

WINTER 2014



High Rocks

JOURNEYS

WHERE I'M FROM

by Shaylen Lafferty, High Rocks Girl

I am from a world where fairy tales were real to me
Where the bed of sage, oregano, thyme was as magical as the stories dear to me
I am from the words printed neatly on paper, spinning yarns of wonder.

I am from a beginning that knows no strife,
but a middle where a family lived in two homes -
yet only had three people to begin.

I am from right next to the big glitzy hotel
in a little white cottage, so small in comparison,
just like the town it resides in.

I am from the yard beside my neighbor's,
the only other kid nearby,
until he moved (then there was one).

I am from two sides of a coin,
From somewhere lost and forgotten in childhood memories
that might have been dreams

I am from the snow of January
And from the snow of a crabapple tree,
as its petals fall.

I am from the floating of voices in songs,
From the script rehearsed,
about to have fifteen minutes of fame.

I am from thoughts and learnings,
From hot chocolate,, giggles
I am from something uncommon,
and not often found.

After being here I feel stronger and more confident. At school I just went with the flow of things whether I liked it or not. Now I refuse to just sit back and be silent. I am going to change the education system by forming better bonds between students and teachers so that classrooms will be a safe environment for everyone. I am also going to fix the disconnect between students and policy makers (with the help of others) so that life at school could be better.

by Nicole Hall, High Rocks Girl



fall harvest of the High Rocks garden



I will take away from camp the idea that if there's something I don't like...fix it! I've always kind of had that idea but I really feel like I started DOING that this camp.

by Casey Griffith,
High Rocks Girl

Jade discussing body maps at New Beginnings Camp



Sarah and Leslie marching on Martin Luther King Day

HAND IN HAND

by Layla Shinaberry, High Rocks Girl

The past is replaying in my brain,
The world has changed; have we all gone insane.
Word gets around and changes too quickly,
It has to stop; I can't name names we're all guilty.

The things they reveal are mercenary and rude;
The complexity of the lie is more than human can conclude.
People have made a new beginning to an era; it has started,
It seems like we either forgot or we disregarded it.

It has to change we can't live this way,
The copacetic people get hurt more than they say.
Why is there such a problem in the world?
No one can answer the question is rhetorical.

We bleed for the ones, who don't care,
We live for the ones who take our lives; it ain't fair.
If we could stand up and just come clean,
We hand in hand could reach it; it's not just a dream.



girls at New Beginnings Camp



Brandy harvesting garlic

DEAR EDITOR OF LL BEAN CATALOG,

Hi my name is Brandy, I'm writing to your catalog because I love the outdoors, and I thought I would like your catalog. When I was younger, I wanted to start hunting because boys said girls couldn't do it. It kind of makes me feel that in your catalog you're saying that girls can't go kayaking by themselves because in your photographs, there are boys in all of your photos. In all the photographs you see of a girl, there is also a boy in them.

I also believe that there needs to be more ads and photographs about hunting and camping, not just about kayaking. West Virginia's major outdoor fans believe hunting is a sport. If someone went out in the woods with only products from your ads, they wouldn't have the proper clothing or tools to go out in the woods because all you advertise about is kayaking. There are a lot of wild animals in the wilderness that people need to be prepared for.

It's nice that you have some camping in your catalog. People might be prepared to go camping, but not hunting. They would need warm clothes, and weapons, like guns, bow and arrows, knives, knife sharpeners, and also mannequins of deer, bears, wolves, and maybe even squirrels. Hunting is just as important as camping. Your catalog is about the outdoors, so hunting should be included in the outdoors. Thank you for reading this.

