

# DEBRA GANO

**Title: CEO & President of BYOU “Be Your Own You” and Award-Winning Author of the Heartlight Girls Series**

**Websites: [www.DebraGano.com](http://www.DebraGano.com), [www.BeYourOwnYou.com](http://www.BeYourOwnYou.com), [www.HeartlightGirls.com](http://www.HeartlightGirls.com)**

## **Full Bio:**

Debra Gano is the CEO & President of BYOU ‘*Be Your Own You*’ LLC, a girls self-esteem apparel and educational company, and the best-selling author of the *Heartlight Girls* series. As a passionate advocate for women’s & girls empowerment, she is a sought-after national speaker and self-esteem expert for television, radio, and print media. Her book, *Beauty’s Secret, A Girl’s Discovery of Inner Beauty*, is the recipient of multiple national awards, including Gold Winner of the Mom’s Choice Award and Children’s Fiction First Place in the USA Book News *National Best Books* Awards. Her work has been endorsed by many best-selling empowerment authors (such as Jack Canfield, Marianne Williamson, & Neale Donald Walsch), girls’ organizations including the Girl Scouts and Smart-Girl, Inc., educators, counselors, corporations, and parents and girls alike.

Debra is a graduate of the University of Michigan’s Ross School of Business (B.B.A. in Marketing) with an extensive 20-year history in the fashion industry. Her entrepreneurial background includes her work as a national fashion show producer for major retailers, columnist in five metropolitan newspapers with her own weekly fashion feature, college-level fashion merchandising marketing instructor, professional speaker, and director of her own modeling school and agency. She may be best known, however, for her work as an international model/actress featured in print, film, television, and runways around the world, working with some of Hollywood’s top actors and premier fashion designers worldwide.

After a series of life-changing incidences, including a near-fatal car accident, Debra’s perspective shifted from one of superficial external-focus to a deeper inner awareness that "it's what's inside that counts." Driven with a passion to share this and empower others, and as a single mother of a one-year old girl, Debra abandoned her ‘glamour’ career to dedicate her life to teaching and coaching others to live authentically in their most empowered sense of self. She founded Heartlight Girls and authors a book series under this same name. Her

first book, *Beauty's Secret, A Girl's Discovery of Inner Beauty*, is the recipient of multiple national awards, including the Mom's Choice Award Gold Medal, Moonbeam Children's Award Silver Medal, USA Book News 'National Best Books' First Place Children's Fiction Winner, and the COVR Visionary Award for *Best Children's Book of the Year*. Her second book, *Star's Attraction, A Girl's Discovery of Inner Power*, is scheduled for release in 2012.

As Co-Founder, CEO, and President (and still a single mom), Debra now runs the girls' self-esteem apparel and education company, *BYOU Be Your Own You*, with the mission to build self-esteem in girls worldwide. *BYOU* is partnered with teen pop star singer/dancer/actress Cymphonique Miller, who is an advocate for girls' empowerment herself.

Debra serves on the Board of Directors for the Children's Edutainment Network (CEN), a for-profit business dedicated to children's Internet safety & financial literacy, and the CIPA Education & Literacy Foundation (ELF), a non-profit organization dedicated to building literacy in children and excitement for reading and writing. She lives in Denver, CO with her 9-year-old daughter, Ella.