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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **GIRLS ACTION NETWORK SALUTES SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT**

#### **Tangiah S. Royster of Newark, New Jersey, and Sophomore at Marylawn of the Oranges, to Receive Girls Action Network Scholarship to Attend the Smith College Summer Science & Engineering Program in Northampton, MA.**

New York, NY – **On June 14, 2006, Tangiah Royster, a Newark, New Jersey** resident finishing her 10<sup>th</sup> grade year at **Marylawn of the Oranges** in **South Orange**, New Jersey, will be officially awarded a \$4,000 scholarship by **Girls Action Network ("GAN")** to attend the Smith College Summer Science & Engineering Program in Northampton, MA. This one month program in July, will provide Tangiah with the unique opportunity to participate in innovative curricula in astronomy, biology, biochemistry, chemistry, computer science, engineering, physics and a young women's health education initiative.

**GAN** is a young, ground-breaking organization that has demonstrated a unique methodology that educates and empowers young women in grades 7-12, with special emphasis on those from underserved communities. Now providing programming and services in New Jersey, the girls hail from New Jersey schools, as well as schools in New York. At the core of **GAN's** mission, the realization is that girls commonly are directed towards traditional careers, away from, for example, technology and the sciences. Reaching beyond single mentoring, **GAN** continues to create a myriad of innovative programs and experiences, some in partnership with other not-for-profits and organizations, designed to show girls their expansive career and educational choices. At a time when, "research consistently shows that education for girls is one of the most effective – if not the most effective investment a nation can make to improve the health and prosperity of present and future generations " , Westfield, the Founder and President commented, GAN illustrates how a relatively small organization can make a difference.

In 2004, the **GAN – Smith College** partnership was established which provides a fully-paid scholarship for a qualified **GAN** participant(s) to attend Smith College's one month Science and Engineering Summer program held on the Smith campus in Northampton, Massachusetts. Smith College is one of the top-rated liberal arts colleges in the U.S. and the nation's largest college dedicated solely to the education of women.

In order to be considered for the scholarship, Tangiah had to show that she was a well-rounded student, dedicated to both academics and community service. Tangiah exceeded this requirement by demonstrating her dedication to her schoolwork, along with her recent

election into the National Honor Society and the French Honor Society. She was also nominated for membership in Who's Who among American High School Students and the National Society of High School Scholars. Tangiah commented that "[s]he grew up attacking the world head on, overcoming obstacles, setting new goals, and staying involved in her school and community." Her extra-curricular activities include: singing in the choir, praise dancing at her church, being an ambassador for her school, drill teams, re-act theatre clubs, and student council. She also strives to volunteer in whatever capacity she is able, to include: tutoring fellow peers and special needs children, babysitting, volunteering at blood banks, food drives, nursing homes, school functions, walking for breast cancer, and helping take care of a sick, elderly family friend.

"In addition to Tangiah's solid academic performance and community presence, she also displays strong GAN characteristics, recognizing and appreciating the GAN vision", remarked **Dalila Springer, GAN's Scholarship Committee Chairwomen**. Ms. Springer further commented that "she is a bright, energetic, poised and confident sophomore who wishes to further develop her career aspirations." Having given careful thought to her future, Tangiah plans to use her Smith College summer opportunity to explore a career as a Forensic Psychologist. After her summer at Smith College, she will serve as a GAN ambassador, mentoring and motivating other young women towards future aspirations.

**Girls Action Network** was founded by **Elisa M. Westfield, Esq.**, a New Jersey resident who was the first African-American woman from the State of Wisconsin to graduate from the United States Military Academy, West Point. She has led an extraordinary life, fighting to shatter people's preconceived notions about individuals abilities and to create opportunities for others – in her case, whether it be during her 13 years of classical ballet training; eight years of military service in the U.S. Army; or as a corporate attorney in the New York office of Debevoise & Plimpton LLP, an international law firm.

Through her professional experiences and community activism, Westfield saw a need to focus on education and career exploration for today's youth to prepare them and allow them to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global labor market. After mentoring girls in middle and high schools for over 15 years, she was troubled by a disturbing trend affecting young women. She consistently observed that young girls lacked access to information about traditional and non traditional career opportunities and the related educational paths. She decided that a collaborative effort needed to be launched to help create a strong group of future leaders, reflecting a diversity of aptitudes and cultural perspectives. Furthermore, after conducting research on career assessment programs and services focused on girls in underserved communities, Westfield found a tremendous void, and decided to establish the New Jersey not-for-profit corporation, **Girls Action Network** upon her graduation from Rutgers School of Law – Newark and prior to practicing law at Debevoise & Plimpton LLP. The GAN Board of Directors is comprised of the following individuals: **Andrea Fant-Hobbs (Verizon), Ileana Griffiths (INROADS), , Mary Ann Jackson (Prudential) , Charmaine Sibanda (CIT) and Dr. Quincy Tharps (University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee) and Elisa Westfield (Debevoise & Plimpton LLP).**

Please visit [www.girlsactionnetwork.org](http://www.girlsactionnetwork.org). (new website to be launched o/a August 1, 2006.)