



Reflecting on Montana's Future

THE GEMINI PROGRAM: EMPOWERING YOUNG WOMEN

by Sandra Lonon

The Nurturing Center of Kalispell through its Gemini Program is providing an opportunity to make a positive difference in the lives of young women in the Flathead Valley. The program is seeking dependable, mature women, 21 years of age or older, to become mentors to participating high school students. Mentors are matched with young women in their transitional ninth grade year to provide encouragement and support to them as they seek to develop personal and social responsibility. Together, the mentor and her protégé explore options and develop skills for making positive life choices for personal success in both the social and academic aspects of their lives.

The goal of the Gemini Program is that the young women participating will, "envision and create a bright future for themselves that includes completion of their education and a meaningful self-supporting career." This goal is reached by the mentor and mentee sharing relevant personalized activities as well as through small group workshops. In the workshops participants explore and strengthen

life skills through goal setting, problems solving, conflict resolution and team work. Another focus of the program is taking responsibility for the well being of the community through direct community service. And field trips provide the opportunity for participants to discover local recreation, cultural and career possibilities.

Mentors are asked to spend four hours each month with their protégé; attend monthly, two hour workshops; attend three Saturday excursions; attend Mentor training; and maintain contact with their protégé for a minimum of nine months.

You can truly make a difference in a young woman's life by becoming a mentor. Other ways you can support this wonderful program include assisting in fund-raising, contributing supplies for activities or sharing a personal strength by facilitating a workshop for the participants.

If you wish to become a mentor, support the program or if you have any questions, please contact Jennifer Rogge at 406-756-1414, Ext. 199 or jennifer@nurturingcenter.org

MW

