

# The Millbrook Independent

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## NEWS

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by

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H.G. Fairfield Arts, a Hudson Valley nonprofit organization, recently presented a play called “Scared Skinny” by comedian Mary Dimino. The production at Woodstock’s Bearsville Theater was part of the organization’s attempt to combat bullying and put a spotlight on a positive attitude. The play is based on Dimino’s own experiences. She said she grew up “fat, funny, and afraid” in a strict Italian family. Instead of succumbing to bullying and taking suicidal measures, however, she was “scared skinny” and lost 115 pounds along her journey. Kim Blacklock, president and CEO of H.G. Fairfield Arts, believes that putting a spotlight on the positive is the way to combat negative behavior. What spurred her to action was the suicide of one of her close friends, Ashley White, who took her own life a year ago at the age of 15. Like Dimino, White had also struggled with her weight and was the victim of bullying. Finally she had had enough, and while on vacation with her family in the Florida Keys, she decided to end things. “When that happened, it made me turn a corner,” Blacklock said. “It’s just enough. Children are feeling that they have no other choice but to check out of this planet.” Blacklock, who has worked with domestic violence in women, said her organization tries to give victims of bullying a voice. She said victims feel as if no one hears them. “How do we let these kids know we’ll listen?” Blacklock asked. “When they can speak about it, it defeats the problem.”

*This is an excerpt from an article in this week's issue. For the full story please see the newspaper.*

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