

That Takes Ovaries

Bold Females and Their Brazen Acts

GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZING A THAT TAKES OVARIES OPEN MIKE IN YOUR COMMUNITY*

FULL VERSION

Here are the open mike Guidelines. They are long because they offer details to a person (a person who has never organized anything before) how to organize an event. If you have already organized events before and just want to know how to lead a *That Takes Ovaries* event itself, and don't need to learn how to bring people in to an event or how to talk to reporters or how to invite other organizations to be a part of your event, then you don't need to read it all. You can instead just read the section called "APPENDIX F -- For Event MC: Suggested Agenda and Wording for Your *Ovaries* Open Mike (5 pages)". Either way, we still need you to register for your event. Thanks! -- Rivka

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*There are separate Guidelines for the *Ovaries* Play. Request them at Info@ThatTakesOvaries.org

GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZING A *THAT TAKES OVARIES* OPEN MIKE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

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Not included in this document. Instead you can find a downloadable version of it at our website www.thattakesovaries.org -- or just email us at < info@thattakesovaries.org > and request we send it to you via email attachment. It is mandatory that you have a copy of it if you are organizing an <i>Ovaries</i> event -- and besides, you will find it very useful.	

INTRODUCTION:

GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZING A *THAT TAKES OVARIES* OPEN MIKE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

FULL VERSION

PRE-NOTE: Summarized vs. Full Versions In the back of the book (and on the book's website www.thattakesovaries.org), readers can find *summarized* guidelines for how to lead their own open mikes. This document in your hands, however, is the *full* version of the guidelines.

Full Version of the Guidelines

Why bother to read the *full* version instead of just the *summarized* version of the guidelines? Well, if you want to lead a "bigger, public" open mike—that is, something where more than just your friends and your friends' friends are invited—you *have* to read this *full* version before you can register to lead the event (see website or Appendix A to register, or email <Rivka@thattakesovaries.org> and ask for the registration form).

***THAT TAKES OVARIES* OPEN MIKES**

(How cool is that?)

The That Takes Ovaries open mike strategy grew out of the main idea and primary goal behind my book, That Takes Ovaries, and that is the empowerment of females. So each Ovaries open mike is about encouraging women and girls to organize and speak out for themselves. Each individual event is linked to a larger grassroots movement of raising awareness and funds for girls' needs, concerns and human rights. Go get 'em, grrrlz! – Rivka

The book, *That Takes Ovaries* (Three Rivers/Random House), is important because of the voices in it—women and girls proudly shouting from the rooftops how they acted boldly in the world. Their stories are celebrations of womanly brazenness. But, *surprise!*, women and girls everywhere have triumphant stories to tell. So wouldn't it be exciting for the vibrant, feisty female voices in *your* community to be heard, too?

Enter the *That Takes Ovaries* open mike.

There are two ways to make this happen. One is small, intimate, and held in your living room; suggestions for how to set this up are included below. The other is bigger, public, and held anywhere larger than your living room—a bookstore, coffee shop, university campus, poetry reading spot, auditorium. The guidelines for how to organize this second, bigger, public-type of open mike are also below, in the full, not-summarized version (for the summarized version, see the paperback book or the website www.thattakesovaries.org). Either type of event (small & intimate or larger & public) will give women and girls in your area an exhilarating chance to inspire and be inspired.

The topics can vary. General theme open mikes might draw the biggest crowds. Specific themes—sports, traveling, fighting back against racism or violence—might draw more dedicated, focused groups.

Whatever type of open mike you hold, it is modeled after the book. If you organize one, please support the book and its goals, and encourage people to take the message of empowerment home with them by having the paperback available (translation: for sale) at your event. Yes, this is a plug for the book—and for spreading the word about the audacious, outrageous, and courageous way women and girls live their lives.

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Ovaries in Your Living Room

It's easy. Invite friends over, as you would for any other party, and tell them to bring their friends, too—new blood makes things more fun. If you want, use this email invitation (below) that the book editor and Ovarian empress (that's me!) sent out when she held her own Living Room Open Mike.

**Please join (your name) for a way cool
THAT TAKES OVARIES™ Living Room Open Mike**

Come tell & hear real-life stories about being a brazen babe. Stories can cover anything YOU have *ever* done—little or big—that was bold, gutsy, outrageous, audacious, courageous, or inspirational. It can be playful, serious, spontaneous, calculated, smart, sexy, and/or an example of leadership. Anything that when you think about it today, makes you nod your head with *pride* or even semi-disbelief and think, "*Wow! I did that!*" Stories should be true and short, 1-3 minutes. (Helpful to time your story aloud beforehand.) Come ready to read your written story—or share one off the top of your head.

DATE/TIME: Anyday, Anytime

PLACE: (Your name)'s cozy, hopefully crowded, living room

ADDRESS: Anystreet, Anytown, Anycountry

DIRECTIONS: Take a right, then a left, blah, blah, blah

QUESTIONS & RSVP: Call (Your name, phone, email)

COST: Free (Or collect donations for some good causes!)

WHO: All ages/genders invited: Guys, come share stories about moms, sisters, daughters

Before your Living Room Open Mike, please contact the book website at eventslivingroom@thattakesovaries.org simply to indicate you are hosting one. This is encouraged, not required. It just helps me to know where and how many living-room soirees are being held.

Please support the *That Takes Ovaries* movement by having the book available and for sale at your event. To do this, you have options: simply buy a bunch of books from your local bookstore, recoup costs when you sell them at your event and return the ones you don't sell. Check the store's return policy first, and *save that sales receipt*. Another option is to have the book's publisher ship copies to your door. Our publisher is Random House: Call 1-800-733-3000, get "customer service", tell them you are holding an "author event" (even if no book contributors will be there, that is what you need to call it to get the discount), the date of your event, the title of the book and the number of books you want. Base the number of books you order on how many folks you think will attend. About 5-10% of your audience will buy books if you make a good, strong pitch for book sales. The books normally sell in bookstores for \$13. Ordering directly from Random House, you pay via credit card or check and get the books at a discount -- 40% off the bookstore price (but you may still have to pay a sales tax if you plan to sell the books at your event). You can sell the books at whatever price you want, but not more than \$13. Donate any profits you make to *That Takes Ovaries* so we can keep doing our good work in the world, or to another women or girls' cause of your choice. You can return any leftover books to Random House for a refund. Email info@thattakesovaries.org if you have questions about any of this. Remember, your event, Ms. Hostess, will rouse women and girls to raise their voices and will give them a chance to look at their own lives and identify their courage; taking the book home will keep them inspired long after the evening has ended. Please have the book at your event.

When at last your living room is brimming with people, here's what I suggest: Bring out the chips and dip, read aloud some excerpt from the book's introduction, like the section called "What Is the Main Point of This Book," or from the book's preface, called **Rivka's Note to All Readers** (see Appendix B) (which sets the

tone), plus read a couple of stories from the book (which model the storytelling style) (P.S. pick mostly short and playful stories, not too many heavy and deep ones), then go around the room and have everyone share her (or his) own true stories. It is a homey, sofa-pillows type of comfortable, and it's entertaining and inspirational—all rolled into one. Feel free to use any activities from the **At the Event Itself** section found below. Make sure everyone who wants to speak gets a chance. Tell folks in advance to keep their stories short: maybe 1-3 minutes? You don't want any one person hogging the floor (oink, oink). If someone does, don't be shy: Interrupt and announce their allotted time is about up. Then make sure it is. Being a Benign Dictator is easier than you might think. Or use an oven timer, the Instrument of Neutral Democracy.

It's a girl thing, so likely not a lot of guys will come. If some do, make them feel welcome (we can always use good men in the revolution, and at parties) and remind them that they can tell stories about the ovaries in their lives—female friends and family members. Some actually might, and then you are in for a treat; it is a treasure to hear men appreciate women's boldness.

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Male-bashing, and Why It Won't Be Helpful At Your *Ovaries* Event

Yes, we still live in a patriarchal society. Yes, the majority of people who hurt (harass, abuse, rape, murder) women and girls are men. For this reason, some stories heard at your event may be about how women and girls fought back. These stories are important; we need to tell them, people need to hear them. But if we want things to change—truly, radically change—we need to understand the full complexity of how a society steeped in sexism hurts *all* involved. How it tries to turn inherently strong girls into women who hesitate to use their power, and inherently compassionate boys into men with an inclination to dominate or hurt. For any one group to be free of these harmful effects of institutionalized sexism, we *all* need access to our full range of emotions and abilities; we *all* need to escape the gender roles and rules our culture declares definitive.

There are many tactics we can use to achieve this goal. Some include anger. Anger is often an appropriate response to being hurt and sometimes a necessary first step to reclaiming one's power (and ability to fight back against assault). But it won't be helpful to direct anger at men who attend your open mike. They came to support women. Besides, if our ultimate goal is to "reach" someone, change their heart and mind, then anger, and certainly bashing, will likely trigger their defense mechanisms. And then those we'd specifically hoped would learn and grow can't even hear how their attitude and behavior affect us.

Happily, there are other tactics we can employ: education, guidance, perspective sharing, and simply telling the truth about our lives. Hearing the truth, for the first time or the hundredth time, can be transformational. Given that, set a tone at your open mike where the truth about how women and girls have been hurt and how they fought back can be told, without simultaneously asserting that *all* men participate in the hurting. If needed, remind your audience that good men have always stood side by side with women in our mutual struggles to be free.

May your *Ovaries* event be made up of the transformative stuff that tears down walls, not raises them. Good luck!

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Organizing a (Bigger, Public) That Takes Ovaries Open Mike

If you want to have more than just a few friends over; if you want to see strangers (who are only friends you have not yet met) excitedly milling around, talking about doing audacious things; if you want to bring women and girls together to listen, clap, and cheer with huge grins on their faces; if you want to feel powerful, smart, and in charge, like *you* can plan and pull off a great time for lots of folks—and raise their consciousness to boot—then you want to organize a bigger, public *That Takes Ovaries* Open Mike. Good for you.

Luckily for everyone, the book's control-freaky editor cannot be involved with most events. So instead, there are these guidelines for open mike organizers, like you, to use.

What? You say you have never organized a public event before?

Well, hey, now's your chance. You never know, this might start your new career in organizing for women's empowerment. Or it could just be a lot of fun—once.

You can work as an individual, or under the auspices of an established organization. You can hold a stand-alone event, or include the open mike as a fun, audience participatory component to an already-scheduled larger conference (big advantages: comes with a site and pre-made audience). Or you can hold it in a bookstore. Options galore! Be creative.

Unlike a smaller Living Room Open Mike, where I have suggestions but no requirements, if you want to organize a bigger, public open mike you will have to do Certain Things. I list them below. But first, a definition of what exactly a "bigger, public" *That Takes Ovaries* Open Mike is. It is any gathering that uses "That Takes Ovaries" or any like-wording in its promotion and: (1) is open to the public or local community—such as your city, neighborhood, or school; (2) includes more than just your friends and your friends' friends; (3) is publicized, perhaps with a publicly posted flyer or listing in a newspaper, school, or community events calendar; and/or (4) may be covered by the media. Lastly, if you expect more than thirty people, whoever they are, consider your open mike "bigger, public."

**So the open mike you want to organize meets
the above "bigger, public" definition?
And now you are wondering,
"What are these *Certain Things* I'll have to do?"**

Thing 1. On the website, or with the form found below (Appendix A), register your intention to organize an open mike. This is simple. Don't let having to do it be a hindrance. Then pay the \$25 registration fee (this money helps keep the *That Takes Ovaries* organization alive and working to empower women and girls around the globe. (Only if these fees absolutely prevent you from doing an *Ovaries* event will we consider lowering or waiving them.)

Thing 2. When you register, you agree to follow the full version of the **Guidelines for Organizing an Ovaries Open Mike in Your Community** (in other words, what you are reading right now). As you read these guidelines you will see they are very flexible. You can alter and adapt them to your specific community's needs.

Thing 3. Wait to hear back from the website before beginning to organize.

There are good reasons for Things 1-3. I need to coordinate and keep track of what is going on around the country. We wouldn't want two open mikes in the same city on the same week, now would we? (That could mean competition for the same audience and media.) Also, if you want, we can post on our website's calendar of events your upcoming event for all to see—and attend. Besides, contact with the website means you'll have someone who cares as much as you do about the event. And someone to whom you can brag when it goes swimmingly.

Fundraiser, Too!

