

'Sisters' to the rescue



Changing lives: Young women and their Sister2Sister mentors, at this year's "Butterfly Bootcamp".

By Clare Bruce

A CALL has gone out to women to help change a girl's life, by joining the Life Changing Experiences Foundation's Sister2Sister program.

The mentoring program supports at-risk girls aged 12 to 19, who may be suffering from troubles such as neglect, abuse, loss, trauma or self harm.

Under the program, women become a "big sister" to a girl for a year, in which they attend monthly group activities together, mix with some celebrity guest speakers, and keep in touch throughout the month by phone.

Kellyville woman Natalie

Rose began volunteering with the program in 2005 and is now mentoring her second "little sister".

She said the friendships formed in Sister2Sister literally do change girls' lives.

"You see the transformation over the course of the year," she said.

"My first little sister was from a very abusive background and she was not very confident when I first met her.

"By the end of the year she'd made so many friends and her confidence just soared.

"Being around other girls and having that support she'd never had before made a huge difference to her."

She said her new "little sister" for 2008 already has great confidence, but "just needs someone to believe in her and guide her in the right direction."

So far they've attended an introductory "Butterfly Bootcamp" together, which included motivational talks by marathon swimmer Shelly Taylor-Smith and Natalie Bassingwaighte.

Other "life-changing experiences" this year will include the Sydney Harbour BridgeClimb, surf lessons, white water rafting, recording a CD and even flying trapeze. Their next activity is learning to cook with a celebrity chef.

"I'm looking forward to that one," Natalie said.

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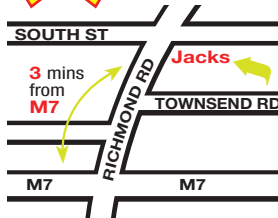


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