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Wyndmoor teen starts first PA scoliosis 'Curvy Girls' chapter

by Sally Cohen

It hasn't exactly received a lot of publicity, but June is Scoliosis Awareness Month. Scoliosis is a medical condition in which a person, most frequently a female, has an abnormal lateral curvature of the spine. On an x-ray, the spine of an individual with a typical scoliosis may look more like an "S" or a "C" than a straight line.

It may be congenital, caused by anomalies present at birth or idiopathic, sub-classified as infantile, juvenile, adolescent or adult according to when onset occurred. Conventional treatment for scoliosis is through bracing and/or surgery. In an attempt to halt the progression of the curve, kids must wear a hard plastic torso brace for 23 hours a day until they are finished growing.

Julia Fleming, 15, of Wyndmoor and a student at Penn Charter, knows what it's like to be diagnosed with scoliosis and wear a back brace. Adolescence is a rough time, and adding the shame and embarrass-



Julia Fleming, age 15, of Wyndmoor knows what it's like to be diagnosed with scoliosis and wear a back brace. That's why she founded The Curvy Girls of Philadelphia.

ment of wearing a brace to school is overwhelming to teens, which is why Julia is determined to help other girls get through this with peer support. Julia had the opportunity to attend Scoliosis Rehab in Wisconsin, where she learned exercises to strengthen her spine. She wants to share her knowledge with other "Curvy Fam-

lies."

Therefore, Julia has started "The Curvy Girls of Philadelphia," the first Pennsylvania division of the national Curvy Girls Scoliosis Support Group, which was recently featured on Nickelodeon's TeenNick HALO (Helping and Leading Others) Awards. Started four years ago by then 14-year-old Leah Stoltz of Long Island, New York, The Curvy Girls brings girls together to support one another at monthly meetings, hospital visits, and through phone and internet contact.

"I want to carry on the message by reaching out to other girls," Julia told us last week. "I feel so lucky to have the opportunity to help other girls and make them feel better about themselves and who they are, both inside and out! We will be holding our first meeting on Aug. 7 at 1 p.m. at a location in Wyndmoor"

For more information about the national organization, visit www.curvy-girlsScoliosis.com. For more information about the local chapter started by Julia and/or the meeting on Aug. 7, email curvygirlsphilly@gmail.com

New version of 'South Pacific' a tepid mounting of timeless show

by Clark Groome

Rodgers and Hammerstein were at the heart of what has become known as The Golden Age of the American Musical, the period between 1943 and the end of the 1960s that was begun by their "Oklahoma!" The shows in those days were all called musical comedies, a moniker that wasn't always exactly accurate.

PSF's "South Pacific" for all its

ed to be the hick from Little Rock she claims to be.

Lawton's Billis doesn't really seem like the constantly-conspiring con man he is supposed to be, although he does have some of the show's best moments.

Directed by Dennis Razze, PSF's "South Pacific" is a decent but never inspiring rendering of a truly great musical. Its most glaring weakness is Stephen Casey's bland, almost paint-

energy that if done right would be irresistible. Here those numbers were mediocre.

The PSF "South Pacific" is a tepid mounting of a timeless and almost indestructible show. Clearly the opening night audience was thrilled by what they saw. It's too bad that they didn't see it at its best.

For tickets to the Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival's production of "South Pacific," playing through July 3 at the Labuda Center at DeSales Uni-