In keeping with the philosophy that it is important to give back to our communities, I encourage each (bigger, public) open mike organizer to make her event a fundraiser, and to split the proceeds between two causes: one local, one international. We females are scattered far and wide; by dividing up our resources locally and internationally, we cover all bases.

Some of the money collected can go to covering costs (though it is hoped that sponsors or in-kind donations will take care of that), and, if absolutely necessary, to paying the organizer something. But regardless of costs, most of the proceeds should go to the beneficiaries of the fundraiser. Additionally, 10-15% of what you raise must be send back to the *That Takes Ovaries* organization. This is in addition to the original \$25 registration fee. Without this money, we could not continue our work around the globe. (Only if these fees absolutely prevent you from doing an *Ovaries* event, will we consider lowering or waiving them. But first we'd ask you to creatively brainstorm ways to raise the money.)

Beneficiaries of your fundraiser: It is my suggestion and hope that a portion of the money raised go to a local girls' program—whichever one you like in your community. (If you need an idea, consider your nearest chapter of Girls Inc. (www.girlsinc.org), one of the nation's preeminent girls' organizations. They help girls with everything from self-defense to economic empowerment to preventing adolescent pregnancy.) If you search high and low but cannot find a local girls' group that seems right for an *Ovaries* fundraiser, pick a women's group.

It is my further hope that another portion of the money your event raises will be dedicated to stopping two of the most appalling international human rights abuses perpetrated against women and girls—sexual enslavement and, separately, female genital mutilation (FGM) (for info on these two horrific violations of girls' rights and sexual freedom see below). To this end, *That Takes Ovaries* established a relationship with Equality Now (www.equalitynow.org), a New York-based international women's organization that, among other things, works with grassroots groups around the globe to eradicate FGM as well as the sex trafficking of girls. Some of the writers in this book have already generously donated their contributor's honorarium to Equality Now. Imagine if every open mike distributed information and made a donation, too. We could make a real difference in the crucial goal of educating the public and ending both sexual slavery and FGM. And we would be sending a strong message that women in the so-called First World, a world of privilege, care about all women around the globe. (Note: If there is another international women's cause you'd prefer to donate to, that is also an option. Donating to Equality Now is strongly encouraged but not required.)

For those of you who have never organized for a cause or never before seen yourselves as social change activists—Welcome! Please use this event to get your feet (and knees and tush) wet. There is nothing like the high that comes from making a difference.

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Multi-Culti is Good

Have your event reflect the diversity around you. Invite, leaflet, and advertise in a variety of cultural communities. Be imaginative. Reach out to Asian resource centers, Black sororities, disability rights groups, battered women's shelters, gay/straight alliances, girls' associations, Latino advocacy centers, Native American youth groups, LGBT listservs, churches, synagogues, mosques, senior citizen programs, etc. Encourage women and girls from various backgrounds to take the lead as organizers, publicists, MCs. Diversity makes us stronger. Coalitions make us more effective.

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√ Pre-Event Organizing Checklist

REGISTER With the registration form found in Appendix A or on the website www.thattakesovaries.org, register your intention to organize a (bigger, public) *That Takes Ovaries* Open Mike. Wait until you hear back before proceeding further. (Note: There is a separate Registration Form for the *Ovaries* play. If you need that, just email us and request it: <info@thattakesovaries.org>)

TIME PREP AND SETTING A DATE Prepare yourself for a bunch of fun and a good bit of work: Depending on how big you want it to be, the event could take one to three months to pull off. Set a date. It may depend on the availability of the venue you want to use.

GET HELP Find co-organizers or loyal assistants who will help.

VENUE Find a free/absurdly cheap, wheelchair accessible (don't neglect this!), close-to-public-transit site. Try a bookstore, coffee shop, university campus, poetry reading spot, club, auditorium, beauty parlor waiting room, bowling alley parking lot, someone's big house, whatever. (Or piggyback onto another organization's already scheduled conference. Its organizers might love a celebratory, audience participatory activity. And this way your site and crowd are already secured. Yippee!)

"WHAT, WHEN, WHERE" FORM As soon as you have secured a date and site for your event, fill out this form and send it to us. This is required. And it lists your open mike on the *Ovaries* website for all to see. Fill in the form (found in Appendix A) and send to the Ovaries staffer who sent you this email -- or if you can't remember who that is, send it to <Rivka@thattakesovaries.org>.

SPONSORS Invite one, two or twenty local women and girls' organizations to join the fun by having them co-organize, co-sponsor, publicize or just attend the event. Some may be willing to contribute to costs, especially if it is a fundraiser for them or another worthy girlie cause. Ask each organization to bring its following (the folks on its mailing list) to the event itself.

MORE SPONSORS Also find local businesses to sponsor the event or make a donation. That way all costs won't end up on you. Some businesses, like a photocopying store or restaurant, may donate services or food in exchange for including their name as a sponsor on the publicity flyer or playbill.

CELEBS Consider inviting local celebrities, leaders, politicians, actors or musicians. If they come, and you can advertise their scheduled appearance, their fans will come with them. They can just promise to tell their own personal stories at the open mike or they can MC. Which gets us to...

SECURE MC Secure a Mistress of Ceremonies (MC). She should be vibrant and bold (like the book!), and, most important, able to make crowds comfortable enough to share personal stories aloud. *Maybe she is you?* But remember, it can be difficult to both organize *and* lead an event. You can also have more than one organizer or MC (p.s. men are welcome to co-MC with a woman). Once you secure an MC, give her the handout titled "**FOR EVENT MC: Suggested Agenda and Wording for Your Ovaries Open Mike**" It is found below, in Appendix F.

EQUIPMENT If the site is large or the crowd will be big, buy/borrow/rent/steal from a friend/school/library/store *chairs and a mike*—or hold your event at a site already equipped with that. Also try to find a video camera with a tripod (and camera person) to record your event.

GET BOOKS Please give women and girls something concrete and inspirational to take home with them by having the *That Takes Ovaries* book available and for sale at your event. This also helps promote the *That Takes Ovaries* movement and the paperback—thank you!—and further legitimizes your event by linking it to the book. To do this, you have options: Invite any local bookstore to attend your event to sell the book. (P.S. Don't forget to support your local *independent* bookstores. Find one in your area here: www.booksense.com.) *Whatever bookstore you secure, ask them if they will prominently display at their store both the book and some event flyers (that you give them) 1-2 weeks before the event.* If you don't have a bookstore who can attend your event you do have other options: Simply buy a bunch of books from your local bookstore, recoup costs when you sell them at your event and return the ones you don't sell. Check the store's return policy first,

and *save that sales receipt*. Another option is to have the book's publisher ship copies to your door. Our publisher is Random House: Call 1-800-733-3000, get "customer service", tell them you are holding an "author event" (even if no book contributors will be there, that is what you need to call it to get the discount), the date of your event, the title of the book and the number of books you want. Base the number of books you order on how many folks you think will attend. About 5-10% of your audience will buy books if you make a good, strong pitch for book sales. The books normally sell in bookstores for \$13. Ordering directly from Random House, you pay via credit card or check and get the books at a discount -- 40% off the bookstore price (but you may still have to pay a sales tax if you plan to sell the books at your event). You can sell the books at whatever price you want, but not more than \$13. Donate any profits you make to *That Takes Ovaries* so we can keep doing our good work in the world, or to another women or girls' cause of your choice. You should be able to return leftover books to Random House for a refund, but ask them first to be sure. Email <info@thattakesovaries.org> if you have questions about any of this. Remember, your event, Ms. Hostess, will rouse women and girls to raise their voices and will give them a chance to look at their own lives and identify their courage; taking the book home will keep them inspired long after the evening has ended. Please have the book at your event.

☐ **BOOK CONTRIBUTORS** Ask Rivka (via Rivka@thattakesovaries.org) for the *Ovaries* book contributors who live near you. Maybe one can read her story aloud and sign copies of the books. If you want to invite Rivka Solomon, Founder-Director of That Takes Ovaries, to read, speak or co-MC at your *Ovaries* event, contact her at <rivka@thattakesovaries.org> to discuss an honorarium and travel expenses from Boston, MA, USA.

☐ **READERS** Find 3-5 local women and girls who like the spotlight to read stories from the book. Use something like the "Call for Actors" email notice to find local actors eager to volunteer their dramatic reading talents. You can post this call on local actors listservs or just spread it around (see Appendix C for the "Call for Actors").

☐ **PLANTS** Find audience plants: Secure 2-3 people who will jump up and share their stories at the open mike the second the MC says, "Okay, so now who in the audience has a story they want to tell?" This helps get the ball (ovary) rolling. Be sure to ask your audience plants what their stories are in advance. If more than one is super-serious or "heavy" ask your plants to come up with another story. Too many heavy stories at the beginning sets a tone and could make the event a downer. (See Appendix C for a sample email notice, "Call for Audience Plants").

☐ **BACK UP STORIES** Choose some back up stories from the book and have someone ready to read them just in case no one wants to share a story during the open mike.

☐ **BROCHURES** Equality Now will send brochures to each event organizer who wants to pass out at her event info on ending female genital mutilation and sex trafficking. Contact them to get the brochures (phone: 212-586-0906 // email: info@equalitynow.org).

☐ **GOLDEN OVARIES** Consider giving a Golden Ovary award to honor specific women who come to your event. Even better, give one to *each* person who shares a story. Why do this? Because women should be honored for being brave enough to do their original bold deed *and* for being brave enough to get up and share their gutsy story at the open mike in front of a room full of people. It makes folks feel special and acknowledged. And who doesn't like chocolate? So, before your event, be on the lookout for something chocolate and round that you can wrap up with gold paper or foil (gold foil sheets can often be obtained for free from a generous local florist). Maybe even ask your local confectioner (chocolate or candymaker) if s/he will donate some eggs s/he makes. Many confectioners have happily helped us out -- for free. Take a guess as to how many folks will share stories at your event and then get 5-10 additional eggs. Put 'em in a basket or bowl and have a volunteer give an egg to each woman, man or child immediately after s/he shares a story. Tell your audience in advance that you will be doing this. Some folks will be more eager to speak up knowing they will get a yummy Golden Ovary.

☐ **AGENDA** Schedule an up-to-two hour agenda. Choose activities from the **At the Event Itself** section found below.

☐ **PREPARE** Before your event, even if you are not the MC, read "**FOR EVENT MC: Suggested Agenda and Wording for Your Ovaries Open Mike**" (Appendix F)

☐"SUMMARY" FLYER AND SIGN UP SHEET Can you pass around at your event two things that will help keep the *That Takes Ovaries* movement growing and flourishing? One is a flyer that folks can take home, it is our "Summary Of All Things Ovarian" and it tells them all about our books, open mikes and play. The other thing to pass around is an *Ovaries* mailing list sign up sheet. This sign up sheet should be circulated a few times during the event and collected by you at the end. (Find these two items in Appendix E.)

📷PHOTOGRAPHING/VIDEOTAPING Capturing the Moment: Though not mandatory, we here at *That Takes Ovaries* will love you even more if you can film/videotape the event or take digital photos, with the end goal of sending it all to us. If you decide you can "capture the moment", you will need to fill out some permission/release forms. (Find forms in Appendix E.)

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What to Give the MC

At least 1 week before the gathering, have the MC read, "For the Event MC: Suggested Agenda and Wording for Your Ovaries Open Mike" found below in Appendix F.

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√ Pre-Event Publicity Checklist

DOUBLE CHECK: DID YOU SEND US THE "WHAT, WHEN, WHERE" FORM YET? Once you have a date and venue secured, fill out and send us the What, When, Where form for your event. Find it in Appendix A -- or email us at <info@thattakesovaries.org>, request it and we'll send it to you. Once we have your filled out form, we'll post it on our website. Folks will see it and attend your event.

PUBLICITY MACHINES IN PLACE? Find out if the place you are holding the open mike, the groups you got to sponsor the event, or the local fundraiser recipient have their own established publicity machines. If so, use them -- but don't rely on them. No one cares more about your event than you. So if you want a good turn out, consider the suggestions below.

OVARIES PR PACKET All *Ovaries* event organizers should download a nifty *Ovaries* publicity packet off the website www.thattakesovaries.org (find the packet on the website's homepage) -- or email us and ask for it. Use it any way you see fit. Hey, why not get it now before you forget?

FLYERS Make an eye-catching (hot pink?) hardcopy flyer about your event, and an email flyer, too. (Find samples of both in Appendix D.)

TELL THE WORLD Email and snailmail flyers to all potentially interested individuals and groups, like local women's centers, YWCA, N.O.W., Girls Inc., and Girl Scouts chapters.

