



Girls Inc. of Wayne County

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Girls Inc. hosts talk to help parents and adults support girls

Girls Inc. of Wayne County is proud to invite the community to participate in a free public talk on Wednesday, April 9, 2008 at 7pm as part of the Girls Inc. *Got Girls? Giving Back* series.

Mother, author, educator and girl expert Lyn Mikel Brown provides a talk aimed at helping parents and adults support girls. Her talk, titled "How adults can help girls be who they are, now what they're sold" is free to the public.

The talk will be held in The Loose Lecture Hall in Landrum Bolling Center at Earlham College. A reception with book signing follows immediately.

Lyn Mikel Brown has done extensive research on girls, with recent scholarship focused on girl-oriented marketing pressures. Brown's talk will guide parents through marketers' attempts to claim their daughters. She shows parents the image of girls (sexy, diva, boy-crazy, shoppers) that is being packaged and sold, pretty in pink.

Brown demonstrates how "girl power" has been co-opted by marketers of music, fashion, books, cartoons, TV shows, movies, toys, and more to mean the power to shop and attract boys, and how girls are encouraged to use their "voice" to choose accessorizing over academics, sex appeal over sports, and boyfriends over friends.

Out of her concern and advocacy for girls, Brown helped found *Hardy Girls, Healthy Women*, a nonprofit dedicated to the empowerment of girls and women. Her talk will be of interest to a broad audience of parents, youth-workers and girl advocates.

Girls Inc. of Wayne County Executive Director Beth Harrick expresses much enthusiasm for Brown's work,

"Lyn Mikel Brown has been at the forefront of research on girls for the last two decades. She first helped academics and professionals understand girls, and now she helps parents better support their daughters' healthy development. Most exciting to me is how well her talk fits our community need. We have so many hardworking parents and youth-advocates in our community. Mothers and fathers alike as well as grandparents and teachers are constantly seeking resources for working with adolescent girls. They desperately want to support girls and are eager for new information, tips and skills. This talk will help them." Support for this program is provided by the Wayne County Foundation.

Books authored and co-authored and Websites by/about Lyn Mikel Brown:

- Lamb, Sharon & Brown, Lyn M. (2006). *Packaging Girlhood: Rescuing Our Daughters From Marketers' Schemes*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Brown, Lyn M. (2004). *Girlfighting: Betrayal and Rejection Among Girls*. New York: New York University Press
- Brown, Lyn M. (1998). *Raising their Voices: The Politics of Girls Anger*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Brown, Lyn M & Gilligan, Carol. (1993). *Meeting at the Crossroads: Women's Psychology and Girls' Development*. New York: Ballantine Books. (a 1992 New York Times Notable Book of the Year)
- *Packaging Girlhood* website and blog: <http://www.packaginggirlhood.com/> and <http://www.packaginggirlhood.typepad.com/>
- Hardy Girls Healthy Women website: <http://www.hghw.org/lynresearch.php>
- Her Colby College website with biography: http://www.colby.edu/directory_cs/lmbrown/

See attached sheet for a review of her recent book and quotes.

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With questions, phone or email Beth Harrick or Tai Walton at (765) 962-2362, bharrick.wayne@girls-inc.org or twalton.wayne@girls-inc.org

Lyn Mikel Brown's research on girls' social and psychological development has garnered her notice in magazines like People as well as newspaper reviews in The New York Times. Lyn is sought after as an expert and speaks widely on girls and aggression as well as girls and media, and girls and education. She is creator of the nonprofit Hardy Girls Healthy Women, where she works with communities to support girls' healthy development and education.

