

PROGRAM: Weekend session helps build self-esteem, leadership

Camp empowers teen girls

JACOB ROBINSON
Simcoe Reformer

WATERFORD — It wasn't long ago that Christine Smith was a shy Grade 8 student unsure about making the leap to high school and all the baggage that comes with it.

Then she attended the annual GIRLS Power Camp, and everything seemed to fall into place.

"When I got to high school orientation I shoved myself in my own locker because I thought that was going to happen to me," Smith explained.

"Coming here made me so much more confident ... I was very shy and I wasn't really out there, but the facilitators were really great and were able to get me involved. I had such a fun time, it got me ready for high school."

This past weekend, Smith was at Camp Trillium for the fourth time as a facilitator for the GIRLS Power Camp. GIRLS stands for growth, independence, respect, self-esteem and leadership. A joint event held by the Haldimand Norfolk Reach, women's services and local health

unit, 64 campers and 35 facilitators from the area gathered to talk about a wide range of issues including self-defence and body image.

"The Grade 8 girls, they're a lot more grown up than I was at that age," said facilitator Melissa Lyne of Waterford. "They try to grow up fast and I think they need this just to slow them down and know that they're still in Grade 8. They still need someone to look up to because they're trying to grow up so fast."

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GIRLS Power Camp facilitators, back from left, Melissa Lyne and Christine Smith, along with campers (front) Madison McConnell and Shantel Spicer unveil the event's new logo at Camp Trillium Saturday. The three-day event hosted 64 local Grade 8 girls.