KEEP TELLING THE WORLD Pass out flyers at poetry slams, clubs, knitting conventions, pro-choice demos, and any public gathering of one or more people. Post on windows and community bulletin boards in libraries, bookstores, coffee shops, beauty salons, and gynecologists' offices—anywhere you'd find women chillin'. (One group even got their local gynecologist's office to sponsor their event.)

GET LISTED Get the open mike listed in the calendar section of local publications. It's easy. Just call the publication and ask them how to list it. Some need a month advance notice, others only eight days.

BECOME FAMOUS If you want more publicity, like your fifteen seconds of fame, two to four weeks before the open mike, contact local TV stations and newspapers. Look on their websites, or call and ask, for their: 1) entertainment/events editor or reporter, 2) "around town/style/living/fluff" editor or reporter, 3) book section editor. Just call the newspaper and ask for all the names and phone extensions for each of these folks. Then talk to each directly or pitch the idea to their email or voicemail—and *leave your phone number*. They will love *That Takes Ovaries*; it is both playful and depthful, and has just enough "edge" to draw them in. Here's a possible pitch to spark their interest:

Hi, my name is Tiddlywinks Hinklebaum (*or whatever your name is*). I am calling to see if you'd like to _____ (*Fill in the blank with one or all of these: "Do a pre-event story on a fundraiser we are holding; cover an exciting international open mike movement that's holding a local event."*). (*Note: As the organizer, you'd prefer a pre-event story so more folks come to your shindig.*) Both our event and the international open mike movement are linked to a book. It is a collection of stories from women and girls about bold, gutsy, brazen, outrageous, audacious, courageous things they have done. The book and the open mike movement are both called *That Takes Ovaries* (*Note: Pause a sec to let their brain synapses compute. Most folks giggle or half-laugh-half-snort upon realization of what the phrase means.*) Dozens of *That Takes Ovaries* Open Mikes are being held all around the country. At them, women and girls publicly share their true tales of times they were particularly gutsy and bold. Guys join us and proudly brag about the ovaries in their lives, like their mothers, sisters, daughters. Everyone who shares a story gets a chocolate egg wrapped in gold foil: a Golden Ovaries award. (*Note: If you are making it a fundraiser along my suggestions, explain: "It is a fundraiser for the local girls' group _____ (state which), and for groups working to end human rights abuses against women, such as female genital mutilation and sex trafficking."*) The local groups and celebrities sponsoring and attending this event are _____. (*Note: Mention only those you definitely secured.*) Can we interest you in doing a story? Perhaps I could send you an email or fax on all this? (*Note: Get their coveted email address, if possible.*) Or I'd be happy to send a publicity packet, a copy of the book, or have the book editor and international open mike coordinator, Rivka Solomon, available for an interview.

If anyone is interested, immediately email or fax (snailmail only as a last resort) an event flyer—or anything with the key info *and your phone number* on it. This is your press release (see sample in Appendix D), so

write "Press Release" at the top. Ask them if they want to see a full publicity packet. If they do, either you can email it to them or you can ask us to do it. If any of them want to interview Rivka, contact her at Rivka@thattakesovaries.org. Remember, you are competing with 1000 other events for that editor or reporter's attention. So it is okay to do a follow up phone call. But if you sense they are annoyed, back off by repeatedly bowing your way out of the room. Now, after informing the media about your gig, you have to be Zen about it and let it go. They will either come or not.

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Political Discussion

There are times for political discussions. Sitting around coffee tables with friends, at holiday dinners with the family, on the street at a protest rally. Your open mike is not one of those times. But the stories women share at your gathering may raise political issues. Issues that different people feel differently about: Like the role of pornography in our lives, like whether a woman should retaliate for being done wrong, like whether a girl should use violence to fend off violence done to her. Those are just a few examples; who knows what political and social contention could come up at your event. But this is not the place to start a big debate about complex concerns. We can't solve them in one night anyway. What this night is about is something totally different. It is about feeling triumphant, positive, happy at hearing how yet another woman pushed past societal imposed boundaries or internally adhered-to constraints. It's about providing a safe space for women and girls to share their stories and experiences. This is a time to put political differences aside and instead focus on supporting yet another girl who, at least when she did her deed, felt she was taking some kind of action to somehow free herself. This is a time to celebrate daring dames, gutsy gals, feisty females...even if you don't agree with them politically.

If a political debate starts, have the MC gently but firmly squash it. Tell the crowd to continue their debate *after* the open mike. Right here, right now, we want to focus on the positive.

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Pre-Event "Check-in With Us" Checklist

That Takes Ovaries Open Mike: Pre-Event "Check-in With Us" Checklist

About 1-2 weeks before your event, please look over this below checklist. Then reassure us that all is going well with your organizing by emailing us the answers to these questions. Contact the *Ovaries* staffer you have been in contact with, or send it to <Info@thattakesovaries.org> (and if possible, tell us the name of the staffer you have been in contact with).

- Tell us who are you, where are you and when your *Ovaries* open mike is happening (the date).
- Remind us: Is your event a fundraiser, if so for whom?
- Did you send us your Registration and What When Where forms, and your Registration Fee?
- Did you read the document called "For Event MC: Suggested Agenda and Wording for Your *Ovaries* Open Mike"? (Find it in the Guidelines)
- Did you give this same document to your MC at least one week before your event?
- Did you make hot pink flyers of our "Summary Of All Things Ovarian" to put on each chair before your audience comes in? (Find it in the Guidelines)
- Will you pass around our *Ovaries* mailing list sign up sheet so folks can get on our mailing list? (Find it in the Guidelines)
- Do you have readers lined up to read stories from the *Ovaries* book? Are they actors or folks who like the spotlight? Let us know something about who you lined up to be your readers. Most importantly, have they practiced out loud a few times? (A must!)
- What stories from the book are you reading? List them for us.
- Will you be doing the "Pair and Share" icebreaker? (We recommend you do!)
- Do you have audience plants secured, to get the ball (ovary) rolling for the open mike?
- Are you videotaping and/or photographing the event -- and using a tripod to keep the camera steady?
- Do you have enough copies of the video release forms ready for all the MCs, actors/readers and open mike storytellers to sign? (Find it in the Guidelines)
- Do you have a volunteer who will make sure everyone signs the video release form?
- Do you have chocolate Golden Ovaries to give to each MC, reader and open mike storyteller (and all your volunteer staffers too)?
- Will you have the *Ovaries* books for sale? Via a bookstore who attends your event? Or did you order books by calling the publisher? (Let us know if you need help getting books there.)
- Have you secured any press coverage? Are you keeping in mind that we need sent to us original hard copies of all press coverage, and the website addresses, if any press that appears on the web?
- Gentle Reminder: After your event you will send us 10-15% of all monies raised, so we can keep doing our ovarian work around the globe.

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As Folks Walk Into the Event

- Welcome them.
- Consider playing toe-tapping, happy music (and there are always the old school classics, like Cyndi Lauper's *Girls Just Wanna Have Fun*, Aretha Franklin's *Respect*, Helen Reddy's *I Am Woman...*).
- If it is a fundraiser, have someone collect money (for security reasons, periodically remove the money from the door). Post a sign stating where the proceeds will go.
- Some organizers might want to use a sign-up sheet at the door for those who intend to share a story. This is optional, but if you do, make sure all attendees know about it as they walk in. With this, you'll know in advance how many plan to participate in the spoken word part of the night. You could also use the list for who goes first, second... Remember though, you will also want folks to *spontaneously* share stories. That is where the real excitement could be. Most of our open mike events do not use a sign up sheet, but it is up to you.
- IMPORTANT: Make sure the *Ovaries* books you or a bookstore have for sale are in a highly visible location, like by the door.
- IMPORTANT: Make sure the person you have videotaping or photographing the event has a good, unobstructed view of the stage and that there are no lights behind the stage or background music during the event that will interfere.

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At the Event Itself: *Summary*

Activities you can use at your event are summarized in the next three paragraphs. For the more detailed description of each activity, see below the summaries. Pick the activities you think would work best with the community you are inviting. A bare-bones open mike consists of only three components: 1) the *Introduction*, when the Mistress of Ceremonies shares her own thoughts on why this event is important to her and reads aloud some excerpt from the book's preface (aka **Rivka's Note to All Readers**; find it in Appendix B below or in the website's About the Book section) or perhaps an excerpt from the book's introduction, like the section called "What Is the Main Point of This Book"—both discuss the importance of women and girls publicly sharing their brazen, outrageous, audacious, courageous acts; 2) *Modeling the Storytelling Style*, when someone role-models the types of stories we hope to hear at the event (i.e. true, short, and, of course, gutsy), probably by reading aloud stories from the book. Choose mostly light, fun, playful stories for this. In general, we don't want the event to start out with more than one "heavy" story because then folks tends to follow suit and tell only heavy stories during the open mike—and then everyone leaves a bit down; 3) last, the actual *Open Mike Time*, when folks (including your audience plants) who came with a story already prepared share them with the whole room, thereby motivating others to spontaneously share stories, too. With just those three components, you will have a great event!

However, you also have other activities you could do, such as: *Celebrity Readings*, when well-known, crowd-drawing locals tell stories from their own lives or read from the book; the *Golden Ovaries Award Ceremony*, when community-based women and girls who have acted boldly are honored and then tell their specific act of brazenness to the audience -- or even better, you can be more egalitarian and give a chocolate egg wrapped in gold foil (a Golden Ovary) to *everyone* who shares a story; the *Pair and Share Icebreaker* (also known as the *Greater Audience Involvement* exercise), when all who attend have a chance to share their stories in a pair and then later, if they want, with the whole room. The exercise is a fun way to give everyone at the event the opportunity to share a story, even if it is not to the whole room. It is also a good way help bring shy people out and build their self-esteem.

No matter how you proceed with your open mike, the clapping, cheering, supportive yelps and congratulatory pats on the back at the end of every story will encourage each woman and girl to keep being gutsy, keep taking risks in her day-to-day life. And when the electrified crowd finally dances its way out the door, you can be sure they'll know that being *Women With Ovaries* enhances their own lives and serves as a fine example to others of what a woman can be.

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At the Event Itself: *Details*

What follows below are the detailed descriptions of the above-mentioned activities. Not all of these have to happen at your open mike. Pick the ones you think will work best for your community. Adolescents may want something different than beautifully aging crones. Again, a bare bones open mike would consist of simply three components, the *Introduction*, *Model the Storytelling Style*, and the actual *Open Mike Time*; and with just those three activities, participants will leave uplifted and excited. Enjoy!

Introduction

The facilitator of the evening, the Mistress of Ceremonies (if you're lucky, this MC will be the local leader/celebrity you invited weeks or months earlier), welcomes everyone, goes over the evening's agenda, and if it is a fundraiser, explains whom the recipients are. She introduces the idea behind the open mike and why it is important for women and girls to share their "bold, gutsy, brazen, outrageous, courageous" acts (these words best describe what "having ovaries" is about). The MC does this by sharing her own thoughts and/or reading aloud some or all of the short preface to the book called **Rivka's Note To All Readers** (also found on the website's About the Book section, and in Appendix B below) or excerpts from the book's introduction, like the section called "What Is the Main Point of This Book." This sets an inspirational *You-go-girl* tone and gives context to the story-telling that follows. And it links your event to the book. Yippee!!

Modeling the Storytelling Style

Find some way to model the storytelling style. The style is short—we suggest 3 minutes max per story, to the point, and, of course, gutsy, audacious or courageous. Consider any of these options for modeling the style: 1) a contributor to the book is present and reads her story; 2) pre-selected local actors read pre-selected stories from the book (stories you gave them at least a week in advance so they can rehearse/practice); 3) any volunteers, pre-selected or found on the spot, read one or two stories from the book; 4) everyday women and girls share their own (not from the book) stories of brazenness; 5) the MC or celebrities present give examples from *their* lives. This last one could double as the *Celebrity Reading* activity (see below). Note: To date, we have found that having local actors read the stories works great. We recommend you try it! (Try using the "Call for Actors" email notice in Appendix C.)

