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**GIRLS QUEST HONORS VOLUNTEER MENTOR AND TEEN LEADER FOR ONGOING DEDICATION AND SERVICE**

Local organization recognizes two New Yorkers for their commitment to promoting the development and growth of young women at annual benefit

**New York, NY - April 30, 2007** – Girls Quest celebrated its 71<sup>st</sup> anniversary last night at its Brazilian Carnival Benefit. During the event, held at the Racquet and Tennis Club, Girls Quest awarded two New Yorkers with their prestigious Mentor Recognition and Teen Leader Recognition Awards for service to the Girls Quest community.

Betty Diaz and Sheniese Thelem were honored last night for their dedication to the Girls Quest mission and the young women of New York. Diaz was awarded the organization's Mentor Recognition award for her role as a mentor in the Girls Quest Mentor Program for more than three years. Additionally, Thelem received the Teen Leader Recognition Award for her extensive involvement in Girls Quest activities as a camper, mentee and Teen Leader.

“Girls Quest is dedicated to helping disadvantaged girls from the greater New York area achieve their full potential, while encouraging them to become active members of their community, and we're pleased to be able to recognize the commitment of our volunteers and program participants in this way,” said Susan Hall, Executive Director, Girls Quest. “Both Betty and Sheniese have been extraordinary in their commitment to the success of our Mentor and Teen Leadership programs. It has been a privilege to have them as a part of Girls Quest and I am honored to have the opportunity to recognize them for their contributions to our organization.”

This year's benefit was co-chaired by Diana Goldin and Maureen O’Gorman. All proceeds from the annual benefit directly support Girls Quest's programs - Summer Experiential Education and Development (SEED) Program, Mentor Program, Teen Leadership Program, and Advancing Year-Round Engagement Program.

The SEED program is the point of entry for all girls who join Girls Quest, and operates at Camp Oh-Neh-Tah program site in the heart of the Catskill Mountains. SEED is a fusion of a traditional summer camp experience and an educational program. Directly enhancing the lasting impact of SEED, the year-round Mentor Program and Teen Leadership Program provide a continuum of ongoing enrichment in the lives of participants throughout the year.

“I have truly enjoyed my journey through the Girls Quest experience,” said Sheniese Thelem, Teen Leader, Girls Quest. “I've had the opportunity to participate in each of the Girls Quest programs and look back with pride as I see all I've been able to accomplish thanks to Girls Quest, the volunteers and the confidence and empowerment I've gained through my participation.”

**About Girls Quest:**

Girls Quest is a 70-year-old youth development organization for girls ages 8-17, offering outdoor experiential education, literacy development, year-round mentoring, leadership training, and peer-to-peer role modeling.

Girls Quest's mission is to nurture girls from low-income families in New York to help them achieve their full potential and become active members of their communities by building academic and social competence.

For more information about Girls Quest's programs and girls, please visit <http://www.girlsquest.org>.

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