

# Ophelia's Voice Newsletter

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WINTER 2009

## Special points of interest:

- We're gearing up for our third annual National Day of Action on February 14—find out how to participate!
- Our resource library is officially launched! View our listing of books and resources you can check out on girls' issues.
- Hear our update on the Girl's Action Foundation (formerly Power Camp National) retreat. It was great!

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## The Half Year Mark: A Recap Of Our Programs & Activities

Welcome to 2009—it's the half-way point for the girls participating in our 2008 - 2009 program and we've accomplished a lot already! In September we started our program with 14 girls aged 11—14 with a “drop in activities” format: we offer various activities, workshops, and projects throughout the month and girls are welcome to attend whatever they choose.

Here's a short recap of some activities we'd done so far:

- Yoga
- Photography
- Body Image

- Kickboxing
- Using/Analyzing Media
- Volunteering In The Community (Christmas Bureau)
- “Nervosa” Play



And we have lots of look forward to! The girls will have the opportunity to plan the Day of Action this year and raise awareness about an issue they are

passionate about. We will also be hosting a workshop on facilitation to encourage girls to develop workshops for each other, and we are tackling some big issues like healthy sexuality, anti oppression, cyber-bullying, and feminism. In the months upcoming we will also be doing individual action projects, where girls can receive mentorship and funding to launch their own project about an issue in the community.

In the works is also an event for International Women's Day on March 8, and a focus group with the girls to guide our programs for the upcoming year.

## February 14: Day of Action

Ophelia's Voice is a proud member of the Girls Action Foundation Network, which supports a “Day of Action” planned by young women to raise awareness about community issues on Feb 14 of each year. This year, we are putting the project

in the hands of the girls to plan together. Girls Action Foundation offers \$400 mini grants for projects, as well as national publicity. The girls will be supported by several adult mentors to choose a community issue, plan an appropriate event

or project, and to write a \$400 budget to submit. More updates will be given closer to the date, but to learn more about actions happening across Canada or to read the young women's “blogging rally” visit [www.kickaction.ca](http://www.kickaction.ca).

## Girl's Action Foundation National Retreat



In November 2008 Joanne, Lily (adult mentor), and Courtney (participant) attended the Girls Action Foundation National Retreat in QC to meet with girls groups from across the country and to learn about issues affecting Canadian girls and women. It was a great experience, with over 80 girls and women attending the 4 day retreat. Ophelia's Voice members participated in workshops on topics such as healthy sexuality, indigenous feminism,

and reproductive rights led by leading-edge Canadian activists and organizations. They had the opportunity to meet girls from Victoria, BC to Halifax, NS and Clyde River, NT and everywhere in between! They also participated in hiphop dance workshops, ziplining activities, campfires, and discussions led by Mohawk woman elders. Joanne and Lily have attended the retreat since 2005 and find it a great opportunity to network and partner with other girls groups and

learn about emerging girls issues affecting girls in Canada. Many opportunities exist for participants in Ophelia's Voice to participate in upcoming National retreats or to be involved in other work of the Girl's Action Foundation—including their new leadership program "Project Elle", their kickaction.ca website, the Day of Action that's hosted on February 14 of each year, and regional meetings that will soon be connecting girls' groups in western Canada.

*"We are encouraging girls to design their own community action project on an issue they are passionate about"*

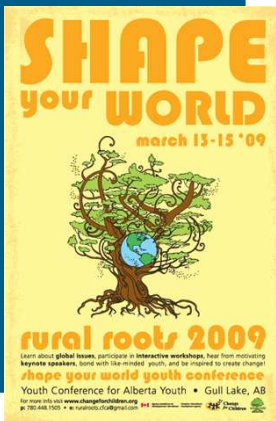
## Opportunity For Girls: Design Your Own Action Project!

As part of the Ophelia's Voice program this year, we are encouraging girls to design their own community action project on an issue they are passionate about. This is an optional component of the program, but a very exciting one! If girls choose to take part, they can participate in a project-building workshop, receive a small seed funding

grant to pay for their project expenses, and will receive support through the entire process from Joanne and some of the adult mentors. This project is very flexible—girls can work independently or in small groups and can choose whatever issue interests them (everything from environment to cancer awareness, eating disorders, racism, etc). Each

girl dedicates as much energy to her project as she is able, and some projects may be bigger than others. Girls will be encouraged to use the tools they have gained in Ophelia's Voice to give them ideas about how to take action—whether it's through a presentation to classmates, a poster campaign, or a fundraiser. Training for girls will begin in March.

## Opportunity For Girls: Shape Your World Youth Leadership Conference



Shape Your World is a youth leadership conference March 13—15, 2009 hosted by an Edmonton-based organization called Change for Children. Change for Children offers global education programs, which encourage Canadians to learn more about global human rights concerns, especially

those affecting children. Shape Your World is part of a youth project called Rural Roots, which brings social justice education to rural Alberta communities. The Shape Your World conference is for youth aged 14—19 and will be taking place in Gull Lake, Alberta. The conference includes a

variety of workshops on topics like women's rights, HIV, the environment, and more. Two esteemed keynote speakers include Severn Cullis-Suzuki, the daughter of David Suzuki, and David Johnson from Free The Children. Ophelia's Voice will cover the registration fee for girls if they want to attend.

