking at these women and thinking they're perfect, but they're actually not and that's why you should leave them natural showing the real beauty of women. In conclusion we suggest you put a variety of different races, religions and body types in your magazines. Thank you for your time we hope you think about some of the things we have mentioned in this letter.

The grade 7 class at the Calgary Girls' School



BEAUTY / STRENGTH / WISDOM / SUPPORT / CELEBRATE

The beauty beast

BY DR. SUSIE ORBACH, THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS



Women want to see the idea of beauty expanded. They see emotional qualities, character and individuality as equally expressive of beauty as the narrow physical aspects of beauty that currently dominate popular culture.

To be sure, women want to be physically attractive, and they want to be perceived as such. Their looks are important to how they feel about themselves, how they regard beauty in themselves and in others.

Yet, as the landmark 2005 Real Truth About Beauty study showed, women regard being beautiful as the result of qualities and circumstance: being loved, being engaged in activities that one wants to do, having a close relationship, being happy, being kind, having confidence, exuding dignity and humour. Women who are like this look beautiful. They are beautiful.

When it comes to strictly physical attributes, the images of manufactured femininity are rejected as being too narrow, as inauthentic and as insufficient. The great majority of women want broader definitions of how women's physical beauty is visually represented. Seventy-five per cent of women in the study would like to see considerably more diversity in the images of beauty. They want to see women of different shapes, they want to see women of varying sizes, and they want a broader range of ages in the pictures of women than those who, at present, saturate our visual field.

These results are, in a sense, no surprise at all. The last 50 years have witnessed an interesting paradox. Beauty – as an idea and an ideal – has moved away from being the exclusive province of the Hollywood dream factory, of fashion models and the young bride, to become an essential attribute to which women of all ages need to pay heed. But at the same time that women of all ages and classes want to claim beauty for themselves, there has been an insidious narrowing of the beauty esthetic to a limited physical type – thin, tall – which inevitably excludes millions and millions of women. The conjunction between democratizing the idea of beauty and the limiting of what constitutes the ideal of beauty has caused considerable anguish to women – young to old – who strive to find in themselves the means to meet those esthetic values that have come to make up what we regard as beautiful.

Women's interest in and preoccupation with beauty is not some easily dismissed concern. Women now judge beauty as important and even crucial as they navigate today's world. In attempting to democratize and make accessible to all the idea of beauty, women are eager to see a redefinition and expansion of the ideals, along the lines they see it and away from the limiting, narrowed and restricted body shapes and sizes we see in moving images and in print.

The overwhelming majority of women (despite the popularity of Extreme Makeover™) do not wish to expose themselves to the surgeon's scalpel. But neither do they wish to be excluded because they fail to find their beauty reflected in the images that bombard them, on average, in 2000 advertisements per week.

What women involved in the Real Truth About Beauty study told us is that a sense of legitimacy and respect is wrapped up with beauty in today's world. Whether this sentiment dismays or delights us, it poses a serious challenge. And it is this in the first instance: For the idea of beauty to become truly democratic and inclusive, then beauty itself must be revitalized to reflect women in their beauty as they really are rather than as portrayed in the current fictions that dominate our visual culture. With such fictions removed, the many hours of anguish, spent in self-criticism, or in the attempt to reshape themselves so that they do in some ways resemble the ideal, have a chance to be freed up and find expression in the many other desires and ambitions that women hold. □



My mother, myself

BY THERESA LANG

"You're just like your mother."

When I was 17, no accusation held greater power to infuriate or embarrass me.

I was nothing like my mother, clearly. I had lots of cool friends with whom I did cool things, like playing drums on the beach and swearing in public. I had a closet full of alternative clothes and a music collection I considered edgy.

She, by contrast, was sensitive and serious, even earnest. She couldn't stand loud or abrasive noises, including the aforementioned music collection. She didn't smoke or drink; she got her kicks from ancient Chinese art. She was, in my view at the time, a total square. What, aside from a coincidental bit of shared genetic material, could this woman possibly have in common with me?

Of course, no amount of black clothing or eyeliner could prevent me from seeing her inheritance take shape in my own features. I am exactly her height and have the same high-arched feet.

