



**Contact: Speakers Bureau  
212-591-0039  
[speakers@girlsactionnetwork.org](mailto:speakers@girlsactionnetwork.org)**

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **GIRLS ACTION NETWORK® PARTNERS WITH BLACK DATA PROCESSOR ASSOCIATES (BDPA) NEW JERSEY CHAPTER FOR 6<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL FAMILIES IN TECHNOLOGY DAY**

New York, NY – **Girls Action Network, Inc.** ("GAN") joined forces through a partnership with Black Data Processors Associates New Jersey Chapter ("BDPA") on September 12, 2009 at Rutgers University in Newark, NJ to support BDPA's 6th Annual Families in Technology Day. The theme of the FIT Day event was focused on "**Technology Awareness = Community Empowerment.**" Over 250 families and students participated in the various panel discussions and workshops that were conducted from 9:00 am until 3:00 pm. Several of the event's speakers were affiliated with GAN to include: **Elisa Basnight**, **Andrea Fant-Hobbs**, **Ileana Griffiths**, **Ayana Neil** and **Dalila Springer**.

The event opened with welcoming remarks from BDPA President, **Coram Rimes**, and the event chairperson, **Goldie Bonney**, and was then turned over to GAN. **Elisa Basnight**, GAN Founder and President, commented in her opening remarks and introduction of the morning keynote speaker, that "GAN treats its focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields very seriously because there is a national problem, which some have even called the "Silent Crisis." Statistics demonstrate a decreasing number of American students graduating from U.S. educational institutions with the requisite math, science and technical problem-solving skills needed to keep our country competitive in the 21st century. And if actions are not taken to remedy this situation, our country will continue to experience national security, health care, technology and other challenges due to the nation's lack of innovators, scientists, researchers, engineers and other technically skilled professionals."

The morning keynote speaker, **Andrea Fant Hobbs**, Vice President of Brand Marketing, Advertising and Content Standards and GAN Advisory Board member, covered two very timely topics during her presentation: "Can we really have it all?" and "Keeping Families Safe in the Digital Technology Age."

The morning and afternoon activities were divided into various panel discussions and workshops targeted to the adults, parents and students. Panels and workshops included such topics as: Overview of GAN and the GAN Annual Summer Scholastic Enrichment Program and scholarship opportunities led by **Dalila Springer** of Prudential and GAN Board Member. During the GAN workshop, **Ayana Neil**, a Newark resident and the 2009 GAN summer scholarship recipient, shared the story of her transformative experience as a GAN participant in the month-long Mount Holyoke SummerSEARCH program in South Hadley, Massachusetts. Other workshops covered topics such as: Teens and Technology: A Tool for Tuition; Shopping for Computers and Technology on the Internet: Money Saving Tips and Strategies; Take Our Children to Work - Create a Story Project; Technology and Your Family Tree;

The Acceleration of Dentistry with Technology; How to Succeed in a Technology-Driven World; Imagine, Program Share and Scratch; Internet Security; Internet Training for Beginners; Investing for the Future; Literacy Strategies for Families. Additionally, **Ileana Griffiths** of Horizon Blue Cross and GAN Board Member hosted an information table during the event to answer questions and provide attendees with GAN-related materials.

The highlight of the event was the Laptop Give-Away, during which time over 100 laptops were given away to qualified event recipients. This BDPA FIT Day and related activities were able to occur due to the generous corporate sponsorships and partnerships of BDPA with Johnson and Johnson, Prudential, JPMorgan Chase, Microsoft, Merck, Rutgers University, Girls Action Network, Inc., Southern at Heart, A. Francis Original and Minority Interchange.

**GAN** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that delivers programs and services to educate and empower young women in grades 7-12, with special emphasis on those from underserved communities. At the core of **GAN's** mission is the realization that greater steps needed to be taken to increase the number of: (i) students studying science, technology, engineering and mathematics ("targeted fields"); (ii) female students choosing occupations in these targeted fields; and (iii) workforce-ready graduates for the 21st century labor market who reflect a diversity of aptitudes and cultural perspectives, and who possess a personal foundation to contribute in a global society.

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