

ENTERTAINMENT

ChatterChix trading cards connecting pre-teen girls

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When shopping for Pokemon cards for her son, former teacher Robyn Bard was struck by a thought: Why aren't there any trading cards for girls?

Taking the initiative, she created ChatterChix, a hip new product addressing issues that concern pre-teen girls.

Bard wanted her product to be both entertaining and informative, and she hoped to help girls ages 5-12 build self-esteem. This year's initial launch included 25 cards representing girls from 25 states.

"It's important for young girls to know other girls their age share the same problems," Bard said.

The cards include a bio of each girl and fun facts about her state. A six-card pack is \$2.99.

Bard also has created an interactive online community at www.chatterchix.com, where girls can share their problems and their dreams. Each ChatterChix character keeps an online diary that addresses real situations.

Bard, along with a few hand-picked contributors, writes the diary entries and other online material, which ensures the information is topical and accurate.

"ChatterChix is a means for girls to discuss the similarities they share, and their differences, and to realize that their issues are not isolated but normal," Bard said.

As the mother of a 12-year-old daughter, Bard knows exactly what the issues are.

"My hope is that the virtual chats encourage in-person socialization among girls," she said.

ChatterChix also exposes different environments and geographic locations to girls.

"While girls love reading about their counterparts from other areas, they are actually getting a geography lesson," Bard said.

Bard also has launched a collection of ChatterPets, also \$2.99 per pack. The cards are meant to teach girls about compassion, love and being a friend.