



VOLUNTEER ESSENTIALS

2009

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Introduction

Welcome to the great adventure of Girl Scouting! Thanks to volunteers like you, generations of girls have learned to be leaders in their own lives and in the world.

No matter why and how you choose to spend your time with Girl Scouts, your investment in time and energy will pay back ten-fold. Little can compare to the satisfaction you'll feel as you help girls grow in self-confidence, discover their genuine selves, connect with the people and community around them, and take action to make a difference in the world.

The Beginnings of Girl Scouting

Juliette "Daisy" Gordon Low assembled 18 girls from Savannah, Georgia, on March 12, 1912, for a local Girl Scout meeting. Her goal: Bring all girls out of isolated home environments and into community service and the open air. Girl Scouts hiked, played basketball, went on camping trips, learned how to tell time by the stars, and studied first-aid. For more on Juliette Gordon Low, visit www.girlscouts.org/who_we_are/history/low_biography.)

Today, Girl Scouts has a membership of more than 3.5 million girls and adults, and over 50 million women in the United States are Girl Scout alumnae. You belong to this powerful network!

Girls and Women Today

Although girls and women have made remarkable progress since Juliette Low founded the first Girl Scout troop in 1912, inequalities still persist:

- Women earn 77 cents for every dollar their male counterparts earn.
- For every dollar a white man earns, African American women earn 67 cents and Hispanic women earn approximately 58 cents.
- Women represent almost 50% of the workforce, but only 10% are CEOs of Fortune 500 companies.
- Women are granted fewer than 27% of Ph.D.s in physics, 20% in computer science, and 17% in engineering.
- Female professors represent only 36% of tenured faculty nationwide.
- Only 13% of universities granting doctorates have women presidents.
- Women only hold 87 of the 535 seats (16.3%) in the U.S. Congress.
- Women only hold 75 of the 315 elective executive offices (24%) across the country.
- Since the end of World War II, women have served as president or prime minister only 42 times throughout the world.

Why Girl Scouts?

Girl Scouts understands that girls have unique needs that are best met in a program designed specifically for them and delivered in an all-girl setting. Research tells us that a girl's leadership blooms when she's among other girls, away from school pressures, social cliques, and boys. In a place where she can be herself and take on new challenges. Where activities are girl-led. Where each girl learns by doing, and the learning is cooperative, not competitive. Where adults mentor girls and model skills, behaviors, relationships, and careers that girls can emulate.

Girl Scouts has developed an exciting model that meets every one of these needs—it's called the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE). Everything girls do in Girl Scouting is infused with the GSLE, which shows girls how to discover who they are and what they stand for, connect with vibrant and diverse peers in their own neighborhoods and around the globe, and together take action to make a difference in the world, inspiring and advocating for others along the way. The GSLE identifies fifteen exciting outcomes/benefits for girls, all of which propel girls toward becoming the exceptional women they were born to be.

In order for your community—indeed, for the world—to be at peace and work cooperatively, you recognize that tomorrow's leaders require mentoring. Girl Scouts, and the powerful model that is the GSLE, offers girls the tools they need to be successful leaders now and throughout their lives. And you're the critical link, as you learn about, understand, and deliver the GSLE to the girls in your group.

The Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law

You belong to this powerful organization of—and *for*—girls. The Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law speak to the vision we all share for girls and that inspires each of us to work on behalf of tomorrow's leaders.

The Girl Scout Mission

Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

Every opportunity in Girl Scouting, from every group meeting to travel to earning badges, encourages girls toward this incredible mission of becoming courageous, having self-confidence, and being a person of character who takes action to make a difference in the world.

Mission Statements Throughout the Years

The current Girl Scout Mission is critically relevant to today's world, just as previous mission statements were relevant to the girls and women of their time:

- **1912:** "Train girls to take their rightful place in life, first as good women, then as good citizens, wives and mothers."
- **1924:** "Realize the ideals of womanhood as a preparation for their responsibilities in the home and service to the community."

• **1953:** “Help girls develop as happy, resourceful individuals, willing to share their abilities as citizens in their homes, their communities, their country and the world.”

The Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:

To serve God* and my country,

To help people at all times,

And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

(*Girl Scouts makes no attempt to define or interpret the word “God” in the Girl Scout Promise. We look to individual members to establish for themselves the nature of their spiritual beliefs. When making the Girl Scout Promise, individuals may substitute wording appropriate to their own spiritual beliefs for the word “God.”)

The Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be

honest and fair,

friendly and helpful,

considerate and caring,

courageous and strong,

and responsible for what I say and do,

and to

respect myself and others,

respect authority,

use resources wisely,

make the world a better place,

and be a sister to every Girl Scout.

