



To: HRRC

Agenda Item #: VII.E.

From: Annie Coyle
Staff Liaison

Date: January 28, 2014

Subject: Gender Stereotypes

Action
Discussion
Information

Action Requested:
None.

Information / Background:

Mayor Hovland shared three letters of correspondence from Edina High School students regarding gender stereotypes and requested that the HRRC review.

Attachment:

Correspondence from Edina HS Students

From: [Arnold Bigbee](#)
To: [Annie Coyle](#)
Subject: Fwd: Misleading Stereotypes about Women in our Community
Date: Tuesday, November 12, 2013 8:36:03 PM

Sent from Arnie Bigbee's iPad2
Cell: 612 804 4660
arnieb1@me.com

Begin forwarded message:

From: James Hovland <jhovland@krausehovland.com>
Date: November 12, 2013 at 5:01:29 PM CST
To: Arnold Bigbee <arnieb1@me.com>
Cc: Steve Winnick <winsteve@comcast.net>
Subject: **FW: Misleading Stereotypes about Women in our Community**

Another piece of communication for consideration.

James B. Hovland, Esquire
KRAUSE & HOVLAND, Chartered
310 Groveland Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55403
jhovland@krausehovland.com
Phone: (612) 874-8550
Fax: (612) 874-9362
Cell: (612) 961-6192

From: Frank Petrovic [<mailto:FPetrovic@EdinaMN.gov>] **On Behalf Of** Edina Mail
Sent: Tuesday, November 12, 2013 4:22 PM
To: 'Avery Kerr'
Cc: Jordyn McGinnity
Subject: RE: Misleading Stereotypes about Women in our Community

Hello,

Thank you for your message! I have forwarded your email to Mayor Hovland.

Regards,
Frank

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[endif]-->

Frank Petrovic, Communications Assistant
952-826-0347 | Fax 952-826-0389
FPetrovic@EdinaMN.gov | www.EdinaMN.gov



...For Living, Learning, Raising Families & Doing
Business

From: Avery Kerr [<mailto:averyk16522@apps.edina.k12.mn.us>]
Sent: Sunday, November 10, 2013 8:19 PM
To: Edina Mail
Cc: Jordyn McGinnity
Subject: Misleading Stereotypes about Women in our Community

Dear Mr. James Hovland,

Hi! My name is Avery Kerr, and I'm a sophomore at Edina High School, in a small suburb located near Minneapolis in Minnesota. I wanted to email you so that I could tell you more about the misleading stereotypes about women in our community. The missing representation for women in leadership positions all around the world, in the workplace, government, etc is because of a false stereotype and this needs to change because women are just as capable as men.

One of the main challenges facing women in our community is the misleading thought that they do not have the ability to be in a leadership position. This issue presents itself on wide spectrum ranging from within a high school all the way up to leading a country. According to Sheryl Sandberg (2010) "Women are not making it to the top of any profession anywhere in the world. The numbers tell the story quite clearly. Of all the people in parliament in the world only 13% are women." Meaning that about 90% of the leaders in the world are men. This quote displays the stereotype of women not being able to lead by how unbalanced leadership in this world is.

Women have the ability to lead as shown by Queens throughout history who have successfully led countries without a husband; also by women who have risen up in their profession to become successful leaders of their companies. For example as shown by Money CNN (2013) Ginni Rometty has risen up to become the Chairman, President and CEO of IBM, showing a real life example of a woman overcoming this stereotype. These women and in Miss Representation (2011) show that women do have the ability to lead. However because of this false stereotype women all over the world are not achieving their full potential. This causes an unbalanced work environment with men dominating the workplace.

Although women have this unfair stereotype pinned on them there is a way to overcome it. As Sheryl Sandberg informs (2010) 1. Sit at the table 2. Make a partner a partner 3. Don't leave before you leave. These three crucial steps all incorporate the idea that women must not be afraid to sit at the table with the men, that women are just as able as any man is

and that they need to take control of their workplace. Many women have overcome this stereotype and are now successful leaders like Ginni Rometty or Sheryl Sandberg; still there needs to be more women in a leadership position, only 13% of parliament in the whole world are women which is causing this false stereotype that needs to be broken down.

