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Avondale Estrella Mountain Community College celebrates West Valley's women

Their empowerment is goal of conference

by **Eddi Trevizo** - Mar. 21, 2012 09:39 AM
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Estrella Mountain Community College is spotlighting West Valley women in its first conference that aims to empower young women.

Starting this week, the Avondale college, near Dysart and Thomas roads, is celebrating national Women's History Month.

In 1987, Congress declared March "Women's History Month." This year's national theme is empowerment and education for women.

The college events begin today and include seminars, workshops, presenters, a food drive to benefit a local women's shelter, interactive art exhibits and a scholarship for women who want to pursue higher education in one of the Maricopa County Community Colleges.

The events are free and open to all members of the public. Anyone who wishes to attend the conference March 31 must RSVP by next Wednesday.

Notable women

EMCC will spotlight presenters that help empower women during a half-day conference and workshops March 31.

Kelli Hernandez, a presenter and workshop leader, works at the New Life Center, a shelter for women and children who are victims of domestic abuse.

Hernandez, community-development manager for the Goodyear-based shelter, said she will teach women how to build and project confidence.

"As women, we aren't always taught to be confident," Hernandez said. "Often, we are taught to be meek, but you need to present yourself in a way that is confident, especially in a professional setting."

Hernandez has experience in teaching confidence-building exercises to women at the shelter. Her presentation at the college will focus on:

- Easy ways to build self-confidence.
- Avoiding habits that damage self-image.
- Using body language that communicates self-confidence.
- How to project confidence even when you don't feel it.

Hernandez said the discussion and workshops will be interactive.

"At the New Life Center women learn confidence from each other by telling each other that they are worth something; it's reassuring," Hernandez said.

Another local speaker is Debbie Polisky, founder and owner of Words & Health LLC.

Polisky will be a presenter at a leadership luncheon on March 28. Polisky is a bilingual nutritionist. Her Avondale-based business offers Spanish translation, writing and speaking services in addition to nutrition advice.






"I will speak about the importance of personal health and wellness in conjunction with pursuing educational goals and the challenges faced by different ethnic groups," Polisky said.

Polisky was born and raised in Argentina and moved to Arizona as an adult.

"I was a student pursuing two master's degrees while working two jobs as an adult; so I can relate to students' challenges quite well," Polisky said.

Her background includes seven years as a clinical dietitian in Buenos Aires, Argentina, 11 years as director of nutrition services for a community health center, 11 years as adjunct faculty and six years teaching at EMCC, and the recent opening of her business, Words & Health LLC.

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