



Girl Scouts' CEO Honored with 2010 ATHENA Award
Recognized for Exemplary Leadership and Vision

Macedonia -- A devotion to women's advancement and empowerment has earned Chief Executive Officer of Girl Scouts of North East Ohio (GSNEO) Daisy Alford-Smith, Ph.D. the 2010 ATHENA Award for the Akron region. Overcoming challenges early in her professional career and achieving success is what drives Alford-Smith to help other women realize their full leadership potential, and it begins with teaching girls not to underestimate themselves.

"It's a prestigious honor and a great feeling to be recognized among this accomplished group of women," said Daisy Alford-Smith, Ph.D. "Receiving this award is a testament to the importance of having a can-do attitude and being everything you can be."

The ATHENA Award, named after the Greek goddess of wisdom and courage, is an annual award presented by ATHENA International to women leaders across professional sectors for exemplary leadership. Recipients are selected for their professional excellence, community service, and for serving as a role model for young women both professionally and personally. Each year, two individuals from Northeast Ohio are selected, one each from Akron and Cleveland.

"One of my personal commitments is to make a difference in the lives of young girls who might otherwise settle for a life of poverty," said Alford-Smith. "I'm in a position where I have the opportunity to be proactive in breaking the cycle, starting with young girls and instilling in them healthy lifestyles and attitudes on the path to leadership. I've witnessed first-hand the benefits of leadership development in Girl Scouts of all ages, particularly those that earn the Gold Award, the pinnacle of Girl Scouting."

Since assuming the position of Chief Executive Officer of GSNEO in 2007, Alford-Smith has overseen the merger of five area councils and participated in the national re-branding of Girl Scouts as more than just "cookies, camping and crafts" by spearheading the implementation of leadership-development programs. Alford-Smith is particularly passionate about the Girl Scouts' financial literacy program, which she calls "the foundation for self-sufficiency for any woman." She is equally enthusiastic about working to bring scouting programs to girls in non-traditional settings such as after school programs.

Dr. Alford-Smith is a seasoned executive who brings strong leadership and career accomplishments to the Girl Scouts. Her resume includes tenures as director of the Ohio Department of Human Services, director of the Cleveland Department of Public Health, and assistant professor and director of Case Western Reserve

University's Center for Urban & Minority Health, a position in which she spent a semester teaching in Zimbabwe. In 1998, she assumed the directorship of the Summit County Department of Job & Family Services.