



January 30, 2013

## **Recommendation Letter for Women and Their Bodies,**

### **Knowledge and Action Group**

The Neot Hadar Hostel is a boarding home for at-risk girls removed from their parental home by court order.

The hostel provides a long-term educational-therapeutic solution for 13-18 year-old girls, in a warm, domestic environment. The girls in our care are at high risk after having experienced severe violence, sexual assaults, and extreme physical and emotional neglect, and are under serious danger of further deterioration.

The hostel is more than a boarding school, it is an alternative home guided by the therapeutic community principles. It is our ambition to see these girls integrated in normative systems – in schools, enrichment afternoon activities and various social circles – equipping them with as many tools as possible, and thus extricating them from the vicious circle of underserved communities. Inspired by deep faith in their strength, ability and willingness to choose a normative, productive and satisfying way of life, we act to reconstruct the trust between them and the adult world which had injured them so much in their past.

It is with great pleasure that I recommend the series of workshops facilitated by Women and Their Bodies in the Neot Hadar Hostel under my management. The program included 20 workshop sessions on promoting the general health of the girls living in the hostel. The program was provided on behalf of the NGO by a skilled and experienced facilitator, Ms. Neta Arkin, dealing with a variety of issues related to identity, body image, food and nutrition, anatomy, menstruation and relationships.

Despite our team's initial fears given these highly sensitive issues, I am pleased to say that almost right from the start, the girls related to the facilitator, process and contents. They had a lot of fun, and they learned and cooperated exceptionally throughout the process. It was evident that they anticipated the workshop every week and that they were undergoing a highly significant process, with far-reaching impact on their perception of femininity and their own bodily and emotional self-perceptions.

The process included ten sessions in which the girls acquired knowledge and shared their feelings about issues that are highly significant to their lives, but are often ignored in daily discourse. Ten additional meetings focused on an area where the girls chose to promote action, statement and protest. The chosen action was creating an artistic performance about their body image, proclaiming their right to their bodies. The work process was highly empowering and moving.



As a team, we are highly pleased by the fact the meanings and outcomes of this process undergone by the girls who have attended the workshop by Women and Their Bodies continue to echo impressively in their daily lives and general conduct.

On behalf of the team, the girls and the undersigned, I wholeheartedly recommend this workshop!

Sincerely,

Ofer Turgeman

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