I have her deep-set eyes too, though I think they look better on her than on me – they're not well served by the English nose I inherited from my dad. They're not bad, as eyes go: fairly expressive, especially when smiling. Slightly almond-shaped, very well suited to performing the come-hither look.

But they're also saddled with pouchy lower eyelids that on a bad day can make me look like Boris Yeltsin with a hangover, and are

therefore the feature most likely to make me feel insecure about my looks (although as a teenager that dubious honour went to my modest chest proportions – thanks again, Mom – a trait that I have only in my 30s begun to see the upside of).

As a young adult first living on my own, I pulled away from my mother. After all, I was an independent woman and no longer needed her advice – until my first dinner party, that is. Suddenly the only dish impressive enough to serve my first grown-up guests was her chicken cacciatore.

Of course she wasn't invited to the party. So she read me the recipe over the phone, and then gamely stood by on the hotline issuing remedial instructions when at 10 p.m. it still wasn't looking "right."

But what I didn't know then is that I didn't have to try so hard to prove I was my own person. Of course I was; I am. But there's a lot of her in me, and a lot that I like.

I'm no longer afraid to embrace the sentimental side I suppressed at 17, and am glad I've reached an age where I don't have to pretend to like techno.

More importantly, now that I have a daughter of my own, I am pleased, and maybe a little surprised, to hear my mother's values coming through in the choices I make and the rules I set. I'm strict about junk food and television, and liberal about expressing opinions and feelings.

My mom's habits have become our family traditions – I make the same Christmas cookies and sing my daughter the same bedtime songs. In fact, I don't think I've ever heard *The Rose of Tralee* sung by anyone except my mom and myself. I'm not even sure we have all the words right, but I know we sing it the same. □

Self-acceptance

BY MAGGIE SANSON

Having high self-esteem requires a positive opinion of oneself. But authentic self-esteem is based on a foundation of self-acceptance. The relationship between self-esteem and self-acceptance is significant – and often overlooked.

Self-worth is the essence of self-esteem, says Dr. Nancy Heath, associate professor in Educational and Counselling Psychology at McGill University, who notes that early childhood expe-

riences strongly influence self-acceptance.

"Did our caregivers (tell us) we needed to try harder, be nicer or do more?" she explains. "Or did they impart to us the message that although we made mistakes, they were proud and happy to have us just the way we were?"

Girls can find it difficult to maintain a positive self-image, says Dr. Heath, especially through adolescence. "Young girls tend to get a lot of messages about being nicer, better, more helpful, and then as adolescents they become bombarded with societal messages that are completely unrealistic."

Fortunately, says Dr. Heath, the impact of outside influences can be mitigated. "To boost a girl's self-esteem: provide her with some autonomy and control over her life; ensure that she has a sense of connectedness to others; and help her to feel competent by providing recognition in an area that she values. Never make her worth or value depend on what she accomplishes or does."

Women can also benefit from such sage advice. "You need to say, 'I am not perfect, I have these faults, but I am still an amazing person, with all these great things going for me,'" says Dr. Heath. □

For related information on female stereotypes, beauty and self-esteem, visit www.campaignforrealbeauty.ca

Julie Moos – "Friends and Enemies"

Canada

"This image comes from a series on high school kids with their best friend or their least favourite person. These two girls could be best friends or enemies."

Judy Dater – "Maria Rosaria Dominici"

United States

"This woman is not conventionally beautiful (owing, in part, to a scar under her lips), but is sexy, attractive and mysterious and has soul."

Juliana Sohn – "Sister Ipheginia in her room"

Korea/United States

"The nun in this image is totally unselfconscious, lacking pretension – she offers herself to the camera with open candour."

Catherine Ledner – "Abby"

United States

"I chose this print of a little girl squinting into the sun because she looks great, very happy and unselfconscious."

Dear Supermodels,

At the Calgary Girls' School we are exploring image and how people are portrayed; people as in young and old, female and male, North to south and East to west. We learn how to become critical thinkers and debate and discuss these topics in our Go Girls class. During these discussions, we find it very concerning that young boys and girls can be misled by media images and peer pressure.

We'd like to draw your attention to some questions we have thought of, and were intrigued to know the answers to. Do you wake up a supermodel? How were you influenced to become a model? Is modeling just a job? Did you dream of doing this since you were a child? We've thought of these questions because everyone's been socialized to believe there's one type of beauty, but we believe in actuality that type of beauty is only fantasy. We mean to say that who has three hours to do makeup and plus how can somebody be perfected on a computer other than in a picture? We want real!

