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**STEPHENS COLLEGE OFFERS FIRST-EVER SCHOLARSHIP TO NYC GIRLS PREP
MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS**

**Rising Middle School Students to Compete For Entrance
Into Stephens College Leadership Academy**

COLUMBIA, Mo. (March 13, 2012) – Stephens College, the second-oldest women’s college in the country, announced today that for the first time in its 179-year history it will offer a four-year, full-tuition scholarship to a student from Girls Prep Lower East Side Middle School, the first all-girls charter school in New York City. This unprecedented announcement was coupled with the news that Stephens College will offer an exclusive, summer week-long Leadership Academy from July 15-21, 2012, for up to 10 rising seventh- and eighth-graders from Girls Prep.

As part of the Leadership Academy, these students will learn from faculty who are part of the Stephens Masters in Strategic Leadership program. The Leadership Academy will include leadership team-building events, workshops and classes that focus on the development of leadership skills through confidence-building activities, the foundations of civil debate, exercising persuasion over coercion, and the fundamental components of public speaking.

“Research shows that developing leadership skills in girls at a young age has a major influence on their motivation, confidence and decision making, which empowers them as they eventually consider career and college aspirations,” says Susan Bartel, dean of the School of Organizational Leadership and Strategic Communication at Stephens College.

In addition to their leadership activities, the Girls Prep students will attend a college course, spend time at the Stephens College Equestrian Center, live in an undergraduate dorm, eat in the campus dining hall, and explore Columbia, Mo., a college town located in the center of the state that offers many cultural and recreational activities, which will expose students to a college experience at an early age.

“When a little girl wins a lottery seat for Girls Prep Elementary or Middle School, she becomes part of a peer culture that ensures she works hard and develops a self-expectation of college completion,” says Public Prep CEO Ian Rowe. “Our commitment is to provide her a rigorous program of academics and character development that prepares her to earn a degree from a four-year college. This relationship with Stephens College embodies that commitment.”

In order to be considered for the Leadership Academy, the Girls Prep students will enter a competitive application process in which they develop a resume, essay and video about what they hope to learn from the experience. The Girls Prep students will have to demonstrate how they will live out their core values of Scholarship, Merit, Sisterhood and Responsibility – values that closely align with Stephens’ mission, which includes emphasis on Respect, Support and Responsibility. The top 15 candidates selected from the applicant pool will then partake in a live Skype interview with Stephens College President Dianne Lynch, who will select the final 10 students to participate in the Leadership Academy.

“In addition to the Leadership Academy, we have made a commitment to offer one full-tuition, four-year scholarship to a deserving Girls Prep middle school student upon her high school graduation as a tangible incentive to keep her on the path to attending college,” says President Lynch. “This is the first time in our history that Stephens College has offered a scholarship to a student as early as middle school.”

Both the scholarship and the Leadership Academy build off of a Summer 2011 pilot program in which Stephens College hosted a film academy for Girls Prep, when eight students visited campus for a week and received hands-on filming and editing training. The film academy followed a similar and successful Citizen Jane Film Academy that Stephens’ Department of Film & Media held with public schools in Columbia, Mo., in 2011. More information about these academies and the short films that the Girls Prep students produced and screened on campus may be found at www.stephens.edu/news/spotlight/2011/FilmAcademy.php.

Stephens College, established in 1833, is historically committed to meeting the changing needs of women. Stephens prepares students to become leaders and innovators in a rapidly changing world, and engages lifelong learners in an educational experience characterized by intellectual rigor, creative expression and professional practice. To learn more, please visit www.stephens.edu.

Girls Prep Lower East Side Middle School is part of Public Prep, a New York City-based nonprofit organization that develops single-sex elementary and middle public schools that pursue excellence through continuous learning and data-driven instruction. Our model is designed to empower each student to build strong character, demonstrate critical thinking, possess a core body of knowledge and be on a predictive path to earn a degree from a four-year university. Public Prep is currently comprised of three tuition-free, all-girls charter schools that are open enrollment, can only be entered via a random lottery and serve urban districts in which students face significant academic and social risk factors. To learn more, please watch our video: <http://publicprep.org/video>.

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