Whatever stories you use to model the storytelling style, we suggest that they should be cleared *beforehand* by the event organizer to make sure they are appropriate and best match the expected audience. For example, read a teen's story if the audience will be mostly teens and don't read a real sexual story if there are elementary school kids present. The model stories should vary widely in topic, tone, and culture (cultural diversity is best), but be consistent in style: brief, bold and to the point. Please choose short, mostly light, fun, playful stories. We don't want the event to start out with more than one serious, "heavy" story because then for some reason *everyone* will tell heavy stories during the open mike—and they may all leave feeling down. Similarly, if, at the beginning of the event, you model the storytelling with mostly stories about standing up to violence against women, those will be the stories women will share during the open mike. If you model the storytelling with a single tale of a woman's wild, outdoor adventure, most of the open mike stories that follow will be about that! It is a strange mirroring phenomenon we don't fully understand, but

we've witnessed it enough to know that it happens. So be sure to include *diverse* stories and experiences for the *Modeling the Storytelling Style* part of the open mike.

Celebrity Readings

If celebrities or community leaders attend, at some point during the first half of the event have them share stories from their own lives (if one is MCing she may have already done this), or have them read sample stories from the book (chosen by them but, if possible, cleared in advance by you). It is possible these celeb stories can also serve to *Model the Storytelling Style* (see above). If no celebs attend, proceed to the next activity.

Golden Ovaries Award

If you decide to also use the event as a time to honor specific local women and girls who have acted boldly, have each of the honorees (who would have been nominated and chosen in advance somehow, perhaps by you or members of the community) come up to the mike, accept their "Golden Ovary Award," and share their specific act of brazenness with the crowd. (Where will you get such an award? Make one yourself out of paper and glitter. Or better yet, buy something egg shaped and spray paint it gold!)

Or be more egalitarian and give a chocolate egg (or chocolate anything that is roundish) wrapped in gold foil to *everybody* who shares as story: *Golden Ovary awards for all!* Again, ask your local confectioner if s/he will donate some chocolate eggs s/he hand-makes just for your event. Many have happily agreed. Or buy anything chocolate and round and somehow make it gold.

"Pair and Share" (also known as the Greater Audience Involvement exercise)

You could skip this section and happily go straight to the *Open Mike Time* below. On the other hand, if you want more audience involvement than a typical open mike may offer, consider doing this exercise instead. It also almost guarantees more stories will be shared at your event.

Ask everyone to turn to one person (or two people) sitting nearby. Once the whole room has formed pairs or small groups, tell them they have 1-2 minutes per person to share with their group/pair as many true stories of all the things they have ever done that *took ovaries*—maybe offer this list of synonyms again: "bold, gutsy, brazen, outrageous, audacious or courageous." After the pairs or small groups are done, the MC can ask the whole room, "Who has a story to tell? Who in your pair or group told a story that should be shared?"

Now, after what was essentially a small-group warm-up session, women and girls from the audience can stand up and share with the larger room either the stories they just practiced telling, or brand new ones. This is the open mike segment of your event. The MC can explain that folks are also encouraged to relay the stories they just heard *others* share in their small group, too—but *only if they first get the original storyteller's permission, of course*. The MC can also playfully state, "And if the person relaying your story doesn't happen to be getting the facts right, just start flapping your arms, and interrupt by saying, 'Actually, it really went like *this*...'"

This exercise is good for a few reasons. First, it allows *everyone* who came an opportunity to share a story, even if only in a pair or small group. Second, if someone is shy about telling her story to the whole room, and likely many will be, another person can tell it for her. This way the shy storyteller's gutsy act will not simply end with the act itself, it will live on, serving as an inspiration for other women. Third, for the timid storyteller, just hearing her story publicly told and appreciated is an empowering, affirming experience that will help her to be bold again in the future. Fourth, there is a chance, and again, it should be encouraged, that the shy storyteller will indeed wave her arms about and interrupt the person relaying her story with a: "No, no, it actually went like *this*..." Before she knows it she will be stepping through fear and nervousness to share her own story with the larger room. This is a good thing for the shy girl's own self-esteem and a great

thing for others in the audience to witness. At the end of each story, encourage clapping and cheering, yipping and hollering.

Note: Using this above technique of audience involvement will likely render irrelevant any sign up sheet you might have had at the door.

Open Mike Time

If you did not choose to do the *Pair and Share* activity above, now is the time for women and girls (and men and boys) who eagerly came with a story already prepared, or at least partially-prepared, to share their stories with the whole room. Now is the time for those who did not even know they had a story to share to suddenly be moved to contribute. Now comes the best part of the night! Fun *and* inspirational.

You have already led up to this activity by doing at least the *Introduction* and likely the *Model the Storytelling Style* component. Now remind the audience that the stories must be true and not more than 3 minutes -- and that you will gently interrupt if they go on too long.

If the audience is shy, the MC might remind them: 1) whereas they might feel nervous about sharing in front of a group, they can take this opportunity in this supportive environment to walk through fear and experience doing something that "takes ovaries;" and 2) contrary to what that little voice in their head might be saying, *there are no stupid stories*.

You can follow a sign-up sheet you had at the door, or just let folks spontaneously stand and tell a story when ready. You could also alternate back and forth between those who signed-up and those who feel spontaneously moved to share. They can stand at the mike, pass the mike around, or just bellow from their seats loud enough for all to hear. However you proceed, encourage clapping, cheering, supportive yelps, and congratulatory pats on the back at the end of each story.

Audience plants: Again, it is strongly suggested that you acquire ahead of time a number of audience plants. Friends, friends of friends, strangers, whoever. Find 2-3 people in advance of the event who will be ready to jump up and share stories as soon as you say, "Okay, so now who has a story they want to tell?" This helps, especially if the audience is shy. It draws them out, inspires them! (Ask your audience plants what their stories are in advance. If more than one is serious or "heavy" maybe ask them to come up with another story.)

Lastly, if your open mike is crawling, not dancing, because even after much encouragement from the MC, even after audience plants tell their stories, no one wants to share a story, don't panic. This is why you selected a few extra "back up" stories to read from the book. Read them now -- or end the event.

Inspirational Wrap Up and Taking the Attitude Home

The whole event should not go on for more than two hours—unless everyone is really digging it. In the end, it is better to leave them wanting more, not feeling like it went on too long. If the last story told was not "up" enough, have a pre-selected volunteer share a pre-selected up-beat story from her life or from the book. If there isn't time for a whole story, give a short synopsis. Just make sure the night ends on an up note.

Thank everyone for coming. The MC can remind them to keep being gutsy, audacious and bold in their everyday lives, both because it will enhance their own lives—we develop confidence and experience by taking risks and living through them—and because it will be an active and needed role model for other females of all ages. *Double check that someone passed out the "Summary Of All Things Ovarian" flyers and passed around the Ovaries mailing list sign up sheet from Appendix E. This will help keep our movement going.*

If you have the book for sale (thank you!), tell folks they can take this inspirational feeling home with them in the form of a small, light-weight paperback for only \$13. Have an assistant or bookstore employee sell copies and have a contributor to the book (if one came) sign them. Then put that toe-tapping music back on so people can dance their way out the door.

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Post-Event "Check-in With Us" Checklist (Report Back Form) (1 page)

REPORT BACK FORM (PARTS I & II)

It is your obligation to follow up with us within two weeks after your event. Please send us the below info via email and snailmail.

PART I: SEND US AN EMAIL "REPORT BACK"

Please send us via email an informal "report back" on your *That Takes Ovaries* event. Send to <rivka@thattakesovaries.org>. Nothing huge, just a paragraph or a page. We save these "report backs" as a record of our *Ovaries* work in the world. So, tell us how your open mike or play went. Pleeese do not answer each question bullet style. Rather, write a flowing paragraph and include all the info in it, so we can post it on our website for all to see. (We'll take out your name and contact info before posting it on the website, unless you tell us it is okay to include that info.)

Your full name, contact info (snail and email address, phone), the organization/university, city, state, country where you did your event, and the date of your event?

What did you do -- an open mike or play, or both? For how many nights?

How many folks came?

Did you raise any money? If so, tell us the total raised.

And for what causes?

Did you get any press attention?

Important: What is the online web link to the press you got?

Did you videotape or take photos of your event?

Did you have people sign the video/photo release form?

Did you have a bookstore there, and if so, how many *Ovaries* books sold?

If you held an open mike, how many folks shared stories and what were some of the stories shared? (We love hearing about stories shared!)

Did you give Golden Ovaries to the storytellers? If so, what did you use for Golden Ovaries?

Did anything striking or unusual happen? In general, what are any highlights that stand out from your event?

If you did the play: If, and only if, you changed the original script (which you would only have done with our prior permission), send us via email attachment a copy of the final script you used.

Did you pass around an *Ovaries* mailing list sign up sheet? If so, send us an email with the info you collected. Send it via snailmail only if no one in your group can type it into an email to send us electronically.

Will you do another *Ovaries* event next year (the open mike, the play or both)?

We may post some or all of your Report Back on the *Ovaries* website. Do you want your name and email address included at the bottom? If so, tell us what it is.

PART II: SEND US THESE THINGS VIA SNAILMAIL (Normal postal mail)

Please send us your event program, flyers, posters, etc. If you can't send originals send good, high quality copies.

Send any press coverage you received (originals best). (If the press also was on line, please send us the email link.)

Send any videotape or photos you took.

Send any video/photo release forms you had folks sign.

If you were not able to send it via email (which we hope you can do), send us the hard copy originals of the *Ovaries* mailing list sign up sheet you passed around.

Lastly, send any money you owe us, such as the Registration Fee for open mikes (if you did not send it already), royalties for the play and the percentage of all monies raised (10-15% for both open mikes and the play). All money helps our nonprofit organization spread the ovarian love and the message of women's empowerment, and we also help other women's groups to raise money for themselves so that they can keep

doing the good work they do for women and girls. Make checks out to THAT TAKES OVARIES and send to the address below. If you need our nonprofit Federal ID number, email us and ask <info@thattakesovaries.org>.

THAT TAKES OVARIES

PO Box 750061

Arlington, MA 02475 USA

www.ThatTakesOvaries.org

Rivka@thattakesovaries.org // Ph. 781-674-2244 (fax same #; call first)

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FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION, SEX TRAFFICKING, AND *OVARIES* FUNDRAISERS

Rivka-the-book-editor sez: It is my hope that the *That Takes Ovaries* Open Mikes that you organize (especially the "bigger, public" ones) will be both consciousness-raisers and fundraisers, with a percentage of the money raised going to local girls' groups and a percentage going to the organization Equality Now (www.equalitynow.org) for their work to stop female genital mutilation (FGM) and the equally horrible but separate atrocity of sexual enslavement. (For general info on *Ovaries* fundraising see above section called "Fundraiser, too!")

FGM is one of the most atrocious human rights abuses perpetrated against girls around the globe. To date, 130 million females from Africa to Europe and the United States have been mutilated and suffer permanent disabilities from the barbaric act. An unknown number die each year during and after the procedure. Equality Now works with community-based leaders and grassroots groups worldwide to promote a better understanding of FGM and effective strategies for its eradication

This is how Fauziya Kassindja, who managed to escape FGM, describes it in her story in *That Takes Ovaries*

A harmful traditional practice among some African, Asian, and Middle Eastern cultures, female genital mutilation (FGM) is performed on about two million infants, girls, and women each year. That's more than five thousand a day. Depending on the local custom, you will either "only" have your clitoris cut off, or you will lose the whole thing, including labia minora and majora. If it is the latter, you are sewn up, leaving a small hole, hardly big enough to allow pee and menstrual blood to squeeze out. Then, with each baby you birth, you are recut and re sewn anew. The rationale behind FGM is complex: It is tradition; it is thought to protect virginity and prevent promiscuity; uncircumcised females are considered dirty; girls must be cut as a requirement for marriage; and circumcised girls and women are deemed more sexually desirable.

The practice of FGM subjects women to a number of long-term physical and psychological problems. Often carried out without anesthesia and with unsterilized razors or knives, it is a sometimes deadly practice. My other aunt died from it, as do many girls every year, either from hemorrhaging or infection.

I wanted nothing to do with either the [forced] marriage or the so-called circumcision, so with the help of my sister, and my mother from afar, I fled that very day.

Fauziya left her home, her family, her country to escape the brutality of FGM. Today, in part because of her work publicizing the horrors of FGM, Fauziya's homeland of Togo, West Africa, has outlawed the practice. But it still goes on legally and illegally around the world. Equality Now is one of the leading organizations working to stop it.

