



creating hardiness zones  
for girls and women  
in maine and beyond

## Girls in Aroostook County: Challenges and Strengths

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

- Girls don't believe they have options outside of settling down and having children
- Limited resources (stretched thin)—clothing, money, television, volunteers
- Lack of exposure—culture, outside county (don't realize world out there)
- Poverty/generational poverty
- Lack of transportation (school, parents)
- Family dynamics cause girls to grow up faster, cycle of family passing down limitations
- Limited labor market—limited role models
- Financial barriers/ pay scale make it difficult to move out
- Traditional values limit potential
- Lack of understanding for college options
- Nepotism/who you know
- Lack of youth activities
- Weather
- A lot of spread out rural communities
- Girls reach adolescence and become enemies
- Conservative viewpoints limit what teachers can teach—fear about issue, afraid talking about it will cause it to happen

The group also identified girls' strengths which include:

- Smaller communities cause closer bonds between people
- Do outside activities traditionally stereotyped as boys' activities (i.e. mow lawns)
- Female athletes/hockey coaches
- Girls who get involved are very motivated and successful
- Hunt moose



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- Ambition to go out and do what need to do to survive
- Accustomed to wide open space, environment
- Close knit families
- Physical strength more apparent
- Smaller classrooms
- Low expectations—not hard for girls to achieve
- A lot of resources for small area
- Girls respect neighbors and parents
- Other activities besides sports
- Not a lot of access to stores like Victoria's Secret
- Ability to be completely independent/self-sufficient
- Creative
- Take initiative
- Don't wait for someone to do things for them
- High level of energy



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