Creating spaces to discuss important issues

On Tuesday, June 13th over 100 people gathered in the Mount Horeb Community Center for a screening of the film Miss Representation. The screening was followed by a panel discussion connecting how the objectification of women in the media contribute to gender violence, particularly around intimate partner and sexual violence. Representatives from the Dane County Rape Crisis Center as well as DAIS sat on the panel speaking about the primary prevention work that both organizations do to create a community in which gender violence no longer exists.

One of the most powerful moments of the panel was having the opportunity to hear from two youth leaders, Oliver, a DAIS MENS Program participant as well as part of the Power of One Leadership Committee and Lindsey, a member of the Rape Crisis Center’s Game Changer program. Both Lindsey and Oliver spoke about how the media directly affects them and their peers. Lindsey commented on her leadership potential and her drive to hold leadership positions but because of the way women are depicted in the media she is worried about not being taken seriously as an intellectual. Oliver spoke about how important it is for all young people to support one another and to combat messages in the media that depict competition and judgement between his peers.

What many youth in attendance expressed was how often they are exposed to these images and how crucial it is for them to have a space to dissect these harmful messages and to develop skills around media literacy.
When young people spend an average of 10.5 hours a day consuming media and have no space to discuss the impact of this media consumption, the consequences can be dire. When young people strongly express the need to analyze and discuss these images and we ignore these requests, we are further contributing to a society that perpetuates the tolerance promotion of violence.

**Action Steps**

1. Watch the film *Miss Representation* and discuss the content of the film with those in your life.

2. Challenge traditional gender roles in your family and social circles. Women can be strong and powerful, and men can be vulnerable and show emotions!

3. Take a break this week while you're watching TV or a movie to think about the gender dynamics depicted in your favorite media.

**Power of One**

We all have the power to change harmful attitudes, to speak up, and to support the work to end domestic abuse. It is the power of one voice, one message, one conversation, one intervention. The act of helping one leads to the impact of helping all.

One. And for all.