

# Big Sisters Training to Lead at the Summit for Girls

Submitted by Tricia Vaughan and Ksenija Soster Olmer

Ask any young adult today if they would like to go back to their middle school years and you would most likely get a resounding “No!” The junior high years as they were known in the past can be years of adjustment to new academic and social pressures, but they can also be years of new growth, new friendships and new self-awareness.

The local branch of the American Association of University Women is doing their best to help girls in our community celebrate the latter and deal effectively with the first. Once again the adult committee and nearly fifty high school facilitators are hard at work organizing the 2008 Sister-to-Sister Summit. It will be held March 15th at Acalanes High School in Lafayette. The summit, now in its ninth year, is a day-long event for Lamorinda and Walnut Creek middle school girls to come together and discuss the things that are crucial to their lives right now. These topics are varied and range from body image and peer pressure to harassment and “mean girls.” They learn to talk about the ins and outs of relationships, trust and the surprising difficulties that can come with an ever-widening circle of friends, something that seems to really take off in middle school.

The beauty of this day for the middle school girls is that it is led by a dynamic group of local high school girls, specifically chosen and trained by parent educators and psychologists specializing in adolescence, just for this type of event. Small discussion groups and activities led by girls who just recently went through – and survived – the angst and confusion of their middle school years are inspiring and at the same time comforting to younger girls who are experiencing the first pangs of uncertainty that come with entering the teenage years. The positive attitude, the sense of acceptance among girls and the fun, creative and inspiring activities and presenters make this day special.

The high school facilitators representing all four high schools in our district have been meeting regularly for leadership and communication skill training sessions as well as for work in different committees that decide every detail from what will be the main theme of the summit, to what will be the topics of discussion groups, down to which kind of pizza would their Little Sisters enjoy most.

If you have a girl attending middle school save the date, Saturday, March 15, 2008, for an unforgettable day. The first hour of the summit a parenting



L to R, Sylvia Marton & Keely Kuhn, seniors at Las Lomas, Amber Kanwer and Helen Wang, both juniors at Acalanes

Photo Sharon Metcalf

workshop on raising daughters will be run concurrently. If you would like to hear from local parenting and counseling experts and their take on issues they are working with and connect to other parents of girls in the community plan to save some time after dropping your daughter off.

For more information visit: [www.aauwoml.org](http://www.aauwoml.org)



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