Sincerely,
Brandy Adkins, High Rocks Girl

On the last day of horse class I was working with one of the teachers and she looked at me and smiled. Then she said something I'll never forget. "You have such pretty eyes, on the first day all I could see was the top of your head. Now I can see your eyes."

by Maria Price, High Rocks Girl



Aurora at New Beginnings Camp

At High Rocks I feel safe, and at home. I was bullied for quite some time and because of that, I now have trust issues; I am not a very open person. However at camp I was myself and opened right up. I learned to stand up for myself, and to be an independent, strong, head-on-her-shoulders girl. With my High Rocks sisters I am the happiest. I still get bullied badly at school, and I don't feel like I learn anything there. I get so frustrated at myself and at times I feel so uneducated because of it, but camp is peaceful and a wonderful learning environment. I am thankful for places like High Rocks because I learn, I am safe, and I am always wearing a smile.

I am a High Rocks girl that wants to come to Camp Steele for her first year. I want to do something this summer other than sit around and take up space. I want to learn, instead of sitting around on electronics. I want to make a difference in the world, to make it a better place, but I can't without a scholarship. I love High Rocks with all of my heart, and I would do anything to come back to camp. The girls going to camp are the ones in our community, the ones that will make a difference starting at home. A change is like a ripple it starts out small, but then it grows. I want to be that first small ripple of change.

by Jordan Harper, High Rocks Girl



Revanna at Camp Steele

I'm interested in working at High Rocks because of the unique opportunity it provides for me to develop and learn from young women who are most immediately and intimately affected by social justice issues in Appalachia. More than that, it provides a way for me to encounter these issues through a creative, proactive lens that values creativity and female leadership.

by Alice Beecher, AmeriCorps Member





Discrepancies abound,
But none for me to say.
I like it just the way it is,
With all its faults and problems.
Photo-shopping, too many ads,
And clothes for skinny girls.
I care 'bout other things,
That to me are more profound.
Blasting up mountains
to keep on the lights,
Risking lives to save a buck,
And an incompetent government letting a
Aqua-pocalypse occur
THAT IS WHAT I CARE ABOUT.

by Katz Zuckett, High Rocks Girl



Amber at the Celtic Knot Overnight

I would like to change all the negativity in the world. Many people start unnecessary arguments and talk about others behind their backs. I wish to make the world or at least my community a more peaceful place.

by Grace Harbert, High Rocks Girl

DEAR EDITOR OF SEVENTEEN MAGAZINE,



It has come to my attention that the ads in your magazine are sending a negative message about both gender and race. Really, it's now 2014; I thought we were past that garbage.

The first thing is the girl in the picture. Take a look. Take a good, long, look. The colors are what we will address first. Aren't pink and blue the stereotypes of girl and boy? But we know by now that that shouldn't exist. Colors do not have genders. I'll repeat it. Colors do not have genders. But since apparently in a lot of advertisements these days, they still do...let's pretend they do. Girls are shoved into pink from day one, boys into blue. It's harmful and wrong, but it happens.

But in this ad, they are not only perpetuating that, but they are using subliminal messaging. They are selling perfume with sex, and they are selling it with the idea that women are lesser, that women are objects. The pornographic industry would do better to have this ad, I believe. Funny how this is a magazine for teenage girls, isn't it? And yet in the same magazine, you have an ad for teen pregnancy prevention. Quite the double standard. Girls are being sold for their bodies, girls are supposed to be sex objects, at least that's the message in 90 percent of the advertisements you have.

Some nerve. Some nerve indeed, but I guess girls are not valued unless they're selling themselves. Half the time we're Puritans and girls can't wear anything they want to. And yet somehow if they're being sold it's totally ok?

Another thing: I wonder, don't you, how much Photoshop this picture went through? A lot, I'd say. But then you say you show 'real girls'. And these are all examples from your magazine. What's sadder, I wonder? That you do this and expect to get away with it, or that people actually buy into it?

God forbid anyone be their own person, right? Wrong. We can be whoever and whatever we choose, and it is no one's business but our own. At any rate, there is a solution. If the perfume is worth its salt, which I sincerely doubt given how much sex they had to use to sell it, then all it should need is a scratch and sniff.