I feel that you are in a position to easily and effectively persuade people and inform them about this issue and I hope that you will consider doing something about this issue. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Avery Kerr
Edina High School, Class of 2016

From: [Arnold Bigbee](#)
To: [Annie Coyle](#)
Subject: Fwd: My opinion on gender stereotypes
Date: Tuesday, November 12, 2013 8:35:58 PM

Sent from Arnie Bigbee's iPad2
Cell: 612 804 4660
arnieb1@me.com

Begin forwarded message:

From: James Hovland <jhovland@krausehovland.com>
Date: November 12, 2013 at 5:02:05 PM CST
To: Arnold Bigbee <arnieb1@me.com>
Cc: Steve Winnick <winsteve@comcast.net>
Subject: FW: My opinion on gender stereotypes

Yet another, Arnie!

James B. Hovland, Esquire
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From: Frank Petrovic [<mailto:FPetrovic@EdinaMN.gov>] On Behalf Of Edina Mail
Sent: Tuesday, November 12, 2013 4:47 PM
To: 'Chloe Lewis'
Cc: Elizabeth B Barniskis
Subject: RE: My opinion on gender stereotypes

Hello,

Thank you for your message! I have forwarded your email to Mayor Hovland.

Regards,
Frank



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Business

From: Chloe Lewis [<mailto:chloel16427@apps.edina.k12.mn.us>]

Sent: Monday, November 11, 2013 6:48 AM

To: Edina Mail

Cc: Elizabeth B Barniskis

Subject: My opinion on gender stereotypes

Dear Jim Hovland,

Hello! My name is Chloe Lewis, and I would like to voice my opinion on the gender stereotypes in our society. Today, men and woman are included in social expectations to fit their gender, limiting their resources to strive for success. Specifically, I will be focusing on the stereotyping of women.

To begin with, women don't believe they have the confidence to thrive in the work force. According to Sheryl Sandberg (2010), "Women systematically underestimate their own abilities, versus men". Clearly, Sandberg highlights the idea that women are not striving for their potential, because they are not assured that they will succeed. Later in life, this can affect their jobs, income and family statuses.

Next, women are not considered to have strong leadership abilities. In most, if not all Minnesota leadership positions, women are not in high rank, states the University of Minnesota Hubert H. Humphrey School on Women and Public Policy (2012, p. 14). Women do not have the power to interpret their opinions to our society, and grow in their leadership strength, if they are not considered in the important leadership positions.

To end with, women are misrepresented in the media. According to Carol Jenkins, only 3% of major media roles come from women, limiting the perspective to mostly male on major issues in our world (2011). In larger depth, women are not getting a chance to experience these media roles, limiting their opinions to be displayed in the media.

To conclude, you, as the Mayor of Edina, are in power of our city, which includes individuals who may be currently struggling with their gender identity. Spreading the word of this information to the public will create awareness of this issue, and could shape and make a more powerful society!

Sincerely,

Chloe Lewis

Edina High School, Class of 2016

References:

Newsom, J. S. (Director). (2011). *Miss representation* [Motion picture].

"Only 3% of major media roles come from women, limiting the perspective to mostly male on major issues in our world"

Sandberg, S. (Presenter). (2010, December). *Why we have too few women leaders*. Lecture presented at TED Talks, Washington DC, USA.

"Women systematically underestimate their own abilities"

University of Minnesota Hubert H. Humphrey School of Women and Public Policy. (2012, February). *Status of women and girls in minnesota research overview*.

"At all levels of leadership, from school boards to county commissions and from the Legislature to Fortune 500 companies, women remain conspicuously underrepresented accross the nation. In Minnesota, progress for women's leaders has flat lined in most professions, and in some areas, is on the decline."

From: [Arnold Bigbee](#)
To: [Annie Coyle](#)
Subject: Fwd: The Danger of Gender Stereotypes
Date: Tuesday, November 12, 2013 8:36:20 PM

Sent from Arnie Bigbee's iPad2
Cell: 612 804 4660
arnieb1@me.com

Begin forwarded message:

From: James Hovland <jhovland@krausehovland.com>
Date: November 12, 2013 at 4:59:37 PM CST
To: Arnold Bigbee <arnieb1@me.com>
Cc: Steve Winnick <winsteve@comcast.net>
Subject: FW: The Danger of Gender Stereotypes

Arnie, for consideration by HRRC. Will you please let the student know that we corresponded on the issue and you will raise the issue at an HRRC meeting? Also, you may want to invite them to appear and present.

