

2013 Torchbearer Recipient Deborah Hearn Smith

Committed to helping girls overcome barriers they face, Deborah Hearn Smith has impacted the lives of nearly one million girls through the Girl Scouts organization. Deborah has dedicated her life to encouraging them to become leaders with courage, confidence and character. Deborah has helped to ensure that generations of Hoosier girls enter the next stage of their lives as well educated, civically engaged and philanthropic women.

Growing up during the civil rights and women's liberation movement's formed Deborah's value of inclusivity that still drives her to this day. Deborah got involved with the Girl Scouts at the age of five as a Brownie and, at 17, earned the Curved Bar (now known as the Girl Scouts Gold Award), which is the highest award in Girl Scouting. When she became the first African American CEO of Girl Scouts in the greater Indianapolis area, increasing diversity became a top priority.

While serving in her position Deborah has grown the local programs in the Hispanic community to one of the largest and most successful in the country. *Latinas Taking the Lead* reaches out to Hispanic women and offers them the opportunity to gain leadership skills and further their personal growth. As of 2011, in Indiana, one of every eight African American girls and one of every six Hispanic girls is a Girl Scout. Girls Scouts of Central Indiana also has a working relationship with low-income and public housing communities. With the support of Lilly Endowment they have an initiative to establish a sustainable Girl Scout presence in every public housing community across the region over the next three years.

In 2006, Girl Scouts USA decided to begin the complicated realignment of the councils, reducing the number from 312 to 109. Five councils in central Indiana took the lead nationally and were the first to complete the realignment and form the Girl Scouts of Central Indiana. Deborah was chosen to guide them through this transformation, all-the-while ensuring that the girls and adult volunteers would have tools and opportunities for development both during and after the process. Girl Scouts now has a more unified and consistent regional presence and saves \$1 million annually in administrative costs. This has allowed for more program opportunities and community outreach for the organization locally.

Deborah has proven to be a leader by working hard to enable all girls to have the opportunity to experience the benefits of Girl Scouts, regardless of their circumstances. As CEO of the largest girl-serving non-profit in the state she has created paths for inclusiveness, establish partnerships and attract diverse leadership. Deborah Hearn Smith's positive influence and dedication to serving generations of young women have made her a true Torchbearer.



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