Personally I like how people smell without perfume. Pity how being 'natural' is so looked down upon in today's world, and yet at the same time is advertised. No one smells like a daisy naturally. No one. Now go think about what you've done while you fix it. That is if you can pull your brain out of the box of doublethink it's been stewing in all these years.

P.S. read 1984 to get the reference. Or don't...I wouldn't want to break your mind.

Sincerely,
Morgan Leyzorek, High Rocks Girl

Excerpts from a letter by a High Rocks Parent,

We dropped her off at New Beginnings Camp an angry little teenage ball of hate and picked up an articulate, intelligent young woman with a far better understanding of herself and an ability to work through problems instead of letting them get the better of her. After returning home, we noticed that the significant change in her behavior had stuck. We were no longer “the enemy” and she was no longer adversarial towards us. We would sit down and talk about things that were bothering her and she would listen instead of lashing out.

In the weeks that followed, she would on occasion get seemingly random letters from High Rocks, some of which she had written as reminders to herself of her experiences and the changes she had been through; others were written by camp staff and were always reassuring, encouraging and uplifting. It kept High Rocks and the lessons learned there in the forefront of her mind and kept her focus on improving herself and her abilities to work through problems instead of becoming overwhelmed. To this day, High Rocks is the single most significant experience in her life, and regardless of whatever else she might do in the future she will always, always identify herself first and foremost as a High Rocks Girl.

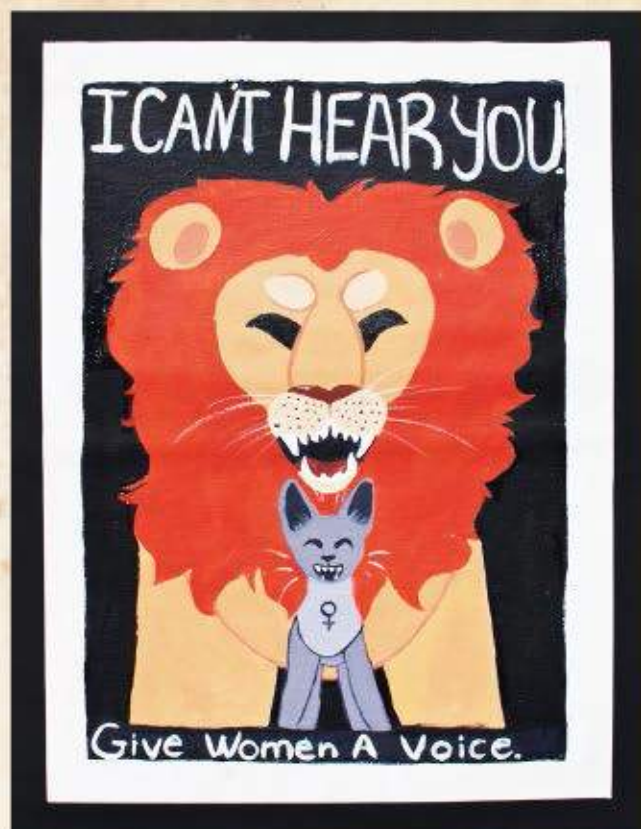
If you want to know what High Rocks has done for our daughter and our family, it’s probably best to start by focusing on what they have taken from us, and then consider what they gave us in return. High Rocks took away an angry, bitter child, consumed by guilt, and returned to us a young woman that sees her true worth. High Rocks took away a beautiful little girl that was angry at the world and returned to us a powerful, focused young woman, driven by a desire to succeed and a love of her friends and family. High Rocks took away a child that didn’t have two words to say to her parents over dinner and returned to us an articulate, functional member of the family who shares in discussions and shares her life with her parents.

You want to know what High Rocks did for me personally? They gave me my daughter back.

But that’s not all High Rocks did...not by a long shot. Let’s fast-forward a couple of years down the road to the present day. She is still a straight-A student. She performs in marching and concert bands. She spends time with her friends and likes to sleep late on weekends like any other teenager. Some of the above might give the impression that she is a very serious young woman, maybe overly so, but nothing would be further from the truth...she has the perfect balance of fun-loving and serious; goofy and focused; talkative and introspective.