James B. Hovland, Esquire
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Minneapolis, MN 55403
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Fax: (612) 874-9362
Cell: (612) 961-6192

From: Frank Petrovic [<mailto:FPetrovic@EdinaMN.gov>] On Behalf Of Edina Mail
Sent: Tuesday, November 12, 2013 4:16 PM
To: 'Jack Holden'; Joelle Reiling
Subject: RE: The Danger of Gender Stereotypes

Hello,

Thank you for your message. I have forwarded your email to Mayor Hovland.

Take care,
Frank

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[endif]-->

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Business

From: Jack Holden [<mailto:johnh16672@apps.edina.k12.mn.us>]
Sent: Sunday, November 10, 2013 3:55 PM
To: Edina Mail; Joelle Reiling
Subject: The Danger of Gender Stereotypes

Dear Mr. Hovland,

My name is John Holden and I am a student at Edina High School where we are studying gender stereotypes and their affect on our society. Gender stereotypes limit a person's potential from a very young age by adults placing boys and girls into boxes that are supposed to define them, which causes people to try to live up to inhumane expectations or be tossed into the "real world" unprepared.

Gender stereotypes are propagated by some adults who attempt to place boys and girls beginning from a very young age into boxes that define who they are supposed to be because of their gender. According to Melissa Wardy (2011):

These grown ups try to fit kids into little boxes that are labeled "Boy" or "Girl", and then they only let certain colors or ideas into each box ...

Since boys and girls don't grow in boxes, you can see how really goofy this is.

Consequently, there are many parents who do not question the negative affects of gender stereotypes, which is then ingrained into the minds of their children, causing them to lose their imaginations and attempt to live up to the inhumane guidelines of gender stereotypes.

With a lack of education on the topic of gender stereotypes, people can be tossed into the "real world" unprepared for their harsh cruelty. In response to a viral web post written by Mrs. Hall, Kristen Howerton (2013) claims, "Trying to protect [children] from situations they will encounter in real life simply leaves them with under-developed self control and mentality" (p. 3). Evidently, a

parent's duty is to teach their children to understand the unreality of gender stereotypes, in order for the child to enter the world prepared.

Lastly, one of the cruelest, most inhumane affects of gender stereotypes is the limitation they set back on women. According to J.S. Newson (2011) in his film *Miss Representation*, 53% of 13 year old girls are unhappy with their bodies, which increases to 78% by age 17. Plus, 65% of American women and girls have disordered eating behavior. Finally, the number of cosmetic surgical procedures performed on youth 18 or younger more than tripled from 1997 and 2007. As a result of these unrealistic gender stereotypes, women have been taught that their sexuality is all that is important to them, which has caused lack of self-confidence in women and causing them to engage in unnatural methods of trying to fit gender stereotypes.

In conclusion, I believe the City of Edina should begin an initiative by taking a stand against the inhumane gender stereotypes that have begun to define our world. The biggest misunderstanding about gender stereotypes is that no one fits them because they are unrealistic and everyone struggles with them. Therefore, the most efficient way to solve the gender stereotype crisis is by educating our children from a very young age in schools how to know that gender stereotypes should not influence their decisions, because they are unrealistic. Instead, they must disregard those false stereotypes and be themselves, working their hardest to fulfill their potential.

References:

Howerton, K. (2013, September 9). On respect, responsibility and Mrs. Hall's

open

letter to teenaged girls [Blog post]. Retrieved from Race Against the Minivan website: <http://www.rageagainsttheminivan.com/2013/09/on-respect-responsibility-and-mrs-halls.html>

Newsom, J.S. (Director) (2011). *Miss representation* [DVD].

Wardy, M. (2011, August 31). Letter to Bella, and other girls with blue shoes

[Blog post]. Retrieved from Ms. Magazine Blog:

<http://msmagazine.com/blog/>

2011/08/31/letter-to-bella-and-other-girls-with-blue-shoes/