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Sister to Sister Summit: The Perspective of a Big Sister

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Girls having fun at the 2010 Sister to Sister Summit
Photo K. De Groot

a six-month period, a group of us are mentored by women from the American Association of University Women (AAUW), planning the Summit and working on our facilitation and communication skills. We have arranged a day of fun and have created a chance for local middle school girls to bond with others of their own age in an open, "clique-free" setting.

Because the Summit is filled with time to talk over tasty food, social games and more intimate and safe discussion groups, the relationships formed can come from sharing in each other's laughter but also hearing about each other's struggles.

Not only are the middle school girls able to form relationships with one another, but with the high school girls as well. The high school girls share their experience of how to get through the challenges of middle school and how to prepare for high school.

A past participant, Tara B., recently noted, "I was unsure about what to expect in high school and a bit intimidated by the upper classmen. However, after talking with the high school facilitators in my discussion group at Sister to Sister, I was able to enter high school feeling prepared and confident. It was also cool that on my first day of high school my I saw my facilitator, who to me was no longer an intimidating upper classman, but a friend."

Although there is only one Summit day a year, the experiences of Sister to Sister can last far beyond the day. This year's Sister to Sister Summit will be held on March 19th from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Bentley School in Lafayette. The registration deadline is March 12. To sign up or get more information, go to www.sister2sister.info.

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Middle school is truly a "middle" phase, where a student begins to distance herself from once-favorite clothes and television shows, but is still too young to earn the freedoms (and experience the stresses) of high school students.

Although those in middle school may not have to stress over final exams and college applications, they are by no means exempt from the feeling. In the organization Sister to Sister, local high school girls plan a day, every spring, for middle school girls from around the area to come together and share their stories.

After I attended Sister to Sister as a middle school student, just a few years ago, I remember thinking that as much as I loved all my friends at Stanley, my own middle school, there was something special and novel about becoming friends with girls from other schools as well. Whether it was because they could provide a different perspective on situations, or because these friendships reminded me that I was not confined within the borders of my own school, the friends I made at Sister to Sister are still a big part of my life.

Now in high school, I have become a facilitator for the Summit. Over