We think you could help change this image by modelling more realistic products. Think about what you model, how many people walk around wearing the clothes you model? or how many people can afford it? Maybe you can pick and choose what you model, we are not trying to get you to quitte your job, but we want to see real people modeling real clothes, thats all we ask for.

Sincerely yours,
Grade 7 Calgary Girls' School



BEAUTY / STRENGTH / WISDOM / SUPPORT / CELEBRATE

Leadership by example

BY LORI BAMBER

In 2002, a Pollara Survey for the Women's Executive Network found that 69 per cent of Canada's most successful women executives felt that men's "lack of comfort in dealing with them" was a barrier to advancement; 66 per cent felt exclusion from "the boy's club" was a factor. Despite such hurdles, more women executives than ever are reaching for – and attaining – top jobs, along the way showing others pathways to personal and professional fulfillment.

In part, it was a desire to transcend traditional corporate barriers that inspired Pamela Jeffery, one of the country's leading public affairs and communications strategists, to found the Women's Executive Network (WXN) in 1998 and launch Canada's Top 100 Most Powerful Women Awards in 2003.

"I wanted to showcase, for younger women, what it's possible to achieve," says Ms. Jeffery. "It is so important for all of us to be inspired and to keep on achieving all the great things that we're achieving as women. We don't give ourselves pats on the back very often."

There is a lot to celebrate. The Top 100 list reveals that women are now in positions of leadership, across sectors, in larger numbers than ever before: executive vice presidents in Canada's largest banks; entrepreneurs who have launched and are running large companies; presidents of major universities; and mayors (even a police chief) of large cities.

That level of success requires perseverance, advises Ms. Jeffery. "And you have to have a skill that is so highly developed that it places you ahead of your peer group."

For women in particular, it is also vital to have the ability to achieve work/life balance.

"I think of the women at Telus," she says, "like Janet Yale (exec-

utive vice president, Corporate Affairs). She chose to work, and her husband is at home raising their children. These extraordinarily successful women have come up with their own recipes, so to speak, for combining a successful professional life with a whole personal life."

Despite the great progress that's been made, there is still only a handful of women CEOs among Canada's largest companies; almost half of Canada's publicly traded companies have yet to have a single woman director, and only about 10 to 15 per cent of law firm partners are women despite the fact that law school graduating classes are more than 50 per cent female.

"Companies need to better address the unique needs of women," says Ms. Jeffery. "We need support within the workplace to allow us to go off and have our children, and come back and not be punished for it. And we are punished: by billable hour targets, not being seen as part of the team, or to have 'paid our dues' as much."

Networking, a strategy that is vital to success, is also more difficult if you're trying to raise a family. "You've got to work doubly hard to make those inroads and have a profile so that you're top of mind as a potential employee or a potential director," she says. "You've just got to work harder."

Whatever the systemic obstacles, success is a personal achievement. Sue Lee, a Top 100 Award winner in 2005, and a senior vice president at Suncor, offers sage advice.

"Regardless of what stage you are at in your career, always look for opportunities to learn and broaden your experience. Be mobile, be proactive, be open to new challenges and strive to make your best contribution.

"Be willing to take risks for things you believe in," Ms. Lee says. "And remember, there is no easy road. You must be able to endure the setbacks and rise above them – your ability to manage your accomplishments and learn from your mistakes is a big part of what makes you successful." □



Taking Care

BY MARIE PATTERSON

Across Canada, teenage girls are watching music videos, movies and ads whose stars have more in common with Barbie than with them.

With their tiny waists and matchstick arms, skinny celebrities have come to define "beauty" in the Western world – even though few women can hope to match their proportions.

Teenage girls, struggling to define themselves and to be popular with their peers, are particularly susceptible to the tempting idea that if they were just a little bit thinner, life would be easier. Such ideas can lead to eating disorders, such as anorexia and bulimia.

In an attempt to halt that spiral before it starts, the National Eating Disorder Information Centre (NEDIC) has launched a comprehensive website devoted to helping teenage girls bolster their self-esteem.

The Real Me Experience (www.realme.ca) takes teens through a series of interactive quizzes to help them realize how their self-per-

ception influences everything from the way they react to criticism to the way they interpret friends' actions.

