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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **GIRLS ACTION NETWORK® KICKS-OFF NEW "GAN GIVING BACK" PROGRAM WITH SERVICE DAY AT COMMUNITY SOUP KITCHEN**

New York, NY – Keeping with the spirit of "GAN Can!" - **Girls Action Network, Inc.** ("GAN") kicked off its new community service program: "GAN Giving Back" on December 26, 2009 at the Life Christian Church Soup Kitchen (TLCC) in West Orange, New Jersey.

The day after Christmas, about 70 people were served a wonderful feast cooked by Eleanor Wills and her team. The sumptuous menu consisted of ham, roast chicken and ribs, mashed potatoes, green beans, macaroni and cheese, sweet potatoes, and vegetable salad. The bread and dessert were generously donated by Shoprite and Panera. The meal service went very smoothly. Everyone took part in the preparation, serving and cleaning up. The volunteers also handed out wrapped gifts consisting of mostly hats, scarves, gloves and a few toys. The volunteers who came out to serve included: about twenty (20) from TLCC, five (5) volunteers from other churches, and five (5) youth and young adult volunteers from Girls Action Network® comprising of **Lakeisha Ford, Andrea Fant-Hobbs, Ayana Neil, Christella Ritchwood** and **Tangiah Royster**.

The GAN Service Day program was co-chaired by **Dalila Springer** and **Andrea Fant-Hobbs**. The participating GAN Girls found this new program to be a great opportunity to connect and work with GAN alumni, current GAN Girls, GAN Champion for Empowerment and Opportunity Mentor, Christella Ritchwood, GAN Service Day Co-Chair, and the other community volunteers.

When asked what they took away from their GAN Giving Back Service Day experience, 2009 GAN-Mt.Holyoke College Summer Scholarship recipient **Ayana Neil**, commented *"... I realized how fortunate I am and how much I take for granted. I went home with a feeling of accomplishment and gratitude [to] all those who gave. [Thank you]... to the Episcopalian Church, and to GAN for giving me the opportunity to serve others. I enjoyed the Giving Back Service Day project and that experience has made me eager to volunteer again..."* 2006 GAN-Smith College Summer Scholarship recipient and 2007 GAN-Mt. Holyoke College Summer Scholarship recipient **Tangiah Royster** added *"...It was time well spent. Service always affects me because I know I am giving something back. Outside of my responsibilities, it was great to connect with the other GAN members [and scholarship recipients]..."*

**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.

**Photos:**



GAN CEO Mentor, Christella Ritchwood, and GAN Girls



Volunteers and Community Residents



GAN Service Day Co-Chair, Andrea Fant-Hobbs and GAN Girls

Please visit [www.girlsactionnetwork.org](http://www.girlsactionnetwork.org).

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