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UI students, staff discuss ways to heighten women's self-esteem

By Tara Karr
Argonaut Staff

The back of the mirror is covered with a collage of images of models titled "Women in the Media."

The words "True Beauty" frame the reflection of the person who looks into the mirror.

This artistic statement in the UI Women's Center is part of Elizabeth Morrow's project to promote positive body image and self-esteem to women at UI.

Morrow, a counseling student from the Australian College of Applied Psychology, is living in Moscow for the year while completing her master's degree online. Morrow is working through the Women's Center, bringing in projects and events such as "Love Your Body Day."

Women's Center staff and a few UI students and faculty met Wednesday afternoon in the Women's Center lounge to celebrate the sixth annual "Love Your Body Day."

The event takes place across the country and is organized by the National Organization for Women. This year, discussion and actions focused on the role of cosmetic surgery, as well as defeating negative images of women in the media and encouraging women to love and care for their bodies, Morrow said.

"So many girls are thinking that because they don't match up to the airbrushed models, they're not worthy," Morrow said.

Along with the True Beauty mirror, a poster listing reasons to love your body and a scale with compliments instead of numbers are on display in the Women's Center.

Morrow handed out information sheets including a "Real Woman Creed" and a list of little-known

CALENDAR

TODAY

Career Expo of the Palouse
WSU Beasley Performing Arts Coliseum
9 a.m.

Human resource development workshop
Administration Building Room 217.
2 p.m.

College of Graduate Studies seminar:
"Managing Daily Stress"
SUB Silver Room
5:30 p.m.

Dance Theatre fall performance:
"Kaleidoscope"
UITV-8 Programming
8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Civil rights lecture
College of Law Courtroom
11:30 a.m.

Noontime Concert series:
Laurel Brauns
Idaho Commons Lawn
noon

College Success Series:
"Improve Your Memory"
Idaho Commons Room 327
3:30 p.m.

Reading: Nonfiction writer
David Quammen

between a size 12 and 16, Barbie would have to walk on all fours due to her proportions if she were real, and only 5 percent of women naturally possess the body type portrayed in advertising.

One of the central topics in the cosmetic surgery debate was whether or not it is beneficial for self-esteem. Some women thought plastic surgery can be used to improve self-esteem while others asserted it is unnecessary.

Morrow said cosmetic surgery is just another way for women to try to live up to an unrealistic and unhealthy standard of beauty. She said no one should have to cope with low-self esteem or teasing because "society claims that a nose shouldn't be more than this big."

She said the solution to this is for women to stand against beauty standards. "We should be changing society," she said.

Sonya Rosario, executive director of the Women of Color Alliance in Boise, said she could see some benefits of cosmetic surgery. "I think that there are individuals who go through society that have been in horrible accidents ... who need reconstructive surgery to regain or improve what they already had," she said, but cosmetic surgery to please a boyfriend or society should not be acceptable.

Rosario said many women opt for plastic surgery because of a negative self-image. "If you yourself don't like what you see in the mirror, you're never going to like it," she said. She advised women to enter counseling before considering surgery.

Morrow and the Women's Center are starting a Body Image Support group for people with eating disorders and low self-esteem. Morrow said this group is "necessary for this campus," because one out of every four college-aged women has an eating disorder. Those who are interested can sign up in the Women's Center, and Morrow said the first meeting should be within the next two weeks.

Another way the Women's Center staff is encouraging women to love their bodies is by promoting outdoor and indoor activities such as hikes, skiing, skydiving and rock climbing.

Diana Proemm, a student in health, physical education and dance at UI, is organizing several events including a slideshow on the Alaskan outdoors Nov. 10, a women's fun run and two "women's winter fun weekends".

Monday nights are women's climbing nights at the Student Rec Center, and Proemm said learning to climb can help women who have been attacked or abused by teaching them to deal with fear and relearn

College of Law Courtroom
7 p.m.

Union Cinema film:
"Kukushka (The Cuckoo)"
SUB Borah Theater
7 and 9:30 p.m.

THURSDAY

Library and technology
open forum
SUB Borah Theater
8 a.m.

Workshop: "Understanding
Depression"
SRC Classroom
3 p.m.

Construction kickoff
celebration
UCC balcony
3:30 p.m.

Idaho Treasure Award
dinner
University Inn-Best
Western
6 p.m.

James A. McClure Lecture:
Oregon Gov. John
Kitzhaber
University Auditorium
7 p.m.

Union Cinema film:
"Kukushka (The Cuckoo)"
SUB Borah Theater
7 and 9:30 p.m.

trust. "It's amazing empowerment for women," she said.

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