Chapter 1: Sharing Your Unique Gifts

The comprehensive Girl Scout volunteer management system ensures that you are matched with the right opportunities, are provided efficient and effective learning and support, and are recognized for the valuable service you provide on behalf of girls. The first few steps of the process include background screening, interviewing, and placement, which you've already experienced. Now, you're in a position to assess the skills and competencies Girl Scouts has identified as most important—the ones that will lead to the best results for girls. You surely already possess many of these skills and behaviors and will develop more in the coming year, as you work more closely with girls and with your volunteer support team. After you've evaluated your skills and identified opportunities for growth, you can utilize the learning opportunities offered by your council. You'll have the opportunity to learn and grow, right along with the girls!

As an adult volunteer member, you receive the benefits that every member receives (publications from both the national office and local council, supplemental insurance coverage, and discounts that some councils have negotiated with local businesses). But in addition to that, you also have tremendous opportunity for personal development and career advancement. Girl Scouts is passionate about ensuring that your experience is a good one by offering a comprehensive system of learning and development that translates into new skills—and perhaps new opportunities in your workplace. You also have access to a network of nearly a million (that's right—a *million!*) other Girl Scout volunteers who care just as passionately about making a difference in girls' lives, and who are usually happy to assist fellow volunteers in their career and personal pursuits.

Evaluating Your Skills

Use the following checklist to determine your strengths and areas for growth, and then work with your volunteer support team to boost the areas in which you can do some additional learning and skill-building.

Focusing on Girls

- I create a fun, interactive, girl-led series of activities.
- I help girls set realistic and clearly defined goals and objectives.
- I am respectful of and empathetic to girls.
- I create a friendly environment for girls and adults.
- I foster girl-adult partnerships that provide opportunities for girls to lead their own activities.

Demonstrating Flexibility

- I adjust, modify behavior, and remain flexible and tolerate in response to changes, obstacles, and divergent opinions.
- I maintain a sense of humor and emotional composure, even when under pressure or opposition.

Communicating Well

- I express ideas and facts clearly, concisely, and accurately.
- I communicate in a manner that's appropriate for each individual and group.
- I use appropriate nonverbal communication.
- I actively listen to others and incorporate their ideas and perspectives.
- I facilitate group discussion, clarify the points of others, and encourage group responses and actions.
- I present information that is clear, organized, and vibrant.

Fostering Diversity

- I understand that each individual brings a unique—and important—experience to Girl Scouting and I embrace those differences.
- I value, develop, nurture, use, and celebrate both group and individual diversity.
- I strive for inclusiveness in all activities, removing barriers to participation for both girls and their parents/guardians.
- I challenge the biases of others.
- I treat others fairly.

Living with Personal Integrity

- I demonstrate dependability, honesty, and credibility.
- I accept responsibility for my own actions.
- I maintain confidentiality.
- I uphold ethical standards.

Taking Advantage of Volunteer Learning Opportunities

Girl Scouts strives to provide you with just enough information to successfully manage your group of girls, and then to let you know how and where you can get additional information on certain topics when you're ready to find out more. You'll find that volunteer learning is offered in a variety of ways, so as to best meet your unique learning styles: written resources; face-to-face learning; interactive online learning—and additional methods are being developed and tested all the time!

Currently, through your council, you'll find online learning modules that you can complete on your own schedule and at your own pace, as well as face-to-face training opportunities that allow for immediate feedback on the skills learned and knowledge gained. You also have resources—like this resource and the journey adult guides, for example—to use as a reference over the next year. Read what you need now, and come back to it when you're ready for more. At this point, you have probably already completed the online Volunteer Orientation and will soon be scheduled for Leadership Essentials, which will provide in-depth focus on delivering the Girl Scout Leadership Experience—the outcomes/benefits we're striving to achieve for girls, the processes (girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning), and the three leadership keys (discover, connect, and take action). Your council may also offer additional courses.

Field Trip Basics, Indoor Overnights, Outdoor Overnights, Destinations, etc.

Learning opportunities ensure that you have the support you need in Girl Scouting. The volunteer learning department at your council will provide you with the instruction and guidance necessary to fulfill your role successfully as a Girl Scout volunteer—learning that will not only help you work more effectively with Girl Scouts but also may introduce new skills and behaviors into your work life, relationships, and personal development. In the end, your service will be recognized and evident to all the girls you help become confident, courageous, and character-driven young women. And that's the greatest reward of all!

[Council: You may want to fill in the required learning at your council]

Getting Feedback on a Job Well Done

Serving as a Girl Scout volunteer affords you exceptional opportunities, both in the skills you'll gain and in the difference you'll make in the lives of girls. Everyone involved with Girl Scouts wants to ensure that you're effectively mentoring girls to become world-changing leaders, and your council staff helps you do that by measuring outcomes, evaluating your performance, continuing to give you opportunities to build new skills, and recognizing you for the tremendous work you do.

We want you to have such an incredible time working with girls that you want to stay in Girl Scouting! So, after you complete your current role, your council staff will go through a reappointment process, in which you'll talk about the positive parts of your experience as well as the challenges you faced, and discuss whether you want to return in this position or try something new. During this process, council staff will also (of course!) want to lavish you with praise, rewards, recognition, and thanks for all the hard work you do!