They also work to end global sex trafficking of girls and women. Ruchira Gupta describes sexual slavery in India in her story in *That Takes Ovaries*

I came to learn that the sale of girls is no secret; it is all done in the open, like any business. There is the local procurer, an uncle or fellow villager, who buys the girl from her parents for twenty to thirty dollars. He'll collect three or four females, aged seven to thirty, bring them to a bigger town, collect another dozen girls from other rural areas, put them all in a truck, smuggle them over the Nepal-India border (where he'll pay off the border police), then sell them to the next middleman up the chain, in India. The new men take the girls to small boardinghouses. There they rape the girls, beat them, subjugate their spirits completely until they do whatever these men want. The men sometimes use ice to break in the premenstrual girls. Then the girls are taken to Bombay and sold to brothel madams for three thousand rupees apiece, about forty to fifty dollars.

Back in Bombay, I heard how the half-grown children are bonded sex slaves for the first five years, unpaid and forced to "service" twenty-five to thirty men a day: *raped* twenty-five to thirty times a

day! "Clients" stub out cigarettes on their young breasts and shove bottles up their vaginas. They are kept in five-by-seven-foot rooms, each crammed with about four miniature beds. The rooms have no walking space, just beds and curtains separating them. Windows are barred, entrances locked and guarded. A severe beating follows any attempt to flee. After five years, they are allowed to keep half their meager earnings. By then the madams have made sure that the girls have become addicted to drugs and alcohol and have had a baby, so they won't run. The girls, now with distorted, almost caricatured bodies, get trapped by disease and debt—they have to pay for water, bedding, and food. By age forty they are usually dead from AIDS.

I learned that this horror goes on around the globe, from Africa to Albania. Each year 4 million girls are sold by their impoverished parents, tricked with false promises of good jobs, or outright kidnapped. They are brought to big cities in their own country or sent abroad to rich Western nations. Fifty thousand are shipped to the United States each year.

Both Ruchira's and Fauziya's descriptions help to explain why *That Takes Ovaries* established a relationship with Equality Now and why I strongly suggest you send them a percentage of the money raised at any *Ovaries* Open Mikes.

Equality Now
P.O. Box 20646
Columbus Circle Station
New York, NY 10023
Phone: (212) 586-0906 // Fax: (212) 586-1611
Email: info@equalitynow.org
Website: www.equalitynow.org

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Not included in this document. Instead you can find a downloadable version of it at our website www.thattakesovaries.org -- or just email us at < info@thattakesovaries.org > and request we send it to you via email attachment. It is mandatory that you have a copy of it if you are organizing an <i>Ovaries</i> event -- and besides, you will find it very useful.	

For the That Takes Ovaries play/script, email <play@thattakesovaries.org>.

Lastly, if you want to use some of this below material for press releases or flyers or whatever, but don't want to re-type it all into your computer, just email us at <info@thattakesovaries.org>, request these Guidelines be sent to you and we'll send them via email attachment. Then, ta-da!, you can just "cut and paste" any text you wish into your computer -- no re-typing necessary.

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**APPENDIX A -- Registration Form to organize a *That Takes Ovaries* open mike
And, separately, the What, When, Where form (2 pages total)**

The first step in your Ovaries journey! (This registration also found on www.thattakesovaries.org.)

Registration Form to organize a *That Takes Ovaries* Open Mike

Email us at <register@thattakesovaries.org> with your *short* answers to these below questions if you want to register to organize a *That Takes Ovaries* open mike. We reserve the right to either approve (yay!) or deny your request to organize a "bigger, public" *Ovaries* event. (If you want to do the *Ovaries* play, we have a separate registration form for that. Just ask us to email it to you.)

12 Quick Registration Questions

1. How did you hear about *That Takes Ovaries*? And did you read -- and do you now agree to follow -- the *full*, not-just-summarized **Guidelines for Organizing an Ovaries Open Mike in Your Community** (found at <http://www.thattakesovaries.org/>)? They are flexible and if you need to adapt them further for your own community's needs, just ask.
2. What is your contact info? Name, address, email, phone. This contact info will not be sold or given to anyone but us *Ovaries* ladies.
3. Tell us about you: Who are you, what do you do, what identity groups or communities are you part of? (African American? Lesbian? Girls' groups? Women's organizations? Colleges? Anything.)
4. What are you thinking of doing? (An *Ovaries* reading? Open mike? The play?) (There is a separate registration form for the play. Just ask us and we'll send it to you.)
5. Do you have experience organizing events? Please explain. (P.S. First time organizers welcome.)
6. Will anyone be helping you? (Friends, colleagues, organizations, site managers?)
7. Ideas for a free/cheap site to hold this *Ovaries* event? Ideas for a bookstore join you to sell the book?
8. Potential date (or month) for the event?
9. Number of people you want to attend?
10. Considering asking local women and girls' groups to sponsor, help publicize and/or attend? If so, which?
11. Planning on making this a fundraiser? If so, for whom? (Info on fundraisers found in the **Fund-raisers** section at <http://www.thattakesovaries.org/>) In a sense, your event will also be a fundraiser for *That Takes Ovaries*, as we request both a \$25 registration fee and 10-15% of the door (i.e. any money you raise from your open mike event). This all goes back to the *That Takes Ovaries* organization to help facilitate our work around the globe. Without this, our organization could not exist. (Only if these fees absolutely prevent you from doing an *Ovaries* event, will we consider lowering or waiving them. But first we will ask you to brainstorm ways you can raise this money yourself.) Contact us for info on where to send the money for *That Takes Ovaries*
12. Trying for media coverage? If so, who/what?

Keep a copy of your answers for yourself, then send us a copy to: <register@thattakesovaries.org>. Please be patient. It may take us a while to respond with an approval or denial of your request.

PRIVACY NOTICE FOR EVERYONE TO READ: *That Takes Ovaries* respects your right to privacy and understands that visitors to the *That Takes Ovaries* website need to be in control of their personal information. For this reason, we only ask you to give us information about you when you register to organize an open mike. We will use the registration information you provide us only in our communication with you. We will NOT share the information with any third parties (folks not working on *Ovaries* activities).

SPECIAL NOTICE TO YOUNG PEOPLE AND CHILDREN: If you are age 13 and under you will need an adult to work on the open mike with you. But don't let that stop you! Contact us about this at register@thattakesovaries.org. DETAILS: Before giving any personal or registration information to us or to anyone on the Internet, please ask your parents for permission. We cannot accept information from anyone 13 years of age or younger without prior written consent from a parent or guardian. We encourage parents to actively participate in their children's use of the Internet and *That Takes Ovaries* activities.

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WHAT, WHEN, WHERE FORM

First, wait for us to approve your registration to do your event. Then after we say "yes," and when you get a date and a site secured for your event, please fill out this below *What, When, Where* form and send it to us. Like your registration, *this is a requirement*. It both helps us and it lists your event on the *Ovaries* website for all to see (so do not include your phone number unless you want the world to see it!). Fill in the info and send to the Ovaries staffer who sent it to you (hit "reply" and email it to her) -- or if you can't figure out who that is, send it to <Rivka@thattakesovaries.org>.

NAME OF YOUR COUNTRY AND STATE/PROVINCE/CITY GOES HERE

WHAT: *That Takes Ovaries* The Play and Open Mike and Fundraiser (only list the events you actually plan to do) (if it is not a fundraiser, don't write that)

WHEN: Day of the week, Date, Time AM/PM, year (important to add the year!)

WHERE: Name of venue and address. Wheelchair accessible (make sure it is!). Add city and state and if on campus, add name of campus.

DIRECTIONS: For those coming by car.

PUBLIC TRANSIT: For those coming by foot.

WHO: Everyone invited, all genders and ages. (P.S. If this event is not open to the public, let's not post it on the *Ovaries* website)

COST: Suggested donation of \$ (whatever you decide) and up, welcome. Benefit for (name the organizations and what they do, for example, "helps survivors of rape and domestic violence"). (If you choose to, you can also write: "No one turned away for lack of funds.")

CONTACT: Local contact: Your email address (include your phone only if you want it on the *Ovaries* website where anyone in the world can see it)

International *Ovaries* contact: Rivka <rivka@thattakesovaries.org>

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APPENDIX B -- Rivka's NOTE TO ALL READERS (consider reading some or all of this aloud at your open mike) (2 pages)

Rivka's *NOTE TO ALL READERS*

Girls are born self-assured and bold.

It is not a chromosomal thing that makes many girls shy about speaking up in class, hesitant to dive into competitive sports, or tolerant of street harassment. It's not due to genetic makeup that women are less likely to run for political office, climb the corporate ladder, or attain equality—whether equal pay on the job or equal attention in the bedroom. It's not nature; it's nurture. Internalized social messages and conditioning by a sexist, often violent society are what contributes to any female suppressing her naturally confident, daring self and replacing it with less risk-taking, less space-taking behavior.

Well, it's time to deprogram.

It's time to reject all that keeps a woman quiet or unsure. Many girls are conditioned to downplay their abilities or needs so that no one else's feathers get ruffled. Most women are taught not to push for or promote their own self-interests. This antiquated behavior has kept women back.

What femininity needs is a boost of bravado.

We perk up and take note when we hear about acts of female adventure and courage. They are stories we grab onto and delight in with others ("*Hey, did you hear about the woman who...!*"). We fix on these magnetic mental images and they become models of how we, too, can be in our lives ("*If she can do it, so can I!*"). So what we need are role models galore—down and dirty role models. They show what is possible. They show how to counteract the subtle and overt messages telling us to be "good girls" even when doing so isn't in our best interest.

Fortunately, role models abound. They are in every racial, cultural, and socioeconomic group, and in girls and women of every age, sexual orientation, ability, and disability. They are everywhere, because they are us. Many girls believe in their strength in spite of cultural conditioning. Women find ways to skirt around and overcome efforts to program them. Examples of resistance, bravery, and breaking-the-mold behavior can be found in every female.

If courage creates ripples, get ready to be hit by a wave.

That Takes Ovaries is a celebration of ourselves—girls and women just like you and me, speaking in our own words about our own actions. This is a celebration of everyday feisty females, those who haven't made the history books or the cover of *Time* magazine but who *have* taken on the tired, false stereotype of the passive female. Their gutsy acts spur us to be risk-takers and heroines in our day-to-day lives. Then we, creating ripples ourselves, inspire them in return with our own daring deeds.

That takes balls are words of praise reserved for a man who has done something bold: a guy we might respect for his ability to push the boundaries or break the rules, a boy with chutzpah. Well, *move over, gentlemen, it's time for the ladies!*

Some women need *ovaries* simply to survive in this harsh world. Others need them in order to flourish. But wherever an individual may fall on that spectrum, it is almost certain she will need to be a *Woman of Ovaries* if she wants to right wrongs, fight the injustices that still plague our communities, and gain her own freedom. Freedom, after all, isn't simply about rejecting conditioning; in the end, it's about dismantling the sexist institutions that promote the conditioning. We gotta be risk-takers to do that.

Of course *all* stories are welcome here, whether they are about hell-raising social change or hell-raising fun. Either act can be a life-altering experience if a girl is tossing aside the rules of how a female is "supposed" to behave.

Although some of the *ovarian* acts described here may seem too risky to you (and, in retrospect, they may seem that way to some of the people who did them), remember that the deeds were originally done with a sassy sense of valor and adventure. Of course some were also done out of panic and blind instinct, and some yielded unsuccessful results. The aim is not to showcase perfect women doing perfect, selfless acts—though we'll witness some of those here, too. The goal is to showcase *real* women. Sometimes we make smart, calculated decisions; sometimes we take foolhardy chances. Either way, *that takes Ovaries*

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APPENDIX C -- Call for Actors and Audience Plants for Your Open Mike (2 pages)

CALL FOR ACTORS FOR THAT TAKES OVARIES OPEN MIKE

Dear Ovaries event organizer,

Looking for actors to read at your ovaries event? If you want, use this ad. Post it on local actor email listservs in your area to help you find a team of 3-5 multicultural actors/readers for the start of your open mike. To make the ad specific for your event, put in your event's info, including location, date, contact info and your fundraiser beneficiary, if it is a fundraiser. This ad also asks for an MC, so keep that part or take it out, depending on if you want to find an MC or not. Just use this as a model/template, or make up your own call for actors. -- Rivka

Subject: Call for Women Actors for THAT TAKES OVARIES one night reading

**Call for women actors in [your city]:
THAT TAKES OVARIES [your city] [date of your event, including year]**

Seeking 3-5 women actors, especially women of color, and 1 experienced event MC, for a one night pro bono reading of stories from the book, THAT TAKES OVARIES: Bold Females and Their Brazen Acts (<http://www.thattakesovaries.org>). [IF IT IS A FUNDRAISER, SAY WHAT ORGANIZATION AND WHAT THEY DO, IN ONE SHORT LINE, like: This is a fundraiser for...]. After the audience hears the actors read stories from the book, they'll then share their own real-life gutsy, outrageous and/or courageous stories during the open mike time (stories 3 min. max). If you are an actress or a dramatically inclined woman or experienced event MC interested in doing this pro bono reading just before we start the open mike, please **CONTACT: [ADD YOUR NAME AND EMAIL -- ONLY ADD YOUR PHONE NUMBER IF YOU WANT THIS ALL OVER THE WEB]**. And if you simply want to join us in the audience for the open mike, please do!

