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AMERICA'S BEAUTY OBSESSION POSES SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS, REPORT REVEALS

YWCA USA Report Shows Alarming Trends in Cosmetic Surgery and Health Risks for Women and Girls

(Los Angeles, CA) — YWCA USA today released a new report that reveals the impact of idealized, airbrushed beauty and body image obsession on the economic well-being, health and interpersonal relationships of American women and girls. The report, *Beauty at Any Cost*, shows alarming new trends and money spent on cosmetic surgery alterations, including dramatic increases among young women, and other serious health risks.

Young women and girls are increasingly spending more money and going to unhealthy extremes to achieve an unattainable image of physical perfection, according to Tracy Lakatua, YWCA USA Board Chair. The costs include physical harm, including risks posed by smoking to maintain a low weight and risky cosmetic surgeries; and mental and emotional harm, including low self-esteem and interpersonal problems that create an unhealthy, competitive “mean girls culture.” The report also reveals the health risks of unsafe cosmetic ingredients and the consequences of appearance-based job discrimination.

“We believe that the obsession with idealized beauty and body image is a lifelong burden that takes a terrible toll on all young girls and women in this country,” said YWCA USA CEO, Dr. Lorraine Cole. “What’s really new here is the sheer extent to which women and girls are now willing to go – literally causing physical harm – to be “beautiful” according to the standards perpetuated by a youth-obsessed media culture with literally thousands of messages, 24 hours a day.”

To help raise awareness and start a national conversation about these issues, the YWCA USA has teamed up with documentary filmmaker Darryl Roberts to become the distribution partner of his new documentary film, “America the Beautiful.” The film provides an in-depth look and critical analysis of the harm inflicted by beauty obsession on young women and girls.

“Darryl’s amazing documentary provides an important medium for our message, and we hope to reach a wide audience through this important partnership,” said Dr. Cole. “The YWCA has been at the forefront of women’s issues in this country for the past 150 years, and we are prepared to raise awareness and ignite a national dialogue about this issue as the first steps to changing American culture and helping women reclaim wholesome and healthy beauty.”

The YWCA USA leadership and Roberts were joined today by a panel of experts to discuss the report, including Dr. Cheryl Dellasega, author of [Girl Wars](#) and [Mean Girls Grown Up](#); and Dr. Cynthia Frisby, a media effects and advertising expert from the University of Missouri School of Journalism.

About The YWCA

The YWCA USA is a national not-for-profit membership organization dedicated to social service, advocacy, education, leadership development and racial justice. Established in the United States in 1858, the YWCA is the oldest and largest national organization dedicated to the empowerment of women and girls and the elimination of racism. Through nearly 300 local YWCAs located across the nation in almost every state, and headquartered in Washington, D.C., the YWCA reaches 2.5 million women and girls, as well as their families. Globally, the YWCA USA is part of an international movement at work in 122 countries serving 25 million women and girls worldwide.

For more information about the YWCA or local YWCA associations, visit the Web site, www.ywca.org, or contact the YWCA at 202-467-0801. *Beauty at Any Cost* can be accessed online at www.ywca.org.

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