

# uniquely ME! PROGRAM Alleviates Low Self-Esteem

(NAPSA)—In a recent survey of child-care professionals in the United States, 78 percent agree that low self-esteem among pre-adolescent and adolescent girls leads to high-risk behavior including drug and alcohol use, smoking, risky sexual behavior, eating disorders and dropping out of school. More than 70 percent agree that low self-esteem among tweens and teens is a critical problem in the U.S.

A new program developed by Girl Scouts of the USA and Unilever addresses this alarming problem by fostering self-esteem in girls, ages 8-to-14, across the country and in Puerto Rico—with a focus on girls in underprivileged communities. **uniquely ME! THE GIRL SCOUT/UNILEVER SELF-ESTEEM PROGRAM** integrates the latest research on self-esteem issues from the renowned Girl Scout Research Institute and helps girls develop the skills necessary to face life's challenges.

Olympic gold medalist, gymnastics superstar and **uniquely ME!** program partner, Dominique Dawes, will help raise awareness of self-esteem issues and will visit girls across the country to talk about building confidence and appreciating one's best attributes.

"Everyone has to deal with self-esteem issues—even celebrities and top athletes," said Dominique Dawes. "I hope that through **uniquely ME!**, we can empower girls to fulfill their dreams."

A few of Dominique's self-esteem tips are to:

- **Find a role model in your own community.**

Spend time with someone who believes in you and will work with you to set high goals.

- **Celebrate you!** Reward yourself when you have accomplished something.

- **Challenge yourself to try new things.** Try a computer



**Olympic champion Dominique Dawes talks to girls about building self-esteem.**

course, learn some new dance steps, speak in front of a large group or join an after-school activity club.

- **Give back to your community.** Helping others is an excellent way to feel great about yourself.

- **Be good to your body.** Remember to exercise, eat well and get plenty of sleep.

The core curriculum of **uniquely ME!** includes three activity booklets designed for specific age groups: 8-10, 11-12 and 13-14 years of age. The booklets are available in English and bilingual English/Spanish versions and will be accessible to Girl Scout troop leaders, adult volunteers and girls across the country.

The booklets focus on appreciating one's best attributes, handling peer pressure, healthy eating habits, hygiene, general wellness and other important issues as a way to boost self-confidence. Empowering activities enable girls to build an understanding of what self-esteem is and how to foster it in themselves. Select activities will be available on the GSUSA Web site for girls who are not involved in Girl Scouts. Visit [www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org) for more information.