"We focused on young women because [adolescence] is a time when tensions related to their self-development are quite high," says Merryl Bear, NEDIC's director.

It takes visitors about two hours to go through all the material on the site, which was launched last summer with money from the Dove Self-Esteem Fund, part of the beauty company's Campaign for Real Beauty.

Reaction to the site has been positive so far, Ms. Bear says. Surveys show that the site has made teens more aware of negative patterns in their thoughts about themselves. In addition, it has made some realize that quick, thoughtless comments could undermine their friends' self-esteem. "Some of the girls said they were really going to watch what they said to others," says Ms. Bear.

In the second phase of the website's launch, NEDIC will work with groups such as Big Sisters and schools to increase traffic to the site and to make Canadians aware of the resources NEDIC provides for people of all ages and genders, including general information on eating disorders and referrals to specialists across Canada. For more details on NEDIC, go to www.nedic.ca or call 1-866-633-4220. □

Supportive organizations provide professionals with a leg up.

These organizations offer programs that help women achieve professional, entrepreneurial and personal success.

Women in Leadership

Dedicated to the advancement of women in leadership positions in business
www.womeninleadership.ca

Canadian Women's Foundation

Working to end violence against women and build economic independence for women and their children; "investing in the power of women and the dreams of girls!"
www.cdnwomen.org

The Minerva Foundation

Assisting women to realize their potential
www.theminervafoundation.com

Business Development Bank of Canada Women Entrepreneur Division

Since 1995, BDC has lent more than \$1.6 billion to women entrepreneurs in addition to providing programs and tools
www.bdc.ca/en/l_am/woman_entrepreneur/default.htm

Women Presidents' Organization

Improving business conditions for women entrepreneurs and promoting the advancement and acceptance of women entrepreneurs in all industries
www.womenpresidentsorg.com

The Canadian Association of Women Executives and Entrepreneurs (CAWEE)

Providing opportunities for all businesswomen at every stage of their career
www.cawee.net

Women's Executive Network

Canada's leading organization dedicated to the advancement and recognition of executive-minded women in the workplace
www.wxnetwork.com

Women Entrepreneurs of Canada

Connecting women business owners from a range of industries to exchange ideas and opportunities; includes online learning opportunities
www.wec.ca

YWCA Canada

The YWCA in Canada has been offering employment skills training to Canadian women since 1874
www.ywca.ca

Gail Albert-Halaban – "Untitled"

United States

"Jessica preparing for the Oscars with family and friends."

Janette Beckman – "Untitled"

United Kingdom

"This woman's face expresses a lifetime of experience, wisdom, humour and pride."

Annabel Oosteweeghel – "Untitled"

Netherlands

"This photo is about the fragility of young women. They are still insecure about their beauty."

MOLLY BINGHAM/WORLD PICTURE NEWS – "Untitled"

United States

"This image of a woman descending stairs, lowering her burka over her face, is very different from the 'normal' sense of beauty, in that it isn't necessarily anything that can be seen."

Natalie and Christina
The Calgary Girls' School
6304 Larkspur Way
Calgary, Alberta
T3E 5P7

Dear Hollywood producers,

We are 12-year-old females who are a little concerned with the image you are creating for us and other girls. After closely observing your programs and movies, we feel that the "ideal" woman in your productions is portrayed with unattainable perfection. Having gorgeous hair and make-up every time they wake up or having perfect height, weight and cup size looks unrealistic and unbearable.

When we see a film or program with ordinary women in it, we find that you portray them as people who are overall unhappy with their appearance. We are wondering if that is meant to make us feel inadequate to be normal young women.

You have fabricated the illusion that a perfect body exists and it has crushed the dreams of many.★

Sincerely,



Natalie and Christina
The Calgary Girls' School
Grade 6



B E A U T Y / S T R E N G T H / W I S D O M / S U P P O R T / C E L E B R A T E

Beyond laws: The right to be me

BY BEVERLEY J. ODA, P.C., M.P.,
MINISTER OF CANADIAN HERITAGE AND STATUS OF WOMEN

As a Canadian born at the close of World War II, I grew up in the last half of the twentieth century, witnessing tremendous social change, both in Canada and around the world. Yet in my day-to-day life, like so many other Canadians, I have always enjoyed tremendous social stability, opportunity and the chance to follow my dreams.

