

YWCA Santa Monica / Westside Girl House Art Project

Issue #4 2006 Editor: Kesa Kivel



Girl House Art Project: Over a 10-month period, a diverse group of girls ages 11-13 explored gender issues, expressed their findings through art, and empowered themselves in the process. Using a small cottage and surrounding area on the YWCA Santa Monica / Westside campus, the girls created an art environment that reflected their issues and educated the public. The Girl House Public Exhibition was held on June 17, 2006.



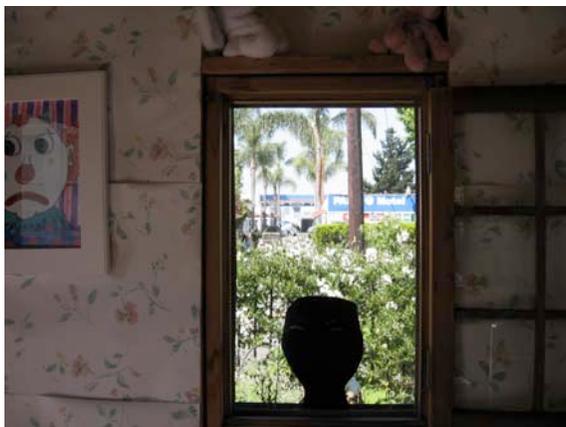
Crystal's bed (above) was full of tissues wadded up, indicating tears. Sexual harassment may lead to sadness and depression.

The girls chose the theme of **SEXUAL HARASSMENT** for their art installation, a situation that affects them and so many others. Using an on-site cottage, the girls created the bedroom of a girl who is being sexually harassed, **artistically rendering this girl's worries as well as the potential consequences to her of the harassment.** They named the girl **Crystal**.

Inside the bedroom there was a Scrabble set with words like **pervert** and **sad** spelled out. There was an oversized journal with "Crystal's" journal entries written inside; **a full-length mirror with a broken body drawn in lipstick on it**; Crystal's pills to treat her depression; her homework marked with D's and F's with teachers' comments on them (e.g., "Please see me after class."); a telephone book opened to a page with a listing for a Teen Line counseling center; **a phone off the hook**; and other items.

While viewing Crystal's room, visitors listened to a **sound recording**, on a repeated loop, of the Girl House girls talking (in first person) about their specific experiences of being sexually harassed. This made the topic of sexual harassment more real and memorable to the visitors.

On the inside walls of the **House of Healing**, a small green shack near the Girl House art installation, visitors could read some of the actions a person could take if sexually harassed. Visitors could also sit down in the House of Healing and either write to Crystal -- or write about their own experiences of being harassed -- in a journal that the girls had provided.



Silhouettes, representing the boys and men who harass girls, seem to peer through the windows of Crystal's Room. The girls created the silhouettes and also the sad clown face in the picture frame on the wall.

Girl House DVDs!

A limited number of **FREE "Girl House" DVDs (16 minutes)** will be available this fall, as well as study guides.

Contact Kesa at www.kesakivel.com



Guests (above) view the Girl House Gallery at the Public Exhibition, held on June 17, 2006.

SECOND CHANCE TO VIEW GIRL HOUSE!

The Girl House art installation (Crystal's Room and the House of Healing) will be reinstalled during the YWCA's Week Without Violence October 16-20, 2006. Middle school girls will **tour the installation, discuss sexual harassment, then express their feelings artistically.** Please contact Barbara Olinger (310) 452-3881 for a brochure and workshop sign-ups. Groups of students are encouraged to attend.

*"What would happen if one woman told the truth about her life?
The world would split open." -- Muriel Rukeyser, poet*



The Girl House girls pose in front of their mural (l to r): Amanda, Angelica, Kaitlyn, and Lily