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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Samantha Scott Named 2025 ATHENA Young Professional Award Recipient

Muskegon, MI – October 7, 2025— The Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce and The Chamber Grand Haven, Spring Lake, Ferrysburg are proud to announce **Samantha Scott** as the 2025 ATHENA Young Professional Award recipient, honoring her exceptional leadership, service, and commitment to empowering others in the community.

Scott embodies the ATHENA principles of professional excellence, community service, and the active assistance of women in their attainment of leadership skills. In 2013, she co-founded an agency with a vision to empower individuals facing employment and life barriers. What began with just 20 clients in a single county has grown—under her leadership—into an organization serving more than 800 individuals to date, with over 200 supported each year across Muskegon and Ottawa Counties.

Starting with 10 employees and a modest budget, Scott has guided the organization's expansion to three program sites and an annual budget of nearly \$2 million. Yet, her true measure of success lies in people, not numbers. Over the past five years, she has promoted eight women into leadership positions within her agency, seven of whom rose from within. By fostering flexibility, family balance, and professional growth, Scott helps women thrive not only in their careers, but in their lives.

Her dedication extends well beyond her agency. Scott serves with the Rotary Club of Muskegon, Women Who Care, and numerous local nonprofits. She advocates for Direct Support Professionals at the state level, secures critical grant funding, and lends her voice to coalitions strengthening healthcare and support services for families.

“What sets Samantha apart is not just what she has accomplished, but how she leads,” said Rachel Gorman, President and CEO of the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce. “Her transparency, courage, and encouragement create spaces where others can grow, where women can envision new possibilities, and where community always comes first.”

The Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber congratulates Samantha Scott on this well-deserved recognition and celebrates her continued impact as a leader, mentor, and changemaker.

This year's keynote speaker was Brianna T. Scott, Attorney, Entrepreneur, and Owner of Brianna T. Scott & Associates, PLLC. In her address, Ms. Scott shared insights from her trailblazing career in law and leadership, emphasizing the importance of perseverance, representation, and purpose-driven service. As the first African American Assistant Prosecutor in Muskegon County and the first person of color to serve as President of the Muskegon Rotary Club, she has long been a champion for equity and opportunity. Her professional and civic achievements—including serving as Rotary International District 6290 Governor and receiving the Athena of the Lakeshore, Living Legend, and Woman of Accomplishment Awards—reflect her lifelong dedication to advancing others. Through her words and example, Ms. Scott inspired attendees to lead with integrity, uplift their communities, and create lasting impact.

The Chamber would also like to congratulate Skye Mayberry, Sara Cooper, Andrea Rose, and Jillian Meloche as 2025 Lakeshore ATHENA Young Professional Finalists.

The Lakeshore ATHENA Award is presented annually to a woman who demonstrates professional excellence, community service, and active assistance to other women in their attainment of leadership skills.

For more information about the ATHENA Award and this year's celebration, visit <https://www.muskegon.org/programs-events/chamber-events/athena-on-the-lakeshore/>

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About ATHENA International

ATHENA International is a catalyst for developing diverse, transformative leaders worldwide through experiential programs that ignite, amplify, and celebrate girls, women, and allies—from young scholars to seasoned professionals. At the heart of everything we do are the Eight Principles of Enlightened Leadership™ (ATHENA Leadership Model®): Live Authentically, Learn Constantly, Build Relationships, Foster Collaboration, Act Courageously, Advocate Fiercely, Give Back and Celebrate. ATHENA is driven to bring empathy based, compassionate, and inclusive leadership culture to the workplace, educational institutions, and individuals.

In our pursuit of creating positive change, we empower women entrepreneurs to achieve new heights of success through ATHENAPowerLink®, an innovative mentorship program connecting selected entrepreneurs with a tailored advisory board to support the growth of their businesses. For over four decades, we have recognized exceptional women and pioneering leaders with ATHENA Leadership Awards on global, national, and community levels. Our impact extends to nearly 8,000 award recipients who stand as change-makers and trailblazers, opening doors.

***About the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce** – The Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce is the premier business membership organization on the Lakeshore. The Chamber represents approximately 1100 businesses and organizations, of every size and type, all over West Michigan. The Chamber has been working for 126 years to sustain an environment for business success, through community leadership, promotion, inclusive business advocacy and valued member services.*

***About the Chamber of Commerce Grand Haven, Spring Lake, Ferrysburg** – The Chamber of Commerce Grand Haven, Spring Lake, Ferrysburg has been a connection point and leading voice for businesses in Northwest Ottawa County since 1899. The Chamber facilitates economic drivers and conversations to support business development, sustained growth, health and quality of life for businesses and communities throughout the region.*