



## WESLEY HOUSE COMMUNITY CENTER LAUNCHES INNOVATIVE “uniquely ME!” PROGRAM FOR YOUNG GIRLS

*– Program is collaborative effort of Dove Self-Esteem Fund and Girl Scouts  
of the USA –*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Knoxville, Tennessee (April 6, 2009)** – Wesley House Community Center (“Wesley House”) has launched **uniquely ME!** The Girl Scout/Dove Self-Esteem Program, an inspirational and educational program for young girls.

The Dove Self-Esteem Fund is collaborating with Girl Scouts of the USA to promote **uniquely ME!**, which addresses the important issue of low-self esteem among tween and teenage girls. Research conducted by the Girl Scout Research Institute (“GSRI”) shows that low self-esteem, a dilemma facing many girls today, often manifests itself in the form of eating disorders, depression, risky sexual behaviors, and substance abuse. Integrating the latest research from GSRI, the **uniquely ME!** program educates and inspires girls on the “beyond the surface” definition of beauty and supports them in acquiring and developing the skills necessary to face life's challenges.

Wesley House’s new program consists of an educational curriculum and offers hands-on activities such as mentoring, community service, and sports. The program includes exercises about recognizing girls’ best attributes, identifying core values, handling peer pressure, and resisting eating disorders.

Wesley House hosted a luncheon and workshop for the participating girls and their mothers on March 28, 2009, to kick off the new program. Girls were partnered up with their mentors to complete a series of fun and educational activities together, including:

- A magazine exercise for girls to talk about specific images,
- Creation of their own advertisement for a magazine,
- An activity that discovered talents and strengths,
- A “Pushy Peers” quiz, and
- “Words Can Hurt,” a talk about the power of words.

Kari Larkin, program director for Wesley House, believes the program is a great addition to the ministry's schedule. "These young girls are opening up more about their feelings and are beginning to see themselves as truly beautiful," Larkin said. "This new program is encouraging them to work through any obstacles they're facing."

The program takes place from 4:30 p.m. until 5:30 every Monday through Wednesday.

**About Wesley House and the Dove Self-Esteem Fund**

Wesley House is the second oldest charity in Knoxville. Founded in 1907 by the Methodist Women, the center operated a childcare center for mothers who worked at Brookside Mills. In the 1940s, Wesley House became a National Mission of the United Methodist Church to minister to families in impoverished areas. Today, Wesley House conducts tutoring sessions, operates a learning center, provides a summer enrichment program, and offers a series of performing arts and cultural activities for at-risk youth in grades 1-8. Wesley House also offers an ongoing educational and social program for senior citizens, focusing on both physical and mental well-being. Wesley House primarily serves the Mechanicsville, Lonsdale, and Beaumont neighborhoods.

The Dove Self-Esteem Fund was developed to help free the next generation from self-limiting beauty stereotypes. Committed to reaching 5 million young women by the end of 2010, the Dove Self-Esteem Fund is committed to supporting and promoting a wider definition of beauty.

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