Details

WHAT: *That Takes Ovaries* Open Mike and Fundraiser (if it is not a fundraiser, don't write that)

WHEN: Day of the week, Date, Time AM/PM, year (important to add the year!)

WHERE: Name of venue and address. Wheelchair accessible (make sure it is!). Add city and state and if on campus, add name of campus.

WHO: Everyone invited, all genders and ages.

COST: Suggested donation of \$ (whatever you decide) and up, welcome. Benefit for (name the organizations and what they do, for example, "helps survivors of rape and domestic violence"). (If you choose to, you can also write: "No one turned away for lack of funds.")

CONTACT: Local contact: Your email address (include your phone only if you want it on the *Ovaries* website)

International Ovaries contact: Rivka <rivka@thattakesovaries.org>

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CALL FOR AUDIENCE PLANTS FOR THAT TAKES OVARIES OPEN MIKE

Dear Ovaries event organizer,

Spread this around to friends (and others?) via email if you are looking for audience plants for your event. Plants will help you get your open mikes started on the right foot. Try to screen the stories, so that fun and upbeat stories are the first ones shared at your event. To make the ad specific for your event, put in your event's info, including location, date, contact info and your fundraiser beneficiary, if it is a fundraiser. Use this as a model/template, or make up your own "call for audience plants." -- Rivka

Subject: Call for Audience Plants for That Takes Ovaries Open Mike

**Call for audience plants in [your city]:
THAT TAKES OVARIES [your city] [date of your event, including year]**

Come hear stories read from the book *That Takes Ovaries*, then during the Open Mike time share your own stories about being a brazen babe. The book is a collection of real-life stories from women and girls, it is filled with multi-culti, short, playful, sassy, often touching, true tales of kickin' estrogen-powered deeds. **HEY, spontaneous stories welcome the night of the event, but we are also looking for audience plants --** or to put it in a nicer way, folks who will commit *now* (before the night of this event) to sharing their own true stories of boldness during the open mike part of this event. Having folks slated ahead of time to speak up at the start of an open mike just helps get the ball (ovary!) rolling. Interested? Contact us. Stories should be gutsy and true, 3 minutes max. (Guys, too: Come proudly brag about the ovaries in your life -- your mothers, sisters, and daughters.)

Interested? Contact: [YOUR NAME, EMAIL AND PHONE, but only if you want yr phone number all over the web].

And if you simply want to join us in the audience for the open mike, please do!

Details

WHAT: *That Takes Ovaries* Open Mike and Fundraiser (if it is not a fundraiser, don't write that)

WHEN: Day of the week, Date, Time AM/PM, year (important to add the year!)

WHERE: Name of venue and address. Wheelchair accessible (make sure it is!). Add city and state and if on campus, add name of campus.

WHO: Everyone invited, all genders and ages.

COST: Suggested donation of \$ (whatever you decide) and up, welcome. Benefit for (name the organizations and what they do, for example, "helps survivors of rape and domestic violence"). (If you choose to, you can also write: "No one turned away for lack of funds.")

CONTACT: Local contact: Your email address (include your phone only if you want it on the *Ovaries* website)

International Ovaries contact: Rivka <rivka@thattakesovaries.org>

FOR MORE INFO ON THAT TAKES OVARIES: <http://www.thattakesovaries.org>

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APPENDIX D -- Sample Hardcopy and Electronic Press Release/Flyer for your event (3 pages) (For more PR material, see the *Ovaries* Publicity Packet found on www.ThatTakesOvaries.org)

For Immediate Release

PRESS RELEASE/FLYER: [YR CITY'S NAME HERE] Area Open Mike

Local Contact: (Your name, phone and email here)

International Contact: Rivka Solomon <rivka@thattakesovaries.org> // 781-674-2244

"Salutes 'ballsy' acts by bold women -- the anatomically correct way."
-- Glamour magazine

THAT TAKES OVARIES®

Open Mike and Fundraiser [IF IT IS A FUNDRAISER]

[DATE/TIME/YEAR/CITY: Tues, Aug. 27, 12:30-2:30 pm, 2004, Boston, MA]

*Come hear and share stories about any time you were gutsy, courageous, wild and outrageous. **THAT TAKES OVARIES** a collection of real-life stories from women & girls about the gutsy, outrageous, courageous things they have done. Multicultural, fun, sassy, true tales of estrogen-powered deeds, from playful to political. After, share stories about times *you or the women in your life* acted boldly. Everyone who speaks gets a chocolate egg wrapped in gold foil -- a Golden Ovary.*

WHAT: *That Takes Ovaries* Book Reading and Open Mike and Fundraiser (or whatever you are doing)

WHEN: Day, date, time, year

WHERE: (Venue/site name and address) Wheelchair accessible.

WHO: Everyone invited, all ages and genders. Bring yr own true stories about being a brazen babe or about gutsy gals you know (3 min. max)! Guys: share stories about the ovaries in yr lives.

CONTACT: *Venue/site Coordinator* (His/her name and phone and email)

Ovaries Coordinator (Your name, phone and email)

COST: (If any, and if it is a fundraiser, say who benefits). Suggested donations fine.

CONTRIBUTORS PRESENT: (list if any, or list big names if any are coming)

[If Rivka and/or Bobbi are attending your event, you should include that, such as:] Rivka is author of the book and co-playwright of the play, *That Takes Ovaries: Bold Females and Their Brazen Acts*. Her nonprofit organization (of the same name) celebrates gutsy women around the globe, *because courage is contagious*. Bobbi is co-playwright of the play and Artistic Director in Residence for the organization. They will be speaking and signing books at this event.

This event is coupled with a grassroots movement for empowerment: Because women and girls everywhere have inspiring stories to tell, any woman any where can host a *That Takes Ovaries* open mike in her community. **For more info: www.ThatTakesOvaries.org**

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SAMPLE E-FLYERS (ELECTRONIC FLYER) OR E-PRESS RELEASE FOR A YOUR EVENT
(send top one to media, bottom one to friends)

Subject Line: Press Release for That Takes Ovaries Open Mike, [ADD DATE OF EVENT HERE]

Hi [ADD REPORTER'S NAME HERE],

I'm writing you to see if you'd like to cover an international open mike movement that grew out of a book, both called **THAT TAKES OVARIES: BOLD FEMALES AND THEIR BRAZEN ACTS**. At the open mikes, women and girls gather together to share true stories about times **they** were gutsy and courageous. Guys join us to brag about the ovaries in their lives -- their mothers, sisters, daughters. Everyone who shares a story get a chocolate egg wrapped in gold foil -- a Golden Ovary award. Many of our open mikes are fundraisers for local women's and girls' causes. In this respect, *That Takes Ovaries* offers a fun and empowering fundraising tool that women's and girls' organizations can use to raise money for themselves, so that they, in turn, may continue their own good work for women. The open mikes have been covered by Glamour and Jane magazines, San Francisco Chronicle, Boston Globe and many others. Would you be interested in covering our local That Takes Ovaries open mike? Or would you know anyone at your paper who might be? It should be an ovarianly good time.

[ADD YR NAME HERE]
[PHONE AND EMAIL]

Press Release/Flyer

Local Contact: Your name, phone and email

International Contact: Rivka Solomon, ph 781-674-2244, rivka@thattakesovaries.org

THAT TAKES OVARIES

OPEN MIKE AND FUNDRAISER

VENUE ADDRESS, CITY, DAY OF THE WEEK, DATE, TIME, YEAR

Everyone invited!

BOLD WOMEN* *GUTSY GIRLS* *BRAZEN BABES

*Come hear and share stories about any time you were gutsy, courageous, wild and outrageous. **THAT TAKES OVARIES** a collection of real-life stories from women & girls about the gutsy, outrageous, courageous things they have done. Multicultural, fun, sassy, true tales of estrogen-powered deeds, from playful to political. After, share stories about times *you or the women in your life* acted boldly. Everyone who speaks gets a chocolate egg wrapped in gold foil -- a Golden Ovary.*

WHAT: *That Takes Ovaries* Open Mike and Fundraiser (or whatever you are doing)

WHEN: Day, date, time, year

WHERE: (Venue/site name and address) Wheelchair accessible.

WHO: Everyone invited, all ages and genders. Bring yr own true stories about being a brazen babe or about gutsy gals you know (3 min. max)! Guys: share stories about the ovaries in yr lives.

CONTACT: *Venue/site Coordinator* (His/her name and phone and email)

Ovaries Coordinator (Your name, phone and email)

COST: (If any, and if it is a fundraiser, say who benefits and what kind of work they do. Suggested donations fine. Can also put "No one turned away for lack of funds" if you want.)

CONTRIBUTORS PRESENT: (list if any, or list big names if any are coming)

[If Rivka and/or Bobbi are attending your event, you should include that, such as:] Rivka is author of the book and playwright of the play, *That Takes Ovaries: Bold Females and Their Brazen Acts*. Her nonprofit organization (of the

same name) celebrates gutsy women around the globe, *because courage is contagious*. Bobbi is co-playwright of the play and Artistic Director in Residence for the organization. They will be speaking and signing books at this event.

This event is coupled with an international grassroots movement for empowerment: Because women and girls everywhere have inspiring stories to tell, any woman any where can host a *That Takes Ovaries* open mike in her community. Details on the *Ovaries* website <http://www.thattakesovaries.org/>

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Sample e-flyer you can send friends 1 week before the event, and on the day of the event

...please forward to all yr [your city] pals....

BOLD WOMEN* *GUTSY GIRLS* *BRAZEN BABES

THAT TAKES OVARIES

Open Mike and Fundraiser

Add city, date and time (example: Brookline MA Library, Nov 14, 2004, 7 pm)

Everyone invited -- and it's free!

*Come hear and share stories about any time you were gutsy, courageous, wild and outrageous. **THAT TAKES OVARIES** a collection of real-life stories from women & girls about the gutsy, outrageous, courageous things they have done. Multicultural, fun, sassy, true tales of estrogen-powered deeds, from playful to political. After, share stories about times *you or the women in your life* acted boldly. Everyone who speaks gets a chocolate egg wrapped in gold foil -- a Golden Ovary.*

CONTACT: *Venue/site Coordinator* (His/her name and phone and email)

Ovaries Coordinator (Your name, phone and email)

FOR MORE INFO: www.ThatTakesOvaries.org

[If Rivka and/or Bobbi are attending your event, you should include that, such as:] Rivka is author of the book and co-playwright of the play, *That Takes Ovaries: Bold Females and Their Brazen Acts*. Her nonprofit organization (of the same name) celebrates gutsy women around the globe, *because courage is contagious*. Bobbi is co-playwright of the play and Artistic Director in Residence for the organization. They will be speaking and signing books at this event.

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APPENDIX E -- Things to distribute at your event: "Summary of All Things Ovarian" Flyer, Mailing List Sign-up Sheet and Video Release Forms (6 pages)

Flyer to be copied on hot pink paper. Place one on each chair before your audience arrives.

THAT TAKES OVARIES

Celebrating gutsy women around the globe -- because courage is contagious

"If you obey all the rules, you miss all the fun." Katharine Hepburn

"Well-behaved women rarely make history." Laurel Thatcher Ulrich

SUMMARY OF ALL THINGS OVARIAN

A book, play, open mike movement & organizing tool for women & girls' empowerment

THE BOOK: *THAT TAKES OVARIES!: BOLD FEMALES AND THEIR BRAZEN ACTS* (Three Rivers/Random House; China, Yilin Press) is an exciting collection of real-life stories from women and girls about the gutsy, outrageous, courageous things they have done. The book is jam-packed with 64 multicultural, fun, sassy, touching true tales of estrogen-powered deeds that range from playful to political, including women fighting for their human rights. The book is coupled with an open mike movement for women and girls' empowerment.

