

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Turning a Spotlight on the Positive

*Sept. 4, 2012 Kent Lakes, NY. By Kim Blacklock.* This is the second Labor Day Weekend that Ashley White of Hopewell Junction hasn't been with her parents and family. Ashley and her older sister used to come to my son's high school get-togethers at our house. I could hear the laughing & challenging & loud music & call-outs of kids having fun. Ashley liked to come to our house; we had rules - the kids all knew me from subbing in Carmel Schools. She had fun here, too. Not so everywhere. Ashley White left behind a note. The neighborhood says Ashley couldn't take the teasing about being fat any more; she said no one heard her.

"SCARED SKINNY" with Mary Dimino is about a girl who grew up fat, funny and afraid in an Italian family from Queens, who now proclaims it, one hundred and fifteen pounds lighter & alone, in front of the footlights & flash bulbs of the world. Her voice got attention as Winner of the NY International Fringe Best Solo Show. Winner of the Gracie Allen Award she is seen on David Letterman, HBO's Chris Rock Show, in the hit play, "Tony & Tina's Wedding," and much more.

So why is H. G. Fairfield Arts getting involved by presenting SCARED SKINNY? Because the NYS Health Dept. lists over 6000 kids aged 10-24 hospitalized due to suicide and self-inflicted injuries; more than 354 died, multiplied by the communities & families grieving, equals a need to be filled. I was at Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha Church with 15 year old Ashley White, surrounded by her family and friends. I vowed to make sure Ashley's voice would be heard.

From H. G. Fairfield Arts' work with Veterans, and my own work with survivors of domestic violence, we know the issues of not being heard; the blinding hopelessness & feelings of isolation are also in other sectors of our communities. We aim to shine a spotlight on those places where kids and others feel alone. It's what our Grandmas used to tell us when we came home crying from the bullies - to turn adversity into personal success: "Consider the source! Pity the person; rise above!" But now the bullying messages are imbedded in the media; calling the Australian swimmer & 8-time Olympic medalist Liesel Jones fat? Bad hair commentary and a nasty NBC monkey ad dominating Gabby Douglas' historic gold medal? Now Grandma's neighborhood threat is a pervasive culture of media bullying. If all else fails, we were taught to make a spectacle before everyone and God, before we let anyone hurt us, our siblings, or our friends.

Bring on the Spectacle! H. G.'s legacy bequeathed to us is "See a need; fill it." To promote the creation, practice, and performance of art, culture, & recreation means to inspire, give a voice, transform a life. To work within our communities links us together with multi-generational activities in laughter, maybe some tears. Big spotlights, stage lights, press attention, radio interviews can be concentrated on the positive in all of this jumble, on presenting very publicly more coping skills & options.

H. G. Fairfield Arts, along with Bearsville Theater in Woodstock, is proud to present a fat girl's voice from Queens in "SCARED SKINNY" with Mary Dimino on Sunday September 9<sup>th</sup>. Come learn more about our Media Arts Workshop and resources in your local communities. Mary invites; "Come laugh your fat off in Woodstock!"

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Links:

<http://www.hgfairfieldarts.org/>

<http://marydimino.com/>

<http://scared-skinny.com/>

<http://www.bearsvilletheater.com/>

<http://sports.yahoo.com/blogs/olympics-fourth-place-medal/public-pushes-back-against-fat-comments-aussie-swimmer-191640600--oly.html>

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/07/26/leisel-jones-australian-olympic-swimmer-herald-sun-weight-body-criticism\\_n\\_1707944.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/07/26/leisel-jones-australian-olympic-swimmer-herald-sun-weight-body-criticism_n_1707944.html)

<http://sports.yahoo.com/news/fan-reaction-gymnast-gabby-douglas-nose-hair-criticized-180000462--spt.html>

<http://scallywagandvagabond.com/2012/08/gabby-douglas-gold-medal-victory-mired-by-nbc-ad-depicting-a-monkey-doing-gymnastics/>

<http://www.upi.com/blog/2012/08/27/Watch-Gabby-Douglas-open-up-to-Oprah/5761346086690/>

[http://www.mercurynews.com/sports/ci\\_21249273/tammerlin-drummond-newsflash-its-not-about-hair](http://www.mercurynews.com/sports/ci_21249273/tammerlin-drummond-newsflash-its-not-about-hair)