

NEWS RELEASE

Ilene Shapiro – Summit County Executive FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Date: August 23, 2021

Contact: Colleen Kelly
Communications Administrator
Office of Executive Shapiro
ckelly@summitoh.net
330-643-2660

Greta Johnson named 2021 ATHENA Akron Leadership Award recipient

SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO—ATHENA Akron recently announced Greta Johnson, Assistant Chief of Staff and Director of Communications for Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro, is the 2021 ATHENA Akron Leadership Award recipient. Presented to leaders across professional sectors, the award's rich history, international scope, and focus on mentorship distinguish it as one of the most prestigious leadership awards given in Summit County and nationwide.

"I am immensely proud of Greta and her work on behalf of Summit County. The work we do often flies under the radar, but Greta's achievements of the past few years have not. Undoubtedly, Greta's leadership has made, and continues to make, a real difference in our community," said Executive Shapiro, who submitted Johnson's nomination. "While juggling her many critical job duties, Greta has also made a commitment to mentoring the women on our team and those she works with in the community. Her efforts are helping foster a professional environment that ensures all women have an opportunity to lead. She is incredibly deserving of this honor and I thank the Selection Committee for recognizing her contributions."

Since joining the Executive's Office in 2017, Johnson has played a pivotal role in positioning Summit County for success. In her previous role as Deputy Law Director, she was a strong proponent of legal action against the opioid manufacturers and distributors, and pharmacies. As the County's legal proceedings continued into 2018 and 2019, Johnson became an expert witness for the County's legal team, with her strong testimony contributing to a significant financial settlement. Today, she serves as Executive Shapiro's liaison to the Opioid Abatement Advisory Council, the group convened to provide expert and lived experience input on distribution of settlement funds. Johnson and the OAAC continue to work diligently to provide funding recommendations for the settlement funds.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Johnson has provided exemplary leadership within County government and the entire community. During a time when accurate information was critical, Johnson led efforts to provide much-needed updates to County leaders and residents. She organized weekly conference calls with elected representatives of all 31 communities and county elected officials to share information and coordinate collaborative action, led Facebook Live discussions, targeted digital ads for critical programs, and facilitated in-depth media coverage to get important information out to as many residents as possible, establishing the County as a trusted source for COVID-19 information. She also played a primary role in the development and implementation of the many County programs funded by

the \$94 million federal CARES Act direct allocation, including, housing and utility assistance, nonprofit and arts & culture assistance, public school district assistance, Direction Home assistance, the Summit County COVID-19 Response Division, and payroll support for all 31 communities. Today, she continues to work to make sure the needs of Summit County residents, businesses, and County employees are met.

"I am beyond humbled and I am so appreciative of Executive Shapiro's nomination and her support of my work. I have an incredible team in the office and at home and I thank and congratulate them, as well," said Johnson. "I am grateful to live in and serve this community and I thank the ATHENA committee for this honor. Congratulations to the other amazing women being recognized this year."

Prior to joining the Executive's Office, Johnson represented Ohio's 35th House District, and previously worked as an assistant prosecutor and teacher. She is a tireless advocate for women, children and those in need. In keeping with the ATHENA Leadership Award's focus, Johnson has prioritized mentorship with her own staff and other women she works closely with in the community. She supports the female leaders in Summit County through her advocacy, and her willingness to listen and offer advice.

The annual ATHENA Akron Leadership Awards virtual event and online program will be held on Wednesday, November 10, 2021. For sponsorships, tickets, or additional information about the evening of inspiration, please email ATHENA.Akron@gmail.com or contact Rebecca Guzy Woodford at (330) 760-0996 or bguzy@neo.rr.com.

###