



The Life Blessing Institute presents

# Maiden Spirit News

August 2007

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## Such a Beautiful Gift from the Universe

Georgette Star -- Maiden Spirit Mentor

Throughout the spring season these third year **Stars of Wisdom Sisters** continued their fund raising efforts to generate money for the **I Contribute** project to manifest a local girl-affirming billboard message. The girls sold **Maiden Spirit** treasure boxes at three special events.

## Women's International Day Festival

In February, the **Maiden Spirit** program had a table at the Women's International Day Festival held at Portland State University. Tracey Heartsun, who co-facilitates this group, was not able to attend the event that day. However, she does have an amazing experience to share:

"I just happened to be at a friend's house and the TV was on channel 2 news. The news showed a 15 second snippet of the Women's Day event. In the few seconds that the news channel filmed the festival, it focused in on our **Maiden Spirit** booth! Our very own third year **Maiden Spirit** girl - Carmella - was sitting at the booth with the beautiful, colorful treasure boxes in front of her. I was completely caught by surprise to see **Maiden Spirit** on TV. I found it quite fascinating that the only booth they showed close up was **Maiden Spirit's!**"

## Spring Equinox Celebration

Every year in March the **Maiden Spirit** program offers a Spring Equinox celebration which is open to the public. The girls sold and raffled off some of their treasure boxes during this event while we enjoyed the lovely music of harpist Ariel Tebben.



Butterflywoman shared with permission from artist Melissa Harris

**GODDESS** by Mary Malizia  
**Great**  
**Ostara**  
**Distant stars**  
**Distant stars**  
**Enter yourself**  
**Serenity**  
**Sip your cup of life**



Women's International Day Festival



Spring Equinox



Spring Equinox

## May Faire

In May the girls sold boxes at the Portland Waldorf School May Faire.

Altogether the girls made over \$300. Realizing it was not enough for a billboard, they began discussing alternatives such as an ad on a local TriMet bus. Tracey came up with an idea to investigate the cost for running an ad at the movie theater, the kind they show while waiting for the movie to begin. The girls liked the suggestion and Tracey proposed it to a local movie theater owner. The theater owner said she feels like all the girls that come into her theater are like daughters and she is well aware of the negative cultural influences they encounter. She offered to show the girls' message: "Empower Girls, Transform our World" at no charge! (See page 6.) Such a beautiful gift from the universe.



May Faire



May Faire



May Faire

## Let's Talk About It

by Carmella

When I was ten years old, I was privileged to attend the **Let's Talk About It** workshop with my mom. The workshop is an awesome, inspiring experience to learn about your first moon. I think that it is a great way for girls to feel more comfortable with getting their first moon, and it is in a safe-feeling environment with no tension.

Some girls have to learn about their period through awkward books their mothers force upon them because they don't want to tell their daughters themselves. But I on the other hand, went to **Let's Talk About It** with my mom. I didn't just learn about the physical stuff, have juice and cookies, and go home. I got to learn about the spiritual and emotional parts of the journey too.



Chocolate Butterfly

This workshop is a fun place to be. It is great not to just be lectured to, but to share experiences with other moms and daughters. My mom and I both had a great time, and I am less nervous for the day that I "become a woman."

*For information regarding our next **Let's Talk About It** workshop, call (503) 631-3906 or email [wisewoman@maidenspirit.com](mailto:wisewoman@maidenspirit.com).*

## Entering the Circle of Conscious Womanhood A Reflection on Ilsa's Family's First Moon Celebration

Amanda R. Martin

Ilsa's family, her peers at **Maiden Spirit**, and its facilitators taught her to believe that her First Moon would be a blessing. When Ilsa received her First Moon, the women in her family offered a ceremony for her that celebrated "a new beginning for Ilsa and an ancient continuation of the women in her family," expressed Sheila, Ilsa's grandmother. A First Moon ritual facilitates bonds of the girl to supportive women. The girl is welcomed, embraced, and assisted as she enters the circle of conscious women.

A ritual for passing into womanhood offers a chance for girls to acknowledge their changing bodies and shifting roles. As girls move out of childhood and into adolescence, a First Moon ritual reminds them that there is a community of women and girls ready to support them. The ceremony reflects the lessons that the female body is a blessing and its natural processes should be honored.

The boundaries between girl and mother are acknowledged. The mother's role in her daughter's life is recognized as changing. A girl's First Moon marks the beginning of a girl's transformation in her relationship to herself. She will begin to become more independent. She will begin to claim self-ownership. The ceremony helps all involved to be conscious of and mark these changes.



Ilsa and her mother Christine

Each person who participated in Ilsa's ceremony gave her a bead along with a blessing or a bit of wisdom. Ilsa felt that the ceremony provided a space for her to experience the support and love of the women in her life. When asked about the impact of this ceremony on her future life, she responded: "It's given me more strength and empowerment for doing whatever I want to in life and not have to hold back." With the love and support of other women, Ilsa can feel safe and empowered to become her own person.

Near the close of the ceremony, the mother and daughter's wrists were bound with red yarn, symbolizing their original biological, spiritual, and emotional connection. In Ilsa's ceremony, the cord was cut by her grandmother. The yarn was then secured individually on the mother and daughter's wrists, respectively, symbolizing the remaining presence of their natal connection, and also the separateness of each as individual persons due to the girl's emerging independence into womanhood. Christine, Ilsa's mother, reflected on the symbology and realism of the cutting of the cord ceremony: "My connection [to Ilsa] feels stronger, but yet I'm more aware of the boundary that she has set... in order for her to grow into her own person. Our relationship will always be evolving." Through a rite-of-passage ceremony, the mother is guided into a new understanding of her changing role in her daughter's life. Through the blessings by other women of her daughter, Christine experienced support for her own transition. She

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Ilsa emerges

visualized her daughter as a person transforming during the rites of the ceremony and integrated the knowledge of these changes in her life.