THE OPEN MIKES, FUNDRAISING FOR WOMEN'S CAUSES & PROMOTING ACTIVISM: *That Takes Ovaries* is a unique initiative (and a nonprofit organization) that mixes the arts with activism for women and girls' empowerment. Since 2002, hundreds of *That Takes Ovaries* open mikes have been held around the globe, either led by Rivka, Bobbi (co-playwrights of the play) or Mira (our India coordinator), or organized and led by local women in the community -- like you! At an *Ovaries* open mike, gutsy gals share stories about times they acted boldly. Guys brag about the ovaries in their lives -- their mothers, sisters, daughters. Everyone who shares gets a chocolate egg wrapped in gold foil -- a Golden Ovary award. **Many events are fundraisers** for local girls' groups and groups working to end human rights abuses against girls. *That Takes Ovaries* offers a fun and empowering community relations event or fundraising tool that any individual or women's organization can use to raise community awareness or money for themselves, so that they, in turn, may continue their own good work for women. Those interested in organizing a *That Takes Ovaries* open mike can easily do it, either as a stand-alone event or as an exciting audience-participatory component to an already scheduled meeting. First time organizers welcome: **Learn to be an activist for women's voices and causes!** Open mike Guidelines and Registration (registration is required) are found at thattakesovaries.org.

THE PLAY: Our play has a powerful message *and* can use rotating celebrity actors to help draw in crowds and obtain press coverage. Full productions and staged readings (often including open mikes with the audience after the performance) have been done in theaters and on university campuses around North America, including in California, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, New York City, Toronto, Washington DC, Calcutta, India. (We are currently seeking interested producers, theaters, celebrity and community-based actors in all areas.)

PRESS COVERAGE: We have generated over 200 press articles and interviews, including *Glamour* and *Jane* magazines, the *Washington Post*, *Boston Globe*, *Chicago Tribune*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Detroit Free Press*, *NY Daily News*, *Times of India* and *Telegraph of India*. We were a **Boston Globe bestseller**.

INVITING US TO YOUR COMMUNITY: Rivka, Bobbi and Mira are available for speaking and leading open mike events. We offer a talk/workshop titled "That Takes Ovaries: Leading a Bold Life," geared towards women but open to all genders; an exciting reading of women's true stories of boldness and courage; and the highpoint of the event, a fun, audience-participatory *That Takes Ovaries* open mike. To invite any of our speakers to your community, contact <Info@ThatTakesOvaries.org>.

At www.thattakesovaries.org

- * **Buy the book (also available at bookstores) ***
- * **Find scheduled *Ovaries* events in your area ***
- * **Register to hold an *Ovaries* Open Mike or Play ***
- * **Invite us to speak in your community ***

Event organizer: *Print & circulate a few times during the event, then return to That Takes Ovaries*

That Takes Ovaries

Mailing list sign up sheet

Yes, I want to learn more about the *Ovaries* book, play and open mike movement for women and girls' empowerment. Please write clearly.

Name Address Email Phone

Return to: If possible, type these names and addresses into yr computer and email them to us at <Info@thattakesovaries.org>. If not possible, please snail-mail to THAT TAKES OVARIES, PO Box 750061, Arlington, MA 02475 USA

Video and Photo Release Forms (4 pages total)

We strongly encourage you to videotape & photograph yr event. The next 4 pages are for those who do.

Instructions for the Permission/Release Forms for *That Takes Ovaries* Event Organizers Videotaping or Shooting Photos

Capturing the Moment: Though not mandatory, we here at *That Takes Ovaries* will loooove you even more if you can film/videotape the event or take digital photos, with the end goal of sending it all to us and us having the right to use the images as we want, like for our website or a film documenting our events around the world. Of course digital (videotapes and photos) is best. If you decide you can "capture the moment" (and become part of the Ovarian Historical Record) you will see we have included 3 forms. Here are the instructions.

1. **FIRST FORM: PERMISSION FORM REGARDING DISTRIBUTION** You, the event organizer, will please sign this first permission form. It says you will not distribute the video you make to the public.

2. **SECOND FORM: PARTICIPANT RELEASE FORM** Please have all willing participants who are shot/filmed sign this second form. With this, *That Takes Ovaries* can use their image (perhaps on our website or in a film we make). Make as many copies of this participant release form as you think you will need -- then make 10 more just in case. (In deciding how many copies to make, include all the event MC's, book readers, actors and potential open mike story-tellers: basically anyone who will be on stage, at the mike or publicly speaking at your event.)

Please fill out the top of the participant release forms **before** the event with the requested info -- date, city, venue and organizer's name -- so I can distinguish your event from all the others.

At the start of your event, tell the readers, actors and audience that you are shooting photos or filming and that you will be sending it to the *That Takes Ovaries* gals for possible inclusion on the *Ovaries* website or a film. Tell folks that if they feel comfortable giving Rivka permission to use their image for this purpose, then please sign this participant release form after they leave the stage.

If you are doing an open mike: Assign a volunteer ahead of time to give a participant release form to each person just after s/he reads a story from the book or tells a story during the open mike time and leaves the stage. We suggest s/he be the same volunteer who hands out a Golden Ovary to each person after a story is shared during the open mike. Have this volunteer wait as the person fills out the form, then immediately collect it and move on to the next person who just told a story. To speed things up, maybe the volunteer can even fill out the "describe your story" line (found on the form), as the story is being told. Please give the volunteer this instruction page (the one in your hands right now), so s/he understands what to do.

If someone does NOT want me to use their image, they can check that off on the form, and they can rest assured I will NOT use their image without their permission. However, even if they don't want their image used, it would still be helpful for me to have the form with their name and story described on it, and the "NO" checked off, so I am clear that they don't want their image used, and so I can find them among all the other stories told that night.

3. **THIRD FORM:** With the third form, you only need to print out one copy and get the venue/site/location manager to sign it.

Within two weeks after your event, send the original forms, videos and photos to: That Takes Ovaries // PO Box 750061, Arlington, MA 02475 // Ph 781-674-2244 // rivka@thattakesovaries.org

Permission Form Regarding Distribution of Your *That Takes Ovaries* Videotape

That Takes Ovaries
PO Box 750061
Arlington, MA 02475
Ph 781-674-2244 // rivka@thattakesovaries.org

August 26, 2004

When you have signed below and returned this letter to us, you are authorized to videotape your *That Takes Ovaries* open mike or play. *Within two weeks after your event, this original from and the original video should be send to That Takes Ovaries.* Copies of the videotape may be distributed to those involved in the production (e.g. participants, cast, crew, etc.). However, you agree that under no circumstances may the videotape be otherwise generally distributed to the public, sold, broadcast or used as the basis of another event. It is for those who have been involved in the event/production only and for archival and memento purposes only.

Agreed by:

_____ (print your name here)

_____ (sign your name here)

Organizer of the *That Takes Ovaries* event held at _____ (your school, theater or organization's name), in _____ (city, state, country), on this date of _____.

Sincerely yours,

Rivka Solomon
Editor, Playwright, Executive Director, *That Takes Ovaries*

**Permission/Release Form for Participants
of *That Takes Ovaries* Open Mike, Reading and Plays**

That Takes Ovaries
PO Box 750061
Arlington, MA 02475
Ph 781-674-2244 // rivka@thattakesovaries.org

EVENT INFO

IDENTIFY EVENT (Open mike, reading or play? Include city, location):

DATE: _____

PARTICIPANT INFO

YOUR NAME (please print): _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE AND EMAIL: _____

In a few words, please describe the true story you shared from your own life, or the story you read or dramatized from the *That Takes Ovaries* book or play:

Are you willing to grant permission to *That Takes Ovaries* to use your real-life story or your reading from the book/play in the future, as described below? Yes No

If "Yes," please read the paragraph below and sign at the bottom. Thank you!

PERMISSION AND RELEASE

I grant permission to *That Takes Ovaries* ("Rivka Solomon") to use the images, statements, sound recordings, and photographs of me created during my rendition of my real-life story at the open mike event or my reading or dramatization from the *That Takes Ovaries* book or play ("the performance") for any and all purposes for which they may be used now or in the future. I understand that I will not receive any compensation for giving this permission or for any use which may be made of my real-life story and performance in the future. I release *That Takes Ovaries* and Rivka Solomon from any and all claims that I have or may have in the future regarding any use whatsoever of the performance. I retain sole ownership of my individual real-life story and the copyright in and to my individual real-life story, and all derivatives of thereof. I am over the age of 18 and have the authority to give this permission and release, or I have a parent/guardian to sign with me. No promises of any kind have been made to me to induce me to give this permission and release.

SIGNATURE (person named above or parent/guardian if under age 18):

**Location Release Form for *That Takes Ovaries*
Only for the site/venue manager**

That Takes Ovaries
PO Box 750061
Arlington, MA 02475
Ph 781-674-2244 // rivka@thattakesovaries.org

Project: **“That Takes Ovaries video”**

Location (venue name): _____

Location Owner or Authorized Party _____ (collectively “Owner”)

Owner agrees that persons designated by That Takes Ovaries (hereafter TTO) may be in, on or about the above location on the date(s) indicated above, for the purposes of preparing or making photographs, and /or video and sound recordings on film, tape or otherwise (the “Recording”) in connection to the Project.

Owner authorizes TTO to edit the Recordings as desired and to use them, in whole or in part, in connection with the Project, in all manner and media, as TTO shall determine in its sole discretion. TTO and its successors and assigns, shall own all right, title and interest, including the copyright(s), in and to the Project, including the Recordings, to be used and disposed of throughout the world in perpetuity without limitation as TTO shall determine in its sole discretion.

Owner represents and warrants that Owner has the right to enter into this agreement and that the rights Owner has granted hereunder will not conflict with or violate any commitment, agreement, or understanding Owner has or will have to or with, nor infringe upon any rights of, any person or entity.

Owner expressly releases TTO, its grantors, officers, trustees, assignees, agents, licensees and employees from all claims, losses, costs, expenses, settlements, demands, and liabilities of any kind, including reasonable attorney’s fees and expenses, arising out of or incurred by reason of the use of the Recordings in connection with the Project or by the inaccuracy, alleged breach, or actual breach of any representation, warranty, covenant, agreement, or undertaking made by Owner herein.

This is the entire agreement. No other authorization is necessary to enable TTO to use the Property for the purpose herein contemplated.

DATE: _____

PRINT NAME: _____

VENUE ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

APPENDIX F -- For Event MC: Suggested Agenda and Wording for Your *Ovaries* Open Mike (5 pages)

For the event organizer to read, and to be given to the event MC 1-2 weeks before the event.

Dear *Ovaries* Open Mike MC,

Here is some info for you re: your *That Takes Ovaries* open mike. Please read this before the event.

1. SUGGESTED AGENDA
2. SUGGESTED INTRO AND WORDING FOR EVENT MC
3. POINTERS RE: POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS AND MALE BASHING

This is just a guide. Don't feel you have to say these exact words. And don't hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Have an ovarianly good time,
Rivka <rivka@thattakesovaries.org>

~oOo~ ~oOo~ ~oOo~

1. SUGGESTED AGENDA

- a. MC introduces the whole event
- b. Readers or actors read stories from the book -- or if you are doing the play, perform the play
- c. MC shares her own story and leads the pre-open mike introduction
- d. MC leads the "Pair and Share" (Optional)
- e. MC facilitates the open mike (and if you have them, gives out Golden Ovaries)
- f. MC wraps up/closes the whole event

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2. SUGGESTED INTRO AND WORDING FOR EVENT MC

A. MC INTRODUCES THE WHOLE EVENT

Please consider touching on these points (though what *exactly* you say is really up to you):

- Welcome everyone and introduce the *That Takes Ovaries* movement: the open mikes, book and play.
- Explain what is happening today (Open mike? Staged reading of the play? Full production of the play?).
- If it is a fundraiser, explain who the recipients are and what they do, or have them do that themselves.
- Ask audience to start thinking now about sharing a story during the open mike that will come later.
- Point to where book is for sale today and recommend folks buy it.
- Introduce the idea behind *That Takes Ovaries* and why it is important for women and girls to share their "bold, gutsy, brazen, outrageous, courageous " acts (these words best describe what "having ovaries" is about). The MC does this by sharing her own thoughts and/or reading aloud excerpts from either **Rivka's Note To All Readers** (found in the *Ovaries* book or on the www.thattakesovaries.org website's *About the Book* section or in Appendix B of the Open Mike Guidelines -- but not the Play Guidelines) or from the book's introduction (perhaps the section called, *What Is the Main Point of This Book*.)
- If you are videotaping or shooting pictures, explain the release forms you will be giving each open mike storyteller. (IMPORTANT: Find this release form in the Guidelines.)