She sees what High Rocks did for her and feels that she has a debt to repay by paying it forward to other girls just like her: girls with great promise who just need to be reassured of their intelligence, strength, and worth. Girls who only need the support and encouragement of peers and mentors to achieve things they would never have dreamed.





artwork by Cecilia Ciciora

I painted a poster about how many women don't have a big say in the world. Usually when a woman speaks her mind men label her as mean or bossy. Women hardly have a voice. They are always being quieted and told that they need to be "seen and not heard". Many women feel too scared to say anything about issues or problems they have. Some people feel that women need to be stronger and speak out more, but they don't give them the chance to do so. I felt like I could make a change and that my opinion mattered.

by Cecilia Ciciora, High Rocks Girl

High Rocks at this same time next year could be in a bad place, or in a place that it has never been before, in a great way. High Rocks could be the #1 camp in West Virginia, or even the United States. It could on TV or maybe it could be doing so well that our camp has ten more cabins built and more money for a longer camp with more people and more girls. I know that every High Rocks girl has the power to change High Rocks in many different ways, and maybe I could be that girl. I could change things for the better and maybe have an important role, make really important decisions and help out in every way a girl can.

One person can change someone's decisions, change their life and make the world a better place just by doing one simple little thing. When I was asked to be a part of this... I was shocked. I never thought that I would be asked, but I was given this opportunity and I wanted to grab it and make it a reality. **LIFE IS ALL ABOUT HARD DECISIONS AND EASY MISTAKES!**

by Jacquelyn D'Angelo, High Rocks Girl

WHY NO ONE ELSE CAN PLAY MY PART

BY JORDAN CLARK, HIGH ROCKS ALUM



"No One Else Can Play Your Part" is a national campaign for Suicide Prevention Month through the program To Write Love on Her Arms. No one else can play your part is an interesting concept to me, one that I honestly haven't put much thought into until recently. What does it mean to play your part?

For me it means that I have helped people come out of the closet and be comfortable in their own skin – while also finding comfort in my own identity. It means that I have been a resident assistant for 3 years now and have helped people anywhere from a broken heart to alcohol poisoning. It means that I get to watch my friends and "babies" grow into amazing people that make real changes. No one else can play your part means that my writing goes out into the world, and even if only a handful of people read it, that is enough. It means that I get to save money to get my artwork permanently placed in my skin – something no art gallery could ever do for me. It means that I will get to live out my dream of gaining my clinical psychology doctorate and one day bringing that knowledge and expertise back into Appalachia, helping to break apart some of the brain drain that exists here and helping the queer youth that need it the most. It means that I get to meet people that have forever changed my life.

For me, no one else can play your part hits home a little harder than others. I've lost friends to suicide, and once December gets here, it will be 5 years since I almost lost myself to the same thing. While that was not my only suicide attempt, that was on the one that almost won, the one I never bothered to reach out for help for until it was almost too late. It's strange to think of where I am today, and even though some days aren't as bright as others, to think that I wouldn't have made it to college, that instead of a graduation party my friends would have been quite aware of my absence and the 1.5 year anniversary of my passing. That I wouldn't have graduated high school, let alone be looking at college graduation in less than a year.

A lot of my work as a psychology major focuses on the idea that many people cannot see a light; they have lost that spark of hope deep inside of us all, and feel that the only way to end the pain and make it to a better place is to stop existing in their current place. Every day I see posts on To Write Love on Her Arms site about this campaign, about why no one else can play your part – and every time I am reminded that even though some days I feel like I make no discernible difference in anyone's life, there are small moments where I do make a difference, moments that I almost gave up my chance to make.

