

THE IMPROPER BOSTONIAN

MAGAZINE

OPRAHS IN TRAINING

Boston's Strong Women, Strong Girls (617-224-1304; www.swsg.org) pairs college mentors with third through fifth graders from the inner city. The next training session takes place in mid-October.

In a female-heroic spirit, Strong Women, Strong Girls (SWSG) aims to inspire youngsters to aspire to the Parnassus of accomplishment. What Oprah, Sally Ride, Michelle Kwan, Madeleine Albright and Bethany Hamilton, who lost her arm to a shark, have accomplished, they can hope for, too. Not just star-struck observers, the girls translate these life stories into messages about overcoming challenges, developing determination and perseverance. During this action-rich mentoring hour-and-a-half, they focus on skills, role modeling and relationships, not to mention critical thinking, cultural sensitivity and stress management. They learn how, yes, Madonna manages her pre-concert nervousness by doing yoga, which they then practice. The kids are exposed to many things, including sign language, Mandarin, and arts and crafts. And the lessons learned are applied through action or metaphor (they act out the digestive system, playfully miming the throat, the stomach, etc.). Kid-conflict issues like bullying are worked on, and the contemplative art of journal writing allows them to relate what they've learned to their own lives. Girls also visit, early on, a college campus. Fitting, since Lindsay Hyde founded SWSG while at Harvard.



HOUSE LIGHTS: ALAN GWIZDOWSKI; TAGS HARDWARE: JOCELYN GARRIEL