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The Ethel Walker School Pilots National Mentoring Program for State

October 9, 2006 - Simsbury, CT - In accordance with its tradition of pioneering innovations in education and growth for its students, The Ethel Walker School this week launched a chapter of the nationally acclaimed student-to-student mentoring program, Girl Talk, on its campus. This is the first time this program is being offered anywhere in the state of Connecticut, and Walker's is the first all-girls school in the nation to offer it as well.

Haley Kilpatrick founded the not-for-profit organization, starting the program as a student in 2002 to bridge the gap between younger and older students, and to provide excellent role models for the younger students. The program has attracted significant national press, including "The Montel Williams Show," "CosmoGIRL!," and much more. Notably, Kilpatrick was named "CosmoGIRL! of the Year" in 2004 and has recently been awarded a grant in the amount of \$100,000 from Atlanta based Bell Capital Management to bring her organization to the next level. Girl Talk benefits from national sponsorship and is offered in 20 states nationwide, reaching a total of over 10,000 girls. Available to both public and independent schools; as Walker's debuts the program in Connecticut, it is hoped more schools will follow.

At Walker's, older students were interviewed by Middle School Director Wendy Allerton; six 10th graders were selected to mentor two groups of seventh graders at weekly meetings, where they will develop lesson plans based on Girl Talk guidelines and conduct the meeting with faculty supervision. "We have every confidence that the group leaders will work exceptionally well with the younger girls, and, with the guidance of faculty advisors, be a great influence on our 7th graders," Allerton enthuses. The Girl Talk Handbook will be referred to for the duration of the program.

Kilpatrick will visit CT on the invitation of Allerton and will be addressing Walker's students at a special assembly on Wednesday, January 3. She plans to stay and attend Girl Talk meetings with our students and reach out to other older girls who might want to serve as leaders. "Girl Talk provides young teenagers with the emotional support and understanding that can only come from someone who has been in their shoes and understands what they are going through. We believe that if teenage girls are taken care of emotionally, they will excel academically," said Kilpatrick. The program's goal is to have chapters in all fifty states by 2010. For more information on Girl Talk, visit www.desiretoinspire.org

The Ethel Walker School, an independent college preparatory school established in 1911, offers girls in grade 6 through 12 a powerful experience: the opportunity to emerge.

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