Coming to college, I have met people that have shown me that my journey is worth it and that there is hope out there – hope that you just have to hold out long enough to rediscover. There is hope in those nights where you feel like not waking up would be the best for all parties involved – and in the morning light although you may not want to wake up I need you to relish in the fact that you have. Honestly, I still have those moments each day but when I wake up I tell myself that I made it, I made it through another difficult, hopeless night and I can try my best to shine on someone else during that day. No one else can play your part; that is for sure. Remind yourself of that every day and one day, we will all be able to see that every time we felt we couldn't go on we made it...and will continue to make it.



body map from New Beginnings camp

I love art and music. I love to help out at the local animal shelter and do projects that help to make the town of Marlinton look beautiful and clean. I was selected to take part with the Pocahontas County Prevention Coalition in the annual Sticker Shock program. I love community and am proud to be from the mountains.

by Lydia Tallman, High Rocks Girl

WHAT IS MY HOME

A home to me is a place where you feel comfortable and can thrive and grow as a person. Home is where your roots are and a place for you to sprout and become strong. My most meaningful home goes by the name of High Rocks.

My story with High Rocks begins in 2009. It didn't take long to find that I was resisting some things that they were trying to get me to open up to and try. The first thing High Rocks taught me was that learning can be fun and exciting not boring and lame (in the language of a 13 year old). I was taught science, math, writing, leadership and much more in a new and exciting way. It never really felt like I was learning anything but more like discovering new things.

The second thing High Rocks taught me was how to not only be comfortable with who I am but also confident. As the years went by and High Rocks became a place I thrived in the most a place where I found myself and sharpened my mind and skills in various ways using various techniques. They taught us real skills; skills that are needed in our everyday lives from the simplest of tasks to the most challenging. I was proud to be who I was and I wasn't going to hide it anymore but also they taught me not to throw it into people's faces.

Home, you see, is not just some house you and your parents and or children live in. It is a place that moves you to be who you are and to better yourself in many ways, to challenge your flaws and build up your strengths. You don't have to go to High Rocks to learn these things or to even understand all that I have said. I believe that we all have our own High Rocks, our own place where we discovered ourselves.

If you believe in the things I have said or agreed then you are already very close to understanding what High Rocks offers the girls of the Appalachian region.

Life may be like a maze but you will always reach your destination if you never give up. Don't ever give up. Always remember your "High Rocks".

by Kris Arbuckle, High Rocks Alum and AmeriCorps Member

Virginia Steele's house



WHERE I'M FROM

by Aurora Cutright, High Rocks Girl

I'm from the dusty floor
the dry spot in a town
Where stray dogs run free
and it seems like the
moon howls.

I'm from seafood and sausage
Where the struggle was hard
I'm from the churrp of a cricket
the secret of a bird
Where if the wind blows the
whole world would know.

I'm from good music, good
people, good food
and fine dances
Where the water is cool in just
the right places.

I'm from bushels and weeds
I'm from gravel roads
and potholes
I'm from barn owls
that take the night away.



Steele Studio's window of gratefuls

As I begin a new chapter and a new year at Mary Baldwin College, I hope to gain more experiences and more successes to help me to model the leader I wish to become. There are more responsibilities and more changes that I must adapt to where all of my capabilities will be put to the test. Fortunately, equipped with the knowledge and skills that I have gained from High Rocks, I am prepared and most confident to overcome challenges that lay before me.

The time, energy, and resources spent to help High Rocks to grow and flourish will never go in vain. This community has transformed so many women into becoming bold and assertive leaders in today's society including myself. I am incredibly honored and humbled by the experience I have had at High Rocks. Thank you again for your generous contributions to High Rocks and to all who work earnestly to ensure that it is successful in all its endeavors.

Sincerely,
Moniefia M. Maitland, High Rocks Alum





artwork by Deana Workman

Thank you for everything you do. I'm not just talking about donating money, but for what you really do. Whether you protest for things like equality or feminism, or you fight to save our country, or stand up for people getting bullied, even if you're a crazy cat lady who holds the world record for best cookies in the world, thank you.

by Revanna Preston, High Rocks Girl