

## *S Factor Action – May 2006*

Sheila Kelley's *S Factor* is no longer promoting strippercise classes to pre-teen girls, thanks to a quick email and phone campaign launched by an APAN member going by the name "Army of Me."

The *S Factor* is a high-profile company in the pole-dancing industry, selling lessons, platform heels, lingerie, "sultry cuffs", and even stripper poles to women from New York to California. Their website claims that "strippercise" will "empower, enlighten, and change the lives of women everywhere!"

And it wanted to bring this empowering, enlightening, life-changing experience to your 11-year-old.

Their website promoted its pre-teen class like this:

**"By popular demand, we have brought back the *S Factor* class for pre-teens! It takes place every Friday at 4:30 p.m. in Studio B in Los Angeles and is taught by the ultra-fabulous Amy Danielson. Tailored for pre-teen girls, this one hour class starts with a challenging warm-up and progresses to a wide range of pole tricks, ranging from beginning to advanced. The class is completely g-rated. Geared towards developing flexibility and strengthening muscles, the class teaches girls to take ownership of their newly emerging bodies, while building confidence and self-esteem. The *S Factor* Pre-teen Class also helps to impart grace and feminine ease, while providing a fun, unique experience."**

Privately, Sheila Kelley admitted to Army of Me: "I agree with you that it appears as though we may be teaching young ladies to "strip." But I assure you that is the least. It's about strengthening and toning, dancing, expression and self esteem. How do we tell (critics that) for us it's a strengthening tool that we use to express ourselves in the safety of an all women environment?"

*S Factor's* website fails to mention the sky-high levels of sexual harassment and assault that occur in the real stripping industry, or the escalating rates of depression and anxiety in young girls - rates which the American Psychological Association has linked directly to the epidemic sexualization of girls by our modern media culture.

It had to be stopped.

Army of Me and her APAN allies began an email campaign to the *S Factor*, and they contacted the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce to notify them about a local business actively promoting the irresponsible sexualization of girls.

The result: the pole-tricks-for-children class quietly disappeared from the *S Factor* menu. Two years later, the pre-teen classes still haven't resurfaced.