I owe that, in part, to countless women who have acted to advance human rights and achieve equality. It's an effort that continues to this day and beyond, and it gives us good reason to celebrate March 8, International Women's Day.

This year, Canada's theme for International Women's Day (IWD) reflects our ongoing commitment to secure equality for women. Beyond Laws: The Right to be Me addresses women's rights, women's diversity and the need to put words into action.

Putting words into action is not easy. As an individual, it means acting with integrity borne of one's deepest-held beliefs and values.

For Canada, it means coming together as a diverse nation with shared culture and values, and working together, nationally and internationally, to build a more peaceful and equal world.

Twenty-five years ago, Canada put words into action by ratifying the most comprehensive international treaty on women's rights –

the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, known as CEDAW. Often described as an international bill of rights for women, CEDAW defines discrimination against women and recommends action to end such discrimination.

Canada works hard to fulfil its commitment to equality for women, both at home and abroad. Strong legal foundations are in place, such as the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms – evidence of Canada's actions.

Nevertheless, the reality is that women are more likely to earn less than men. If they are immigrants, lone mothers, disabled or Aboriginal, they are more likely to live in poverty. And the really difficult issues, such as violence and poverty, affect us all.

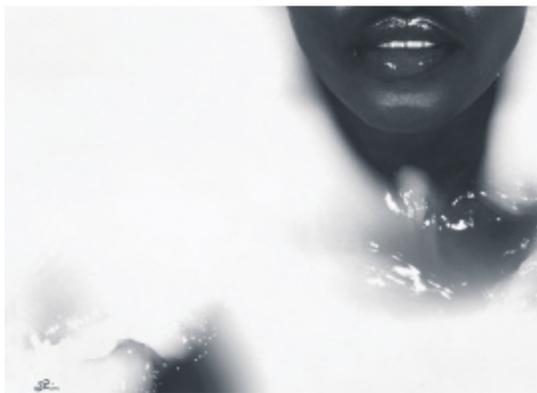
Clearly, a gap remains between the existence of laws and the reality of women's lives, and it affects all Canadians. On International Women's Day, let's consider where we go from here. The law guarantees women and men equal rights. What can we do to ensure women have the conditions for realizing their full human rights?

Working together through partnerships between governments, communities and the private sector, as well as non-governmental organizations, is the key to success in advancing equality.

The equal participation of women and men enables Canada to grow stronger, and to reflect and value all its citizens. We must promote, encourage and support women of every background, particularly Aboriginal women and other distinct groups. No one can be left behind.

As Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women, I am committed to working with my colleagues across the federal government, with other levels of government, and with communities throughout Canada, to promote and strengthen equal rights for women.

As women, we owe our freedom to the determination, insight and courage of those who came before us. We owe it to them – and to ourselves – to continue to put words into action. □



Canada celebrates International Women's Week 2006

Here are a few highlights of the events taking place across the country this week.

Amherst, Nova Scotia

March 8, 12:00 noon - 1:30 p.m.

A free luncheon at the Amherst Community Lions Centre will feature a talk from Autumn House Chair Barbara Jack, entertainment, raffles and door prizes.

Contact: 902-661-1344

Ottawa, Ontario

March 8, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Speakers include Dr. Ruth M. Bell, The Honourable Judy Erola and Senator Raynell Andreychuk. There will also be refreshments, entertainment and door prizes.

Location: Library and Archives Canada

Cost: \$25.00

Contact: 613-232-5409

www.cfuw-ottawa.org/march8.pdf

London, Ontario

March 8, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Flora MacDonald, parliamentarian from 1972 to 1988 and Canada's first female Secretary of State for External Affairs, speaks about the lives of women in developing countries.

Location: Brescia University College Auditorium

Cost: free

Contact: 519-432-8353 ext. 288

www.brescia.uwo.ca/womencentre/upcoming.htm

Montreal, Quebec

March 8, 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

On International Women's Day, the McCord Museum offers free entry to women to view the exhibition Picturing Her: Images of Girlhood.

Location: McCord Museum

Contact: 514-398-7100 ext 305

www.mccord-museum.qc.ca/en/exhibitions/143v.html

Regina, Saskatchewan

March 8, 12:00 noon - 6:00 p.m.

