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Monthly newspaper and website covering faith in action throughout the Inland Northwest

online in color at www.thefigtree.org

Scouts challenge media images

By Mary Stamp

As coordinator for the Girl Scouts' "uniquely ME!" program in Spokane's schools, Keely Eschenbacher has deepened her awareness of the physical, emotional and intellectual impact of media images of women on teenage girls.

She grew up in Ione in Northeastern Washington in a stable home with two parents who sheltered her from some TV programs. Since then she has had her eyes opened about the experiences of abuse, poverty and negative self-talk generated by the culture, peers, families and media.

A course on gender communication during her study of psychology at Carroll College in Helena, Mont., stirred her awareness of the impact of media messages and ads.

They make women and men feel bad about their appearance, Keely said.

"A teenage girl looks at TV and thinks it shows how life should be or how she should look. Most girls think they do not look good enough," she said. "I used to enjoy looking at magazines, but now I see the negative effect the messages can have on girls.

"Looking at wedding magazines before I was married last October, I



Keely Eschenbacher introduces girls to the climbing wall at the Girl Scout center.

could see how easy it would be to think I needed a \$35,000 wedding dress and a huge wedding. What movies, magazines and books show is often different from life," she said.

Keely, who is earning a master's degree in organizational leadership at Gonzaga University, has worked with the Eastern Washington Northern Idaho Girl Scout Council since September 2007. The council's offices and its community center have been at 1404 N. Ash for five years.

Uniquely ME! began five years ago with a grant from Unilever and its Dove Self-Esteem Fund. Out of 350 U.S. Girl Scout councils, this council was one of 11 to receive grants. In the region, 500 girls participated last year, up from 350 the year before.

The program helps girls from eight to 17 years old "embrace a wider definition of beauty" than they absorb from the culture. The Girl Scout Research Institute has found low self-esteem pervasive among pre-adolescent and adolescent girls in the United States, so they sought to address this "critical national problem."

The Uniquely ME! program fo-

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Freeway sparks new ministry options for Bethany Presbyterian Church

In a hypothetical 1970s seminary discussion on what a church needs to do to stay vital, the Rev. Paul Rodkey had suggested that churches close every 50 years.

Paul has served 22 years at Bethany Presbyterian, which has been at Third and Freya for 100 years. It replaced its 1909 building with a new one in 1953.

The congregation has known for 15 years that North-South Freeway plans included an off ramp where their church stands. This year they sold the building to the Department of Transportation and held a closing worship service

on Sunday, Oct. 18.

In their Exodus-themed service, they received 10 new members, bringing the membership to 90.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, at 2715 S. Ray, agreed to share their space, which is smaller than Bethany's building, giving Bethany and Emmanuel Metropolitan Community Church a place to go. Emmanuel, which has met at Bethany for seven years, moved on Oct. 4.

During Bethany's 100th celebration July 18, Paul told about the conversation he had at San Francisco Theological Seminary

during the 1970s.

"As we walk away from the 100-year-old church site, we can rethink what kind of church we will be into the future," said Paul, who grew up in Spokane, attending St. Paul's United Methodist and First Presbyterian.

He graduated from Whitworth University and did youth work in Kelso and Tacoma before going to seminary. His first church was in Madera, Calif., before coming to Bethany in 1987.

When asked if he would de-consecrate the ground, Paul said that even though the land will become an off ramp for the North Spokane freeway and a pillar will stand where the sanctuary is, "the ground remains holy."

The congregation will save the funds from the sale until it decides its future path. In January, members will begin conversations on demography, cultural shifts and public service needs.

"We will look for new paradigms, talking with local people and national leaders. Members will do field trips to observe what

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Many auction items align with Fig Tree's mission

In line with its mission, many silent and live auction items at The Fig Tree's Harvest Soirée Auction on Friday, Nov. 6, will connect people for cultural awareness, special dinners and ministry tours, as well as themed baskets, art and more.

The event is from 6 to 8:30 p.m., at the Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th Ave. It is planned so some can enjoy appetizers and participate in bidding for some silent and live auction items before 7:30 p.m. to accommodate those attending the symphony or other events. Other silent auction tables and live bidding will continue until 8:30 p.m.

Auction donations confirmed before The Fig Tree went to press include dinners with bishops and editors; French, German and Persian dinners; and tickets to Kosher and Japanese dinners, plus gift certificates for various restaurants. The Rev. Happy Watkins will do a ribs-and-chicken barbeque for 50 and is arranging a tour of historic black churches.

There will also be tours of art in cathedrals, Catholic Charities' programs and Sister Paula Turnbull's sculpture studio; a golf outing with the dean of the cathedral and a retired journalism professor, weekend get-aways at nearby camps and outdoor outings.

Items include original art, jewelry, prints, photographs and themed baskets featuring Lubeck sister-city memorabilia, items from Japan and China, music, books, coffee, chocolate and teas and German Christmas items. Farmers' market and fair-trade vendors will also share food and craft items.

"We're pleased to offer items unique to who we are, items that will help connect people personally for dialogue, relationships and community building," said editor Mary Stamp.

For information, call 599-1177 or 535-1813.

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