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**GIRLS ACTION NETWORK®
ANNOUNCES THE
2012 GAN – SMITH COLLEGE
SUMMER SCIENCE &
ENGINEERING PROGRAM SCHOLARS**

New York, NY – **Gianna De La Cruz**, a 10th grader at **The Bronx Center for Science and Mathematics** in Bronx, New York; **Fanta Fofana**, a 10th grader at **Brooklyn Technical High School** in Brooklyn, New York; and **Claudia Torres**, a 9th grader at **Kent Place School** in Summit, Jersey have been selected by **Girls Action Network®** ("GAN") to attend the month-long **Smith College Summer Science & Engineering Program** in Northampton, MA where they will attend as the 2012 GAN Summer Scholastic Enrichment Program Scholars. This July, these GAN Scholars will receive the unique opportunity to participate in innovative curricula including, but not limited to astronomy, biology, biochemistry, chemistry, computer science, engineering, physics and a young women's health education initiative. The Smith program also promotes global cultural awareness and appreciation due to the number of student participants who come from around the world.

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. To be considered for the scholarship, Claudia, Fanta and Gianna, each had to demonstrate stellar academics, strong teacher recommendations, commitment to her community and student activities and a willingness to serve as a GAN ambassador both during the summer program and upon her return. All three of these students exceeded these requirements while demonstrating a passion for science and math disciplines, overcoming adversity and remaining resilient.

Claudia Torres looks forward to attending the Smith program so she can participate in the two classes that most interest her: ***Your Genes, Your Chromosomes: A Laboratory in Human Genetics*** because of her love for genetics; and ***Global Young Women's Health*** because she explains that "Young women today are placed at a disadvantage in our society. Millions of young women around the world are unable to get a proper education and are denied access to health care. For this reason they are more susceptible to getting and carrying life-threatening diseases. Since I would like to have a future career in the medical field, this course would be especially useful and extremely interesting. The course would expand my global awareness on the medical problems women face."

Fanta Fofana wants to attend the Smith program because she says she will have "the opportunity to learn and explore things that I would not get the chance to know about in high school." She goes on to further state, "I relish the opportunity to create a functional product in ***Designing Intelligent Robots***. This would build on my current Digital Electronics class and the design class that I completed last year. I look forward to developing my own unique robot from the imaginative to the functional level." In the second session, Fanta says she would be "thrilled to investigate the lives of insects and animals in ***Celebrating Biodiversity: Special Emphasis on Rare and Endangered Species and Their Habitats***. I like animals, but I always see the same ones every day. I want to explore a variety of species," she adds.

Gianna De La Cruz explains that "Ever since middle school, I have had a deep interest in all sciences." She was a regular participant in the Science Olympiad team at her school, which she says allowed her to "realize that mathematics and social matters are integrated in science, as well." "Although all [Smith] course look interesting, Gianna notes that "The ones that appeal to me the most are ***By Girls, For Girls*** and ***Your Genes, Your Chromosomes***." She goes on further to state that, "By taking ***By Girls, For Girls***, we can learn how to control our emotional health, maintain healthy eating habits, and learn about other harmful behaviors." She continues to explain that "From this course [***Your Genes, Your Chromosomes: A Laboratory in Human Genetics***], I hope to learn the ways you can alter DNA to cure, or at least ameliorate certain conditions or diseases. I would like to learn if you could improve a diabetic's life by using DNA, and whether this would be taking small steps to improve a cancer patient's life as well." She also adds that, "The course ***Making Connections*** caught my attention because I would like to learn more about how and why humans behave the way we do. Just by examining how our nervous system works, I want to learn the ways to alleviate stress and other related conditions. However, before we work on the 'cures,' we have to learn the basics."

The fee for participating in the 2012 Smith Summer Science and Engineering Program is \$4,900 per student, which covers the cost of all program materials and activities. The funding for Claudia, Fanta and Gianna's summer program experience was made possible by **Girls Action Network, Inc.** and grants awarded to **Smith College** from the **Motorola Solutions Foundation** and the **Siemens Foundation**.

GAN is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that delivers programs and services to educate and empower young women ages 11 and up, with special emphasis on those from underserved communities. At the core of GAN's mission is the realization that greater steps need to be taken to increase the number of: (i) students studying science, technology, engineering and mathematics ("STEM") fields; (ii) female students choosing occupations in these STEM 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. The GAN Summer Scholarship Enrichment Program is led by the dedicated efforts of **Chairwoman, Dalila Springer**, and board members **Charmaine Sibanda** and Founder, **Elisa Basnight**.

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