A girl's role within the family system also begins to evolve at this stage. The men and boys in Ilsa's family supported and participated in the preparations for Ilsa's ceremony by preparing the culminating feast. As everyone gathered to bless the meal, Ilsa thanked her father and brothers for providing it. According to Christine, her husband and sons "felt it was very worthwhile for a young girl to have a moon ceremony in her life. They received a much-needed thank you from Ilsa."

From the ceremony, Christine hopes Ilsa will remember "that she will always have a community of women



Ilsa and her grandmother Shiela

(and men) who will be there for her." From the ceremony, Ilsa perceived this knowledge. When asked about how she was most impacted by the ceremony, she responded: "The fact that all these women were surrounding me and are there for me." The sense of support was strong for all of the women and girls present. Ilsa's grandmother hopes that "Ilsa will always remember her own strength and the strength she can receive from other women."

Following Ilsa's First Moon ceremony, Ilsa, with her mother and grandmother, were asked to reflect on what the ceremony had meant to them. From their individual responses, it is clear that each found a sense of empowerment in being able to celebrate Ilsa's stage of transition and label it beautiful.

A rite-of-passage ceremony is a request to community to intentionally offer on-going support for a girl transitioning into adulthood. Both mother and grandmother recognize the importance of this support. The ceremony was an affirmation to Ilsa that she is not alone on her journey of change and becoming. She is supported and will continue to be. As Ilsa begins to claim ownership of her self and learn how to nurture her own needs, she will be guided by the support of women and men in her life. She can look back on the ceremony and the blessings received there and know this: "I am supported... I am loved... I feel empowered..." and "I do not have to hold back."

*Editors Note: This article includes excerpts from interviews with Ilsa and her family in March of 2007*



*When she was ten, Amanda Martin participated in the first **Maiden Spirit** circle. In 2005, Amanda was involved in the **Maiden Spirit** program again as a mentor to the **True Beauty** group. Now she will be contributing to the **Maiden Spirit Newsletter**. Amanda is studying *Development and Feminist Psychology* at *Marlboro College* in Southern Vermont and will complete her B.A in May 2008.*

## Martial Arts - Inspiring Girl Role Model

by Naomi



Naomi kicks high

I have been doing a mixture of martial arts since I was seven years old. Some of the styles I have learned include: kick boxing (Thai boxing), Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (which is a type of grappling), Qigong, Tai chi, Kali and Lameco stick fighting, and a couple of other styles.

I just had a very big test in Lameco Eskrima stick fighting in front of the president of the International organization, Punong Guru Trigg. I was very nervous at first, but then I was alright once I got started. I was testing with several men and one boy who was 13 years old. It was all a blur through my test and when we finished, they said that I had passed! But for some reason, it took me a long time to figure that out. Apparently, I am now the youngest person in the world to have passed this test (I am 11 years old).

This Lameco test also counts towards my goal of reaching the level of a black belt. For the rest of my black belt test I will be doing staff work

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June Gathering of Maiden Spirit Groups



Taylor



Keri and Kiki

## The Goddess in Me

As part of our June closing celebration, girls and mentors invited parents to a community gathering of all the **Maiden Spirit** groups. We acknowledged what the girls have been learning and gave thanks together. Each **Maiden Spirit** group created a presentation for the larger group. One group presented the **Maiden Spirit** way to eat chocolate! After the presentations, each person in the room contributed one sentence to the this poem.



Maiden Spirit Mentor Jeanette and Rachel

Spirit Boxes and Maiden Spirit Altars

# The Goddess in Me

The goddess in me is beautiful and creative  
She feels radiant and inspired  
The goddess in me feels like a sun, happy and proud

The goddess in me is proud to be herself  
She is willing to let her light shine

The goddess in me knows when to take a break and rest  
She says: If you don't want to do something, don't do it  
The goddess in me can trust myself in all situations to know what is right for me

The goddess in me is true to herself  
She is telling me to trust myself

The goddess in me, she sees herself in you  
She shares love with all other women and girls  
The goddess in me, she is very nice

The goddess in me, she strives for love  
She celebrates the love for my family that lives within my heart

The goddess in me is loving and powerful  
She is a woman that has a red dress and rays of golden light  
The goddess in me is beautiful, wild, funny, awesome!

The goddess in me is calm and strong  
She is grounded but happy

The goddess in me is free and wild  
She is adventurous like a coyote  
She is like a monkey swinging on a branch

The goddess in me is flowing and brave  
She is spontaneous and untouched by media

The goddess in me is grateful, she looks forward to each new day  
She is awakening and transforming into a new phase of life  
The goddess in me is running free

Martial Arts - Inspiring Girl Role Model  
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(which I have never done before and am very excited about), overall body conditioning (which means that I have to work out a lot), and Tai chi. The type of Tai chi I am doing is called "Push Hands," it is very interesting.

Martial arts have helped me with self-confidence: I feel stronger, I can talk in front of a group and not be scared, I can stand up for myself



Naomi Stick Fighting

and not be afraid that a person is going to hurt me. Martial arts have kind of been built in to me through the years. I react to things very differently than I usually would. I love it!! I might want to stay with it for the rest of my life.



## Empowered Girls Transform Our World



Such a Beautiful Gift From the Universe

Maiden Spirit News is produced four times a year • **Georgette Star**, Executive Director • Copy and graphics from **Maiden Spirit** girls, parents & mentors  
Editing by **Michelle Keating** • Additional photos, graphic design and production by **Nancy Junge**  
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