QUOTES ON her *Packaging Girlhood* book (from www.packaginggirlhood.com):
"This engaging and important book vividly illustrates how our toxic cultural environment harms girls. Most important, it inspires and empowers us to help our daughters resist..." -Jean Kilbourne, author of *Can't Buy My Love: How Advertising Changes the Way We Think and Feel* Creator of the *Killing Us Softly: Advertising's Image of Women* film series

"Be prepared to be shocked and saddened as you come to see the world of sex, shopping, media, body-fat, and self-esteem through the wide eyes of today's American girls. Be prepared, also, to find invaluable guidance and insight from authors Sharon Lamb and Lyn Brown who know our daughters from inside out. This is a must-read for parents and teachers who want to steer girls away from marketing schemes that distort female power and authority, and towards true self-acceptance and authentic empowerment."-Polly Young-Eisendrath, author of *Women and Desire and The Resilient Spirit*

"Lyn Mikel Brown and Sharon Lamb have that rare gift of translating cutting edge research and analysis into strategies and information that every parent (and every girl) can use in daily life. In *Packaging Girlhood*, they provide solid ways for families to help girls stay rooted in reality while buffeted by the powerful winds of commercialism. In the process, we parents learn more than a little about staying rooted in reality ourselves. This is the kind of guidance that families need, especially if they think they are immune from marketers' schemes."-Joe Kelly, President, Dads and Daughters

"With compassion, insight, and humor, they unravel and demystify the messages girls confront throughout their development, and they offer adults useful tools to help girls resist their powerful pull. *Packaging Girlhood* is filled with useful information and practical suggestions for adults wishing to help girls critique and rewrite consumer culture's narrow and toxic portrayals of girls. Never judgmental and always illuminating, *Packaging Girlhood* reflects Lamb and Brown's deep respect for girls and their first-hand understanding of the dilemmas of parenting."-Lynn M. Phillips, Ph.D., Department of Communications, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

"A tour de force of excellent scholarship put in a very readable context and chock full of practical suggestions to parents for change! In *Packaging Girlhood*, Lamb and Brown expose the manner in which our daughters whom we believed had been newly reinforced with "girl power" actually remain enslaved in the gender straitjacket of a narrow and distorted set of messages about what being a "real girl" or young adult female is all about.

A must read for anyone who teaches, works with or wishes to support girls (from tots to teens) in our society and for every parent of a daughter who wants to give

her child a legacy of meaningful possibilities instead of a prepackaged world of inhibiting stereotypes."-William S. Pollack, Ph.D., author of *Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons from the Myths of Boyhood*

"*Packaging Girlhood* is a must read for anyone who cares about the health and well-being of girls. It exposes the marketing industry's assault on pre-teens and is filled with helpful suggestions for beleaguered parents."-Susan Linn, Ed. D., Associate Director of the Media Center at Judge Baker Children's Center and Instructor in Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School

"Parents constantly complain that they have only a small shovel to hold back the avalanche of products and messages that erode children's resilience and sap their self-esteem. Now they have this book. Sharon Lamb and Lyn Mikel Brown's sharp analysis and patiently pragmatic advice is just what we need to sustain our daughters' quests for healthy identities." -Michael Kimmel, Ph.D., author of *Manhood in America* and Professor of Sociology at SUNY-Stony-Brook

Starred Publisher's Weekly Review *Packaging Girlhood: Rescuing Our Daughters from Marketers' Schemes* Reviewed 2006-07-17 PW

That girls are overwhelmed by images of princesses, demure femininity and pink, pink, pink is no surprise. What is shocking, as Lamb (*The Secret Lives of Girls*) and Brown (*Meeting at the Crossroads*) so astutely demonstrate, is the downright bombardment girls receive, coming from all forms of media. Lamb and Brown, both psychologists, came to harsh conclusions after they surveyed girls; sat through hours of *Rugrats* and *Kim Possible* television programming; scoured stores such as Hot Topic and Claire's; watched Hilary Duff movies; listened to Eminem and Beyoncé; visited MySpace.com; and read Caldecott books. The idea of "girl power was snapped up by the media," and "what it sells is an image of being empowered," argue the authors. Girls are offered two choices by the marketers: they are "either for the boys or one of the boys." Even rebellion is being packaged, "the resistance, that edginess and irreverence that once gave girls a pathway out of the magic kingdom." The book is incredibly readable and rises above others in the genre by giving parents concrete tools to help battle stereotypes. Lamb and Brown include lists of books and movies with positive role models and talking points to help your daughter recognize how she is being manipulated. The authors aren't trying to deny anyone princesses or pink; they just want girls to be knowledgeable enough to choose what will truly interest them. (Sept.)