University of Regina Women's Centre is hosting a Carnival and Celebration of Women, featuring music, storytellers, dance, theatre, puppet-making and shows, plus food, film and fun!

Location: University of Regina Riddell Centre

Contact: 306-584-1255

Edmonton, Alberta

March 8, 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.

YWCA Edmonton hosts a reception featuring a talk from Senator Mobina Jaffer, Special Envoy for Peace in Sudan, plus cultural dance and tapas.

Location: Timms Centre for the Arts (University of Alberta Campus)

Cost: \$25.00 or \$30.00 at the door

Contact: 780-423-9922 ext. 221

www.ywcaofedmonton.org

Vancouver, British Columbia

March 11, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Historical interpreter Jolene Cumming leads a walking tour that celebrates the lives of the famous and forgotten women who lived in or visited the park during the significant period from 1860 to 1914.

Location: Stanley Park

Cost: \$10, concessions \$8

Contact: 604-718-6522

Bridget Farr – "Protect me From What I Want"

Canada

"This photo represents the preoccupation many women have with food by depicting the psychological 'ties' to the often hidden bingeing and purging cycle."

Coliena Rentmeester – "Sunrise"

United States

"This print represents 'optimism.'"

Sandy Pereira – "Onoria"

Canada

"I think skin that shines is porous and is sexy. It's naked skin without having to photograph T&A. I think it says more."

Martien Mulder – "Marya"

Netherlands

"I chose this portrait because of its peacefulness."

Thursday, February 23, 2006

Dear Cosmetic Surgeons,

At school we are learning about Stereo types, and real beauty. We understand that your job has an importance, like all other jobs, but we think the way you advertise cosmetic surgery make it seem like that we need to change, the way we appear and look like people who we are not.

From reading about your job we have come up with some questions to ask you. Do you think cosmetic surgery makes people feel more beautiful than they really are?

Do you think your advertisements encourage young girls and even women to have cosmetic surgery?

Do you personally agree with letting 16 year old girls and younger have cosmetic surgery, even with parents permission?

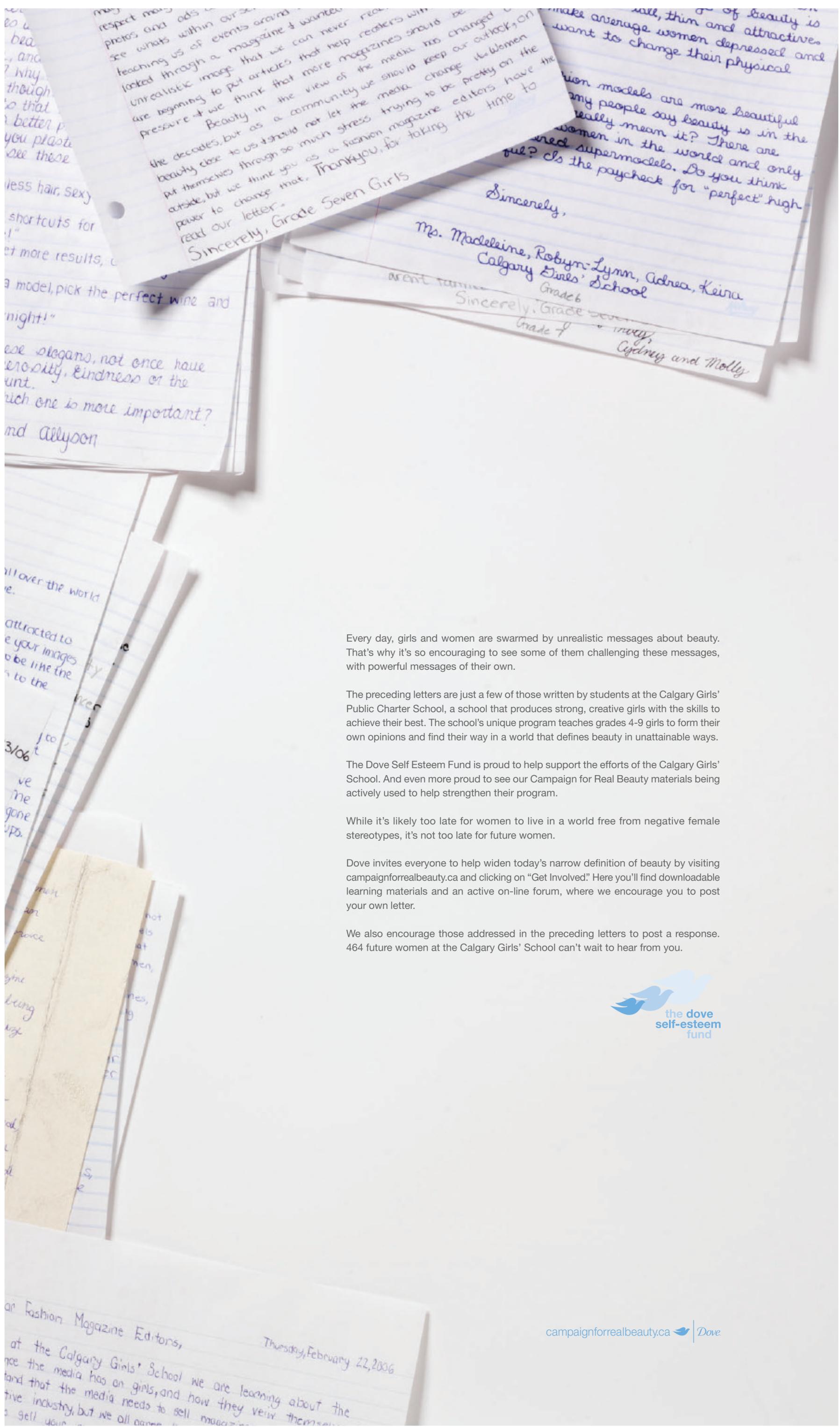
Is making people different a difficult thing for you to handle, knowing you are changing the way they appear?

