



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**GIRL SCOUTS OF EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS  
APPOINTS DENISE BURGESS AS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

***Board of Directors Selects Former Diplomat, CNN Correspondent, and  
International Communications Consultant After Nationwide Search***

**Boston, MA (February 27, 2018)** — [Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts](#) (GSEMA) announced today that Denise Burgess has been named Chief Executive Officer after a six-month nationwide search. Burgess, a Boston resident, is an experienced leader with strategic planning, organizational development, operations, and communications expertise. She is a former American diplomat, national news correspondent, and international communications consultant.

The appointment follows the January 2018 retirement of Patricia Parcellin, who served as CEO for more than three years.

Burgess, who assumes the position March 13, most recently served as resident country director for The Carter Center, the not-for-profit organization founded by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, leading a field operation focused on monitoring elections, human rights, and mining governance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Previously, she served 16 years in the U.S. Department of State – Foreign Service. During her service, Burgess staffed the front lines of the State Department’s 24-hour, worldwide communications and crisis management center. She also directed critical first-response communications during the immediate aftermath of the African embassy bombing crisis in 1998.

“I am so excited to embark on this journey with Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts, particularly at this moment in the course of history. I believe America is facing a critical juncture in the development of our cultural norms, particularly those that relate to women and girls,” says

Burgess. “The Girl Scouts’ mission is to encourage girls to develop the qualities necessary to become successful, well-balanced, healthy women, who contribute positively to our society. We must use our own courage, confidence, and character to make sure that the next generation of girls, and the next, and the next after that, are prepared to face the unique challenges they’ll encounter in a world as yet unknown to us.”

Burgess appeared as a CNN correspondent from 2002 to 2005, managing the Middle East and Asia news desk during the Iraq invasion, then delivering live reports from Baghdad during the post-conflict phase. She was nominated for “Best Feature” by the National Association of Black Journalists.

Following her diplomatic and broadcast experiences, Burgess worked as a consultant on Afghan reconstruction issues at the Department of Defense. She also founded the consulting firm Burgess Belgrave, LLC, providing international strategic planning, communications, and marketing consultancy to the State Department's Educational and Cultural Affairs Bureau, NATO/ISAF Afghanistan, and across a variety of private sector companies.

Burgess, a Boston native, received a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Princeton University and a Master of Science in Communications Management from Syracuse University.

“Denise’s impressive professional experience, her character, and her personal commitment to the advancement of women and girls combine to make her the ideal leader for our council at this time in our history,” said Tricia Tilford, Board Chair and President, Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts. “Our board members immediately recognized Denise’s potential to raise the council’s visibility and help get the message out that Girl Scouts delivers the best leadership development experience for girls in the world—one that is designed with, by, and for girls. She will serve as an ambassador in promoting Girl Scouts as a safe, inclusive space where girls can take the lead.”

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**We're Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts (GSEMA)** We're 47,000 strong, with 32,000 girls and 15,000 volunteers in 178 communities in eastern Massachusetts who believe in the power of every G.I.R.L. (Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader)<sup>™</sup> to change the world. Girl Scouts is the preeminent leadership development organization for girls. GSEMA is the 10<sup>th</sup> largest Girl Scout council in the United States, building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. To volunteer, reconnect, donate, join, or learn more, visit [gsema.org](http://gsema.org).