

## Girls in the Know to host effort to curb ‘meanness in the girl world’

“Sugar and spice and everything nice.” Hardly what little girls are made of.

As girls re-enter the classroom this fall, it is a good time to open up the conversation about the rising emotional, inevitable and detrimental effects of bullying, which starts as early as elementary school.

That is where “Finding Kind” comes in. A film that addresses “meanness in the girl world,” “Finding Kind” is an educational documentary chronicling two college students who packed their vans and traveled across the country to explore the impact of bullying. At the same time, they launched the Kind Campaign, a movement that brings awareness and healing to the harmful effects of bullying.

When Gina Marten, executive director of Girls in the Know, a nonprofit organization that aims to encourage preteen girls to make positive choices as they mature into adulthood, got a hold of the film, she thought there was no better time to share that knowledge with young girls and their mothers.

“It just felt like it was timely, with kids just getting back to school and having the whole idea of having a strong, fresh start in the school year,” Marten said. “Just looking at the statistics and understanding what’s happening in schools, even though we’re educating and we’re talking about it more, there’s still so much work to do.

“‘Finding Kind’ brings to light the detrimental and emotional effects bullying can have on young women in middle school and high school and creates a spirit for change. You see so much in the news about kids and teen suicides these days, and we just feel like it’s important if we can have an impact in this area.”

On Saturday, Sept. 7, Girls in the Know will present the premiere of the film in addition to hosting an EXPO showcasing community girl-empowering organizations that support the movement to abolish the “mean girl” phenomenon.

“This is a great way to open the door to those important conversations while the girls are still young enough, while we’re able to reach them and stay connected with them as they are just entering their teen years,” Marten said. “In addition to being a documentary about the meanness within the girl world, the mission for the creation of the film was to create a movement, and we liked that idea.”

St. Luke’s Hospital, among other sponsors, has joined Girls in the Know’s effort to promote education about bullying. Mary Pfenning, RN, coordinator of St. Luke’s Hospital’s Spirit of Women, said the movie “aligns very well with our mission to improve the quality of life for the community.”

“St. Luke’s Hospital is partnering with Girls in the Know on the ‘Finding Kind’ St. Louis premiere and EXPO because we know it’s never too early to teach women to take action for their own physical and emotional health,” Pfenning said. “The preteen and teen years are a very influential time in a woman’s life, so it’s important to provide the information and resources needed to help girls make good health decisions now that they will carry into adulthood and share with their families.”

“Finding Kind” is recommended for ages 11 and older and plays twice, from 10 a.m.-noon in the Teen Lounge of the St. Louis Public Library, located at 1301 Olive St., and again from 1-3 p.m. at St. Luke’s Hospital’s Institute for Health Education, located at 232 S. Woods Mill Road in Chesterfield.

In addition to the movie and EXPO, the event includes a Chill Frozen Yogurt Bar and participation in the Kind Campaign. The cost is free, but donations to support Girls in the Know are appreciated. Reservations are required. To RSVP, call (314) 717-1270 or email [info@girlsintheknow.org](mailto:info@girlsintheknow.org).

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