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## **GIRL SCOUTS OF EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA ANNOUNCES 2023 TAKE THE LEAD BERKS COUNTY HONOREES**

*Four women leaders who exemplify courage, confidence, and character will be paired with local Girl Scouts as mentors and honored this April*

**MIQUON, PA (November 28, 2022)**—[Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania](#) (GSEP) is excited to announce its 2023 Take the Lead Berks County honorees who will be recognized at the annual, girl-led event on Wednesday, April 12, 2023.

Girl Scouts' mission is to build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. Through the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, girls are prepared for a lifetime of leadership, success, and adventure in a safe, no-limits place designed for and by girls.

Take the Lead recognizes women leaders from Berks County whose achievements epitomize Girl Scouts' values, while also serving as a leadership development opportunity for girls. As part of the program, high school-aged Girl Scouts are paired with an honoree to shadow them for a day, gain valuable career and leadership insights, and receive guidance on building their professional network. The girls, who are selected through a competitive application and interview process, then creatively reflect on the experience and deliver presentations at the event. Girl Scouts are the stars of the show, serving as presenters, emcees, event hosts, social media influencers, and chorus.

### **2023 Take the Lead Berks County Honorees**

- **Desha Dickson, Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Community Wellness, Tower Health:** Desha has spent her career in the non-profit sector working to improve the quality of life in the community and the lives of those most vulnerable, underrepresented and marginalized. She has worked at Reading Hospital, the flagship acute care hospital of Tower Health, for the past 10 years. In her current role, Desha innovates and collaborates to create community-wide initiatives that address substance abuse intervention and treatment, population health issues and social determinants of health such as food insecurity, housing and transportation. She is well respected within the health and non-profit sectors and is called on to provide leadership within both Tower Health and the external community. Desha currently serves on several professional and community-based health committees, including the Board of Centro Hispano Daniel Torres.
- **Virginia Dodge, President and Executive Producer, VA Productions, Inc.:** Virginia is a business owner with a passion for mentorship and community. When she was laid off from her production company job due to the recession in the 1990s, Virginia continued to help her clients – many of whom had become friends – and VA Productions was born. Nearly 25 years later, her clients include local and multinational companies alike. Throughout her career, Virginia has provided free workshops for women to improve their PowerPoint and event planning skills in order to advance their job security, increase their salary and gain additional recognition. She has also turned a hobby into a conduit for charity with her custom-made jewelry. The profits have contributed to her "Gifts that Give Back Charitable Fund," which was administered through the Berks County Community Foundation and has raised thousands for children in the Reading area. Over the years, Virginia has served as a committee or Board member for organizations including the Rotary Club, Leadership Berks, Olivet Boys & Girls Club, Bethany Children's Home, and GSEP.

- **Virginia T. Rush, Vice President, The Wyomissing Foundation:** As Vice President of The Wyomissing Foundation, Virginia meets with non-profit organizations to connect them with resources and provide support with funding their needs. She leads with a caring heart and a devoted mindset to make her community better and stronger at every turn, having lent her time and talent to several start-up charities over the years. Prior to her time at The Wyomissing Foundation, Virginia had a successful career in private banking before transitioning to work for the Colonial Oaks Foundation, which helped fund several non-profits in the community. Virginia has served on many committees in her church, as well as the Reading Area Community College Foundation Board, the Ready.Set.READ! Board, the United Way of Berks County Community Impact Cabinet, and the Alvernia Cultural Coalition Committee.
- **Adelle Schade, Dean of Pre-College and Summer Programs, Albright College and Founder, Total Experience Learning®:** Adelle is the Dean of Pre-College and Summer Programs at Albright College in Reading, PA. Throughout her career, she has had the confidence and courage to look beyond traditional education processes to create innovative curriculums. Previously, Adelle was a science teacher at Conrad Weiser High School where she founded Total Experience Learning®, the trademarked learning and instructional methodology formally known as the Science Research Institute. In December 2022, the program received international recognition as an Innovative Educational Model by the Materials Science sub-division of the United Nations. Additionally, Adelle holds an appointment as an Adjunct Instructor of Pediatrics in the Penn State College of Medicine.

“Our 2023 Take the Lead honorees truly exemplify Girl Scouts’ values through their continued service and leadership in our community. Their unwavering dedication to making the world a better place is inspiring, and we are thrilled to have them as role models for our girls,” said Kim E. Fraites-Dow, Chief Executive Officer of GSEP.

Take the Lead is co-chaired in Berks County by Susan Fromm, Community Advocate, and Andi Funk, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, Enersys.

“Every year we look forward to our Take the Lead event, which raises critical funds for Girl Scouting in Eastern Pennsylvania. We are grateful to our event co-chairs and committee members who work tirelessly to sustain GSEP programs in our communities, ensuring that every girl has the opportunity to build the courage, confidence, and character she needs to become the leader she wants to be, and the world needs her to be,” said Fraites-Dow.

Take the Lead Berks County honorees will be celebrated at a special girl-led, camp-themed ceremony on Wednesday, April 12, 2023, at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Reading. Guests will be invited to partake in activities Girl Scouts experience at camp, including soft archery, s'mores, and more. A cocktail reception featuring heavy hors d'oeuvres, and of course, Girl Scout cookies, will be followed by a seated program and paddle raise for campership support, helping provide hundreds of Girl Scouts throughout Berks County the opportunity to experience all that camp has to offer with the help of financial aid.

**For more information about Take the Lead sponsorships, advertising, and tickets, visit [www.gsep.org/takethelead](http://www.gsep.org/takethelead) or call 267-332-6788.**

### **About Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania**

Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania (GSEP) is the largest girl-serving organization in Pennsylvania and builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. What was started in 1912 in Savannah, Georgia by founder Juliette Gordon Low as one small, yet dedicated troop of diverse girls has grown into 2.8 million Girl Scouts across the U.S. today. GSEP serves nearly 30,000 girls in partnership with more than 15,000 volunteers in Berks, Bucks, Carbon, Chester, Delaware, Lehigh, Montgomery, Northampton, and Philadelphia counties. Today, 80 percent of women in leadership and executive roles in the U.S. were Girl Scouts. Girl Scout alum comprise 70 percent of women in the U.S. Congress. For further information about Girl

Scouting, how to join, volunteer, reconnect, or donate, call 215-564-2030 or visit [www.gsep.org](http://www.gsep.org). Follow @GirlScoutsEPenn on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.

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