Those points together could sound something like this:

"That Takes Ovaries: Bold Females and Their Brazen Acts (hold up the book or poster) is a book, a play and an a grassroots open mike movement for women and girls' empowerment. Today we will hear stories from the book (or see the play, if that is what you are doing) and then we will have our own *That Takes Ovaries* open mike. We want women and girls in the audience to share their own stories of times they were bold and brazen. And guys can proudly brag about the ovaries in their lives, like their sisters, mothers, daughters and partners. They can be little or big acts, smart or silly ones. So start thinking now about what stories you might want to share during the open mike time. Also, the *That Takes Ovaries* book is for sale, over there (point to where). Buy the book, take the empowerment home and share it with a woman in your life."

"It is important for us to gather here and share these ovarian stories because..." (MC shares her own thinking here, and/or reads some excerpts from the book as mentioned above).

Lastly, if you are videotaping or taking photos at your event, tell folks you will turn off the camera if anyone requests, during their open mike story-telling time. Also, tell folks you will give all who are filmed or shot a "permission release form" to sign, if they are comfortable. This allows *That Takes Ovaries* to use their image for a video or the website, if we ever get around to that. If they are not comfortable with their image being used, they can fill out just their first name and what their story was about on the form and then check "No" and we will not use their image.

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B. READERS OR ACTORS READ STORIES FROM THE BOOK -- OR IF YOU ARE DOING THE PLAY, PERFORM THE PLAY

Now is the time to have your pre-selected readers read aloud a few stories you choose in advance from the book (secure some local volunteer actors for this, if you can). Remember, pick light, fun, short stories (if you want to read a "deep, heavy" story, too, only read one).

Or, if you have the play scheduled, perform the play at this time.

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C. MC SHARES HER OWN STORY AND LEADS THE PRE-OPEN MIKE INTRODUCTION

After you have read some stories from the book (or performed the play), have the MC come back on stage (or if you have a "celebrity" MC, you could have her come on stage for the first time now). Have her touch on these points:

- Have MC share her own story
- Invite the audience to share their own stories
- Say that any story is welcome here
- Guys welcome to share stories too
- Stories should be no more than 3 minutes long
- Announce that you'll be giving a Golden Ovary to each storyteller

Those points together could sound something like this:

"Before we start the open mike, first I'll share my own true story about a time I was gutsy." (She does that, keeping it no longer than 3 minutes.) "Now is the time for the *That Takes Ovaries* open mike. This is when you in the audience get to brag about times you were bold, gutsy, brazen, outrageous, audacious and courageous. They can be little or big acts, smart or silly ones. Remember, there are no stupid stories. All your

stories, no matter how small or short, are inspirational. And guys, feel free to come up and proudly brag about the ovaries in your lives -- your sisters, mothers and daughters. Any storyteller who shares a story with the whole room gets a Golden Ovary award for their bravery."

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D. MC LEADS THE "PAIR AND SHARE" (Optional)

Many organizers and MCs like to include a quick *That Takes Ovaries* "Pair and Share" after the MC shares her own story and after she gives the above description of how the open mike will work. This optional, fast-paced, icebreaker exercise would happen immediately before the actual open mike. It only takes 2-3 minutes total and during it the room becomes a-buzz with excited talk.

If you choose to do the Pair and Share, the MC, with a watch in hand, can explain the exercise this way:

"But before the actual open mike, we'll *all* get a chance to quickly share a true story with one other person in a "Pair and Share". It takes 2 minutes total and this is how it works: Quickly turn to any person sitting near you. He or she is now your Pair and Share partner. Each of you will get one minute to share some gutsy deed you have done. Guys will share bold acts of women they know. When I yell "Start" one person in the pair should begin. After one minute is up, I'll call "Switch" and the other person in the pair gets a turn. After one more minute, I'll call "Times up" and we'll all re-group for the open mike. So, find a partner and... start!"

(With each person getting only one minute during the Pair and Share, most folks will not have a chance to finish telling their whole story. That is okay. Hopefully they'll get up and share their complete story during the open mike.)

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E. MC FACILITATES THE OPEN MIKE

Now, during the actual open mike time, the MC acts as a facilitator, not saying a whole heck of a lot except warmly inviting folks to come up to share a story and then gently shooing them off-stage (Golden Ovary in hand) if they go on too long. The MC should not monopolize the stage or even entertain the audience; that is the role of the open mike storytellers. But she should remain on or near the stage, jumping up after each story is shared, asking who wants to go next.

The MC can get things going by saying something like this:

"Would anyone like to now share a story with the whole room? Remember: No story is too short or too silly. The only guidelines are these: The stories shouldn't be more than 3 minutes long, and they can be about you or a woman you know (with guys bragging only about the women in their lives). I'll gently let you know if you go on too long. Also, everyone who tells a story gets a Golden Ovary award both for doing their original gutsy act and for being brave enough to stand up here and share it with us."

Again, after each story is shared, have the MC simply ask the audience "Who wants to go next?" Or you could have folks line up by the stage.

At some open mikes, only one person will be brave enough to share a story. At others the open mike will go on for hours. If the audience is shy, the MC should be ready to jump back into the spotlight to draw out/coax/encourage people to get them comfortable enough to share their own personal real life stories. And then, again, the MC should be ready to gently shut them up if they go on too long.

Usually after the pair and share you will get lots of stories for the open mike, but if not, but don't panic. Perhaps the reading from the book or the watching of the play (and the Pair and Share, if you do it) was enough for your audience. No problem. But if you want to be absolutely sure that stories are shared at your event, secure in advance 2-3 "audience plants" -- friends who promise to immediately jump up to share their own stories as soon as you start the open mike. This gets the ball (ovary) rolling.

Youth Participation: As MC, consider asking if any of the girls and young women present have a story they want to share first during the open mike. This is just a good policy in general, since young people tend to be shy, especially in a predominantly adult crowd. So as you start the actual open mike time, tell the audience that you want to encourage the young girls present to speak first if any have a story they want to share.

Golden Ovaries: If you have some chocolate eggs wrapped in gold foil, put them in bowl and have a volunteer give one egg to each woman, man or child immediately after s/he shares a story.

Release Forms: The same volunteer who hands out the Golden Ovaries might be a good person to have distribute the "release form" if you are videotaping/shooting. Just after each person shares a story, have this volunteer give the story-teller a Golden Ovaries AND the release form. Have this volunteer wait as the story-teller fills out the form, then immediately collect it and move on to the next person who just told a story. Maybe the volunteer can even fill out the "describe your story" line in the form, as the story is being told.) (See the Open Mike Guidelines or the Play Guidelines for the actual release forms.)

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F. MC WRAPS UP/CLOSES THE WHOLE EVENT

Consider touching on these points:

- Thank those who shared their stories and those who came
- Why this event was important (because courage is contagious)
- Anyone can lead her own *That Takes Ovaries* open mike, here is how...
- Please buy the book

Those points together could sound something like this:

"Thanks to all of you for coming and especially those who shared stories. We held this event because courage is contagious and risk-taking is infectious. This event will act like ripples in the pond, spreading the courage far and wide.

This is a grassroots movement and any woman or organization anywhere can lead their own *That Takes Ovaries* open mike, either in a living room with just friends, or in a public setting, like a cafe or club. Either for fun, or as a fundraiser for your favorite women's cause. For first-time organizers, this is a good way to learn to be an organizer for women's voices and causes. Find the guidelines for how you or your organization can host your own open mike in the back of the *Ovaries* book and on the website **www.ThatTakesOvaries.org**. Grab an *Ovaries* "Summary of All Things Ovarian" flyer for information about this and add your name to the mailing list sign up sheet and the *That Takes Ovaries* folks will contact you.

Lastly, please take the empowerment home with you by buying a copy of the book. They make great gifts for the women in your life. (*Hold up the book and point to where books are for sale*). Thank you!"

~oOo~ ~oOo~ ~oOo~

3. POINTERS RE: POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS AND MALE BASHING

Two pointers for the MC to keep in mind:

1. This is not the place for political discussions or male bashing. If either one starts, gently stop it. You do not need to read these below boxes out loud at your event; instead these are for the MC to read (to herself) in advance of the event so she will know what to say (more or less) if she needs to stop a brewing political discussion or male bashing. Remember, this is a fun event -- a celebration of women and girls' sassy stories. Keep the overall mood and energy positive and upbeat!

Political Discussion

There are times for political discussions. Sitting around coffee tables with friends, at holiday dinners with the family, on the street at a protest rally. Your open mike is not one of those times. But the stories women share at your gathering may raise political issues. Issues that different people feel differently about: Like the role of pornography in our lives, like whether a woman should retaliate for being done wrong, like whether a girl should use violence to fend off violence done to her. Those are just a few examples; who knows what political and social contention could come up at your event. But this is not the place to start a big debate about complex concerns. We can't solve them in one night anyway. What this night is about is something totally different. It is about feeling triumphant, positive, happy at hearing how yet another woman pushed past societal imposed boundaries or internally adhered-to constraints. It's about providing a safe space for women and girls to share their stories and experiences. This is a time to put political differences aside and instead focus on supporting yet another girl who, at least when she did her deed, felt she was taking some kind of action to somehow free herself. This is a time to celebrate daring dames, gutsy gals, feisty females...even if you don't agree with them politically.

If a political debate starts, have the MC gently but firmly squash it. Tell the crowd to continue their debate *after* the open mike. Right here, right now, we want to focus on the positive.

Male-bashing, and Why It Won't Be Helpful At Your Ovaries Event

Yes, we still live in a patriarchal society. Yes, the majority of people who hurt (harass, abuse, rape, murder) women and girls are men. For this reason, some stories heard at your event may be about how women and girls fought back. These stories are important; we need to tell them, people need to hear them. But if we want things to change—truly, radically change—we need to understand the full complexity of how a society steeped in sexism hurts *all* involved. How it tries to turn inherently strong girls into women who hesitate to use their power, and inherently compassionate boys into men with an inclination to dominate or hurt. For any one group to be free of these harmful effects of institutionalized sexism, we *all* need access to our full range of emotions and abilities; we *all* need to escape the gender roles and rules our culture declares definitive.

There are many tactics we can use to achieve this goal. Some include anger. Anger is often an appropriate response to being hurt and sometimes a necessary first step to reclaiming one's power (and ability to fight back against assault). But it won't be helpful to direct anger at men who attend your open mike. They came to support women. Besides, if our ultimate goal is to "reach" someone, change their heart and mind, then anger, and certainly bashing, will likely trigger their defense mechanisms. And then those we'd specifically hoped would learn and grow can't even hear how their attitude and behavior affect us.

Happily, there are other tactics we can employ: education, guidance, perspective sharing, and simply telling the truth about our lives. Hearing the truth, for the first time or the hundredth time, can be transformational. Given that, set a tone at your open mike where the truth about how women and girls have been hurt and how they fought back can be told, without simultaneously asserting that *all* men participate in the hurting. If needed, remind your audience that good men have always stood side by side with women in our mutual struggles to be free.

May your Ovaries event be made up of the transformative stuff that tears down walls, not raises them. Good luck!

APPENDIX G -- The *Ovaries* Publicity Packet (about 10 pages)

Okay, so the *Ovaries* Publicity Packet is **not** included in this document (we decided that this document was already long enough). Instead you will find a downloadable version of the *Ovaries* Publicity Packet at our website www.thattakesovaries.org -- or you can just email us at <info@thattakesovaries.org> and request we send it to you via email attachment.

If you are organizing an *Ovaries* event, not only is it *mandatory* that you have a copy of the *Ovaries* Publicity Packet in your possession, but you will actually find it very useful, too. It is full of information and wording that you will be able to use as you pitch your event to the public and the media.

So why not go get it now, before you forget?

~oOo~ ~oOo~ ~oOo~

LAST WORDS FROM THE OVARIES LADIES TO YOU

There. You have now finished reading the Guidelines for Organizing a *That Takes Ovaries* Open Mike. But don't forget: You are not organizing your event alone. If you need help, just contact the Ovaries staffer you have been communicating with, or email us at Info@ThatTakesOvaries.org

And our last words to you before you really take off running to organize your event? T*H*A*N*K Y*O*U for being an important part of this Ovarian movement.

Remember, courage is contagious. And the courage you both promote and witness at your *Ovaries* event will spread like ripples in a pond. Who knows what the women and men who come to your event -- and get inspired by your event -- will do next in their lives. All you have to do is inspire one person and you will be keeping the ovarian empowerment rolling.

~oOo~ ~oOo~ ~oOo~