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NR-0502-Unilever-rep-in-state-to-boost-teenage-girls-self-esteem

Unilever rep in state to boost teenage girls' self-esteem

Author: *Maria Garriga, New Haven Register, Conn.*

Article Text:

May 2 Rollesscia Hurd-Rosa, 16, a senior at Wilbur Cross High School, gets an earful about girl problem through her volunteer work as a senior buddy. Many of those problems revolve around negative self-im she said.

"Image is everything when you walk into a classroom. There are girls who stay home from school if the don't have anything to wear. I know girls who leave school when they realize what they're wearing isn't Most lack confidence in their image," Rollesscia said. But looking too good can also have its drawback among teens. "Girls that do too much, who always look perfect, and have their hair too perfect, people say that they are just not real anymore."

Unilever, the European conglomerate that owns the Dove soap label, is tackling confidence issues amc teen girls by sending self-esteem coaches to work with schools.

Recently, Unilever sent **Courtney Macavinta**, a blogger for RespectRx and author who specializes in gi self-esteem, to the Connecticut Association of Schools to show teachers, guidance counselors, schoo nurses and social workers how to model healthy self-esteem for their students. She did this through exercises that helped them remember what they felt as teens and how to feel better about themselves.

"Educators are on the front lines. They see what's going on with girls. Adolescence is a time when we develop our ideas," **Macavinta** said.

Unilever rocked the advertising world in 2004 when it launched the Dove "Real Beauty" advertising campaign that celebrated the natural beauty of women by using women who were not models in its ads was a gutsy choice of advertising. Most advertisers sell products by focusing on things consumers ne cream to vanquish pimples, wrinkles, clearing up reddish skin or adding more skin color. Dove's market wanted a campaign that didn't depend on making women feel bad about themselves in order to send th rushing to buy a product.

"We found that people like teachers, moms and counselors are a big influence on girls. So, Dove is investing in girls' influencers such as teachers; as a secondary outcome, we will be working on educat

self esteem."

This may seem like an odd mission for a soap label, but Dove has expanded into a full line of beauty products, and its marketers say that self-esteem education makes the next logical step for the brand.

"Our mission is to make women feel beautiful. It wasn't enough to be a brand, we had to walk the talk. Our mission is to make women feel more beautiful. Girls feel insecure. They hear only young is beautiful. You have to be skinny, and size zero and blonde to be beautiful. In our first global study, only 2 percent of women around the world would describe themselves as beautiful," said Stacy Bright, a senior communications marketing manager at Unilever.

The study also showed that girls wished media would show images that looked more like them. So, Dove marketers set out to explode the beauty myth.

The Dove Real Beauty Web site features a film called "Evolution" that shows the transformation of an ordinary woman into a glamorous model in 8 hours through the use of makeup, hairstyling, and photo alterations that made her eyes larger, neck longer, and shoulders more slender. The video made it on YouTube and has been played millions of times. "She didn't recognize herself, and her mother didn't recognize her," Bright chuckled.

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