



creating hardiness zones
for girls and women
in maine and beyond

Girls in Piscataquis County: Challenges and Strengths

At the first meeting, members identified the following as challenges that girls face:

- Geographic isolation
- Lack of exposure to diversity
- Limited opportunities compounded by lack of awareness of what is available
- Loss of family planning in area
- Poverty; groupings of haves and have-nots
- Multigenerational use of social welfare system
- Generational attitudes “That’s the way it’s always been; that’s the way it will always be.”
- Lack of parental support
- Lack of support for parents
- Parental overprotection
- Lack of assertive independence
- Lack of social activities that are not school related
- Dearth of social skills
- Don’t know how to solve conflicts peacefully
- Limited coping skills
- Sexual behavior starting earlier and earlier
- Sexual assaults
- Drug use
- Self mutilation
- Malaise regarding school
- Lack of positive role models
- Lessened connection to community

The group also identified girls’ strengths, which include:

- Hardy/Strong/Forced independence (pros and cons to this)
Know how to load a wood stove. Take on family responsibilities above and beyond what they should have to at their young ages. Strength and independence are good, but this can also be a stress which prevents them from experiencing childhood.
- Resilient – get through tough times
- Resourceful
- Strong desire to connect with other girls





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- Openness, eager to take advantage of opportunities
- Organizers, communicate well
- Thrive in groups
- Willing to help each other and the community
- Flexibility – some do leave and succeed in larger areas
- Small schools are safer, more sheltering environments
- Lots of community support
- In small communities they know each other and have connections with the adults.
(They know the mail carrier, store owners, etc)
- Availability of local resources



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