This month the Women’s Business Center is celebrating Women’s History Month. The theme chosen for this celebration is Celebrating Women of Character, Courage, and Commitment.

If I had to recommend a person as a National Honoree for the Women’s History Month celebration I would recommend Tyra Banks. Tyra Banks is a multi-dimensional woman. She is a supermodel, actress, TV personality, business woman, and most importantly a role model. Tyra chooses to lead by example and bring attention to the issues facing girls and young women. She is passionate about getting girls to believe in themselves and taking control of their lives.
I know first-hand how tough society can be on women. I admit that I have trouble with my self-esteem and confidence. I often feel that I have to ‘prove myself’ to society or feel like I am ‘not good enough’. People have told me I am crazy for feeling this way and for being unhappy with my appearance. They’re right; I shouldn’t be feeling this disappointment with myself. But it is a personal battle for me to believe in myself and to say ‘I am good enough’.

I am not the only woman who feels this way. How often do you degrade versus of compliment your appearance? Many women have negative body images about themselves. Did you know 80% of American women look in the mirror in the morning and are disappointed with what they see? This means that not only are women unhappy with their appearance, but women are also starting their day with this reminder of disappointment.

Many women struggle with believing in themselves! Tyra Banks has struggled with believing in herself too. She was photographed and received a lot of ugly comments from the media. Despite her celebrity career as a supermodel, she was hurt by the fat comments. Her hurt turned to anger and she chose to #fightfattalk and put a stop to women judging their self-worth based on appearance.

Tyra, as a role model, is helping women not only feel confident about their bodies, but also to remove those negative thoughts. She supports public dialogue about ways to help women let go of body hatred. She created the “So what!” campaign to challenge women’s self-hatred about their bodies. She encourages women to love their bodies, and even if there are aspects about our bodies that we don’t adore, we can claim so what! Tyra encourages women to look in the mirror in the morning and say aloud things they love about themselves. Try this at home! When I look in the mirror my left eyebrow is lower than my right, especially when I smile, but so what! I love my blue eyes.

Tyra’s work doesn’t stop there. She is also working toward changing how women value themselves. Women’s magazines are filled with articles about weight loss and self-esteem,
brainwashing us that the two are linked together; an increased self-esteem is earned through weight loss. Many women judge their success or failure as a person based on their appearance or weight, and not their lives work or personhood. Tyra created the Tyra Banks TZONE Foundation to show girls that they are more than just a number on a scale.

TZONE is about building self-esteem and confidence, launching leaders, showing the world that girls can do and be anything they set their minds to. It empowers girls and young women to take control of their lives, live their dreams, discover new possibilities within themselves and take on life’s challenges with fierce determination and drive.

Tyra is a role model to me because she is inspiring women to take positive action and realize their ambitions. She is encouraging girls to aim high, dream big, and always believe in themselves! Her work encourages me to help raise awareness in my own community about the issues girls are faced with today—self-esteem, body image and social pressure. It is a goal of mine to inspire girls and young women in my own community, to build a sisterhood of powerful leaders, dreamers, and believers!