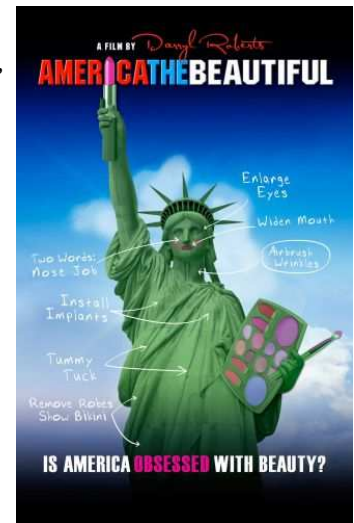
## Eating Disorders Awareness Week: February 22—28, 2009 (www.edeo.org)

The Eating Disorders Education Organization based in Edmonton is once again supporting an initiative for Eating Disorders Awareness Week from February 22—28, 2009. Eating Disorders Awareness Week is about raising everyone's level of awareness about supporting healthy body image, body-positive media sources, and the prevalence of eating disorders in our society. In the past EDEO has done some really innovative awareness-raising projects, including presentations to schools, theatrical performances

about the reality of living with an eating disorder, a masked march across the High Level Bridge, film screenings, and "all sizes" fashion shows. This year, Eating Disorders Awareness Week is culminated with EDEO's "Letting Go ... Living More" conference on February 27 and 28 featuring Peter Walsh, an organizational expert featured on Oprah. On the evening of February 28, "America The Beautiful" will be screened at the Winspear Centre as a fundraiser for EDEO. "America The Beautiful" is a film about the

American obsession with plastic surgery, cosmetics, and celebrities. Ophelia's Voice will be offering the film screening as a group activity for participants, and parents are welcome to attend as well. EDEO requests youth under age 18 be accompanied by an adult due to language.

**The film "America The Beautiful" being screened February 28.**



## Our Resource Library Has Officially Launched!

Ophelia's Voice has put together a resource library that **girls, parents, and the community at large** have access to in order to learn about girl's issues—everything from body image to depression to leadership and feminism. Girls participating in Ophelia's Voice have the opportunity to "check out" books for a 2 week period at general meetings, and if parents want to request books they can be sent home with their daughter or arranged with Joanne at [joanne@opheliasvoice.org](mailto:joanne@opheliasvoice.org). For a complete list of titles, visit [www.librarything.com/catalog/opheliasvoice](http://www.librarything.com/catalog/opheliasvoice).

Some of our titles include (we have 50+ books in total!)

### **For Parents**

The Bully, The Bullied, and The Bystander: How Parents and Teachers Can Break The Cycles of Violence

The Disappearing Girl: Learning The Language of Teenage Depression

The Lolita Effect: The Media Sexualization of Young Girls and What We Can Do About It

Odd Girl Out: The Hidden Culture of Aggression In Girls

Packaging Girlhood: Rescuing Our Daughters From Marketers' Schemes

Queen Bees and Wannabes: Helping Your Daughter Survive Cliques, Gossip, Boyfriends, And Other Realities ...

### **For Girls**

All Made Up: A Girl's Guide To Seeing Through Celebrity Hype and Celebrating Real Beauty

Changing Bodies, Changing Lives

Cycle Savvy: The Smart Teen's Guide to the Mysteries of Her Body

Deal With It! A Whole New Approach To Your Body, Brain, and Life as a gURL

Fight Like A Girl: How To Be A Fearless Feminist

The Girl's Guide To Life

In Your Face: The Culture of Beauty and You

Mean Chicks, Cliques, and Dirty Tricks: A Real Girl's Guide To Getting Through The Day With Smarts and Style

Odd Girl Speaks Out: Girls Write About Bullies, Cliques, Popularity, and Jealousy



**Ophelia's Voice**  
*empowering girls to take the lead!*

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## What We Do

Ophelia's Voice is a youth-led non-profit organization based in Sherwood Park, Alberta that offers teenage girls opportunities to develop critical thinking, leadership skills, and a sense of empowerment. We achieve this through peer-facilitated workshops, leadership training programs, and public education to schools and community groups. The issues Ophelia's Voice deal with range from body image to healthy sexuality to violence against women and social justice.

## Some New Projects ... Want To Get Involved?

There's lots cooking at Ophelia's Voice lately, and we are taking on some special projects outside of our regular program. If you're interested in volunteering or supporting us in any way with these projects, please contact us!

- **International Women's Day**

We are planning a celebration this year for International Women's Day on March 8, 2009 and will engage our participants and adult mentors in the planning process. Some ideas include an emphasis on women's rights "past, present, and future" by learning from second-wave feminists and also engaging girls with their hopes as women of the future. Some event ideas include a film screening of "Iron Jawed Angels", a reception, resource

fair, or collaborative community art project. If you are interested in this project and want to volunteer in some way, get in contact with Joanne at [joanne@opheliasvoice.org](mailto:joanne@opheliasvoice.org)



**International Women's Day takes place on March 8 of every year and is celebrated globally.**

- **Girls' Stakeholders Meeting**

In late spring Ophelia's Voice wants to organize a meeting of all of the agencies and organizations in the Edmonton area invested in the lives of girls and young women—whether it be youth-serving agencies, school boards, various levels of government, or grassroots initiatives. Our goal with this meeting is to offer a venue for networking, resource exchange, collaboration, and awareness building so initiatives for girls and young women can be better supported in the Edmonton area. This meeting will likely take the format of a half-day informal networking meeting and think-tank where participants will have an opportunity to educate the group about their programs. If you are interested in helping organize this, contact [joanne@opheliasvoice.org](mailto:joanne@opheliasvoice.org).