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Fox Valley Rep Teens and Local Authors Raise Awareness to Teenage Bullying

 By **Audra Sybert**
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From left: Haylee Sippel, Juliana Horn, Katie Jackovin, and Melissa Wickland rehearsing a scene for *The Secret Life of Girls*.

Fox Valley Repertory Academy's teen students are ready to provide a glimpse into the lives of teenage girls. From cliques and secrets to bullying and rumors, the cast has spent the last five weeks learning and rehearsing for two performances that will take place Saturday, May 21 at 2:00pm and Sunday, May 22 at 5:00 pm on the Pheasant Run Mainstage. And while there is no charge for tickets, these local teens are hoping to raise \$5 per attendee in support of the FVR Performing Arts Academy's scholarship fund to help those who are financially unable to partake in the academy's most extensive offering of classes, camps and workshops.

In *The Secret Life of Girls*, the dramatization of teen-girl angst will take centerstage, offering an insight into the destructive world of girls' bullying. Bullying takes the form of gossiping, keeping secrets, name-calling, spreading rumors and clinging to cliques. When faced with the consequences of their actions, the girls ultimately resolve to change their behaviors. Based upon interviews with girls on the

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giving and receiving end of bullying, the play highlights the impact of "cyberbullying."

"The Secret Life of Girls is a powerful and important play. I love that this show challenges the cast as performers as well as forces them to take a look at why people behave the way they do and the repercussions of an individual's actions. This of course impacts the audience as well. I encourage all young girls and their families to see this and begin a dialog at home," says Direction Tracy Whiteside of St. Charles. "On a lighter note, this summer we are doing a teen version of 'Noises Off' for ages 13-19. Auditions are Saturday, June 4 from 2 to 4 pm and Wednesday, June 8 from 5:30-7:30 pm. We're always looking for new local youth to join our programs!"

Kendall Becker, 15, of Geneva, plays the part of Abby. "This will be my third show at Fox Valley Repertory. I really enjoy working on this production. This is an important topic and I'm glad I can be involved with it. "

The FVR students and director hope this showcase will help raise awareness on the effects of bullying as well as start conversations in homes, schools and communities.

Bullying solutions authors to speak

After the May 22 performance of "The Secret Life of Girls," Marie Newman and Jacqui DiMarco, co-authors of "When Your Child Is Being Bullied: Real Solutions for Families, Educators and Other Professionals," (ViviSphere Publishing, June 2011) will speak to the audience about solutions for stopping a child's torment and breaking the bullying cycle, including: real solutions that actually work, bullying myths, tips how children can best defend themselves against bullying and discourage repeat attacks, as well as how parents can work with educators to stop a bully from hurting children.

Visit www.solutionsforbullying.com for free resources designed to help parents stop their child's torment and get beyond it, back to happiness.

The Secret Life of Girls cast members include from Bartlett: Maegan Daniels, Katie Jackovin, Jesse Kennelly; Campton Hills: Larissa Catalano; Elgin: Kara Hamilton; Geneva: Kendall Becker; Schaumburg: Melissa Wickland; St. Charles: Kayleigh Aleck., Natalie Hilvert, Juliana Horn, Griffin Johnson, Amanda Sallmann; Wheaton: Haylee Sippel.

The Secret Life of Girls will be presented Saturday, May 21 at 2:00pm and Sunday, May 22 at 5:00pm on the Pheasant Run Resort Mainstage. Admission is free.

The Fox Valley Repertory Performing Arts Academy features some of the Chicago area's most respected teachers, directors, actors and musicians. Classes are available for ages 3-19. For more information, visit www.foxvalleyrep.org/education or call 630-364-0550.

This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency, and is sponsored in part by Kane County Chronicle.

Ample free parking and valet services are available at Pheasant Run Resort, located at 4051 E. Main St., St. Charles, IL.

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