We have appreciated your time, and will be looking forward to your response. We hop you know that this issue impacts young girls, and is important to take to mind.

yours truly,

Dakota, Erica, and Kylie.





respect many photos and ads we see what's within our reach. Teaching us of events around us. Looked through a magazine & wanted unrealistic image that we can never reach. Beauty in the view of the media has changed over the decades, but as a community we should keep our outlook on beauty close to us & should not let the media change it. Women put themselves through so much stress trying to be pretty on the outside, but we think you as a fashion magazine editors have the power to change that. Thank you, for taking the time to read our letter.

Sincerely, Grade Seven Girls

of beauty is all, thin and attractive. I want to change their physical appearance. Fashion models are more beautiful than any people say beauty is in the world and only really mean it? There are women in the world and only supermodels. Do you think they get the paycheck for "perfect" high?

Sincerely,

Ms. Madeleine, Robyn-Lynn, Adrea, Keira
Calgary Girls' School
Grade 6
Sincerely, Grade Seven Girls
Grade 7
Cydney and Molly

a model, pick the perfect wine and night!"
These slogans, not once have generosity, kindness or the heart. Which one is more important?
and Allyson

all over the world
attracted to
your images
to be like the
to the
3/06
ve
me
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men
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Dear Fashion Magazine Editors,
at the Calgary Girls' School we are learning about the way the media has on girls, and how they view themselves. I understand that the media needs to sell magazines in the fashion industry, but we all want to get your

Thursday, February 22, 2006

Every day, girls and women are swarmed by unrealistic messages about beauty. That's why it's so encouraging to see some of them challenging these messages, with powerful messages of their own.

The preceding letters are just a few of those written by students at the Calgary Girls' Public Charter School, a school that produces strong, creative girls with the skills to achieve their best. The school's unique program teaches grades 4-9 girls to form their own opinions and find their way in a world that defines beauty in unattainable ways.

The Dove Self Esteem Fund is proud to help support the efforts of the Calgary Girls' School. And even more proud to see our Campaign for Real Beauty materials being actively used to help strengthen their program.

While it's likely too late for women to live in a world free from negative female stereotypes, it's not too late for future women.

Dove invites everyone to help widen today's narrow definition of beauty by visiting campaignforrealbeauty.ca and clicking on "Get Involved." Here you'll find downloadable learning materials and an active on-line forum, where we encourage you to post your own letter.

We also encourage those addressed in the preceding letters to post a response. 464 future women at the Calgary Girls' School can't wait to hear from you.