[Council: You may want to customize here]

Volunteer Leader Appreciation Day

Each year, April 22nd marks the Girl Scout Volunteer/Leader Appreciation Day, a special day in which council staff, parents, and girls show their appreciation for the volunteer work you do all year. In addition, each council recognizes volunteers in unique and touching ways—you'll hear more about this in the coming year. **[Council: You may want to customize here]**

Chapter 2:

Girl Scouting 101

This chapter gives you a quick and easy introduction to Girl Scouting, including the following information:

- Who can join Girl Scouts and how girls and volunteers can participate
- What important dates are on the Girl Scout calendar
- How Girl Scouts is organized

Who Can Join Girl Scouts—and How!

Any girl—from kindergarten through 12th grade—can join Girl Scouts. Girl Scouts is about sharing the fun, friendship, and power of girls and women together, whether that’s a girl in the United States or an American girl living overseas. Volunteers are also a diverse group, and may be a college volunteer working on a community action project, a parent volunteer ready for an outdoor adventure with her daughter’s group, or any responsible adult (female or male, who has passed the necessary application process) looking to make a difference in a girl’s life.

What all members share, whether girls or adults, are the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Each member also agrees to follow safety guidelines and pay the annual membership dues of \$12 (or you can purchase a lifetime membership for \$300).

After they join, girls team up in the following grade levels:

- Girl Scout Daisy, grades K–1
- Girl Scout Brownie, grades 2–3
- Girl Scout Junior, grades 4–5
- Girl Scout Cadette, grades 6–8
- Girl Scout Senior, grades 9–10
- Girl Scout Ambassador, grades 11–12

Across the country, the Girl Scout community is hard at work on a whole new approach to making sure that everyone can participate in Girl Scouting in the ways they want to. Both girls and adult volunteers can choose from several flexible ways to participate—called “pathways”—that offer the freedom to tailor your level of involvement to fit your schedule and lifestyle. (You can also volunteer behind-the-scenes, working in your council office, instead of volunteering directly with girls.)

Girls can choose any one, all, or some of these pathways (camp, events, series, troop, travel, and virtual)* within a single membership year, while you have the option of partnering with girls throughout a membership year or committing to an opportunity for only a few weeks or months. (*Note that the virtual pathway is still in development.)

Did You Know?

Girl Scouts has always been committed to ensuring that all girls who want to be a Girl Scout can be. We reach out in a variety of unique ways to make sure that happens. Check with your council if you're interested in learning more!

Here are a few examples of happenings around the country:

- **Challenge and Change:** Funded in rural communities through a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, this program uses the GSLE to emphasize social entrepreneurial opportunities.
- **Girl Scouts Beyond Bars:** For more than fifteen years, Girl Scouts, in partnership with the National Institute of Justice, has provided girls with an opportunity to visit their incarcerated mothers and take part in troop meetings.
- **Girl Scouts in Detention Centers:** This program brings the GSLE to girls in juvenile detention centers.

Girl Scout Calendar

Girl Scouts celebrate three special birthdays each year, which you're encouraged to include in your group planning.

- **February 22:** World Thinking Day (the birthday of both Lord Baden-Powell and Lady Olave Baden-Powell, the originators of Boy Scouts and the Scouting Movement worldwide).
- **March 12:** The birthday of Girl Scouting in the USA. The first troop meeting was held in Savannah, Georgia, on this date in 1912.
- **April 22:** Volunteer Leader Appreciation Day—this day is set aside especially for you!
- **October 31:** Founder's Day (Juliette Gordon Low's birthday).

Note that Girl Scout Week begins the Sunday before March 12 (a day known as "Girl Scout Sunday") and extends through the Saturday following March 12 (a day known as "Girl Scout Sabbath").

World Thinking Day

World Thinking Day, first created in 1926, offers a special day for Girl Scouts and Girl Guides from around the world to "think" of each other and give thanks and appreciation to their sister Girl Scouts. February 22 is the mutual birthday of Lord Baden-Powell, founder of the Boy Scout movement, and his wife, Olave, who served as World Chief Guide.

Today, girls show their appreciation and friendship on World Thinking Day not only by extending warm wishes but also by offering a voluntary contribution to the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund, which helps offer Girl Guiding/Girl Scouting to more girls and young women worldwide.

Girl Scouts' Organizational Structure

Girl Scouts is the world's largest organization of and for girls, and it currently encompasses 2.6 million girl members and nearly one million volunteers! Two core structures support all these members: local councils and the national headquarters.

Local Councils

Local Girl Scout councils are chartered by the national office to establish local responsibility for leadership, administration, and supervision of the program, and to develop, manage, and maintain Girl Scouting in a geographic area. As a volunteer, it is through your Girl Scout council that you will have the most contact. However, the national office also provides resources, especially those you can find online at www.girlscouts.org. In addition, councils are provided with program and other support resources by the national office to ensure that what is delivered through the councils is nationally consistent for all girls across the country.

[Council: Potential content includes council structure, coaching opportunities, Web site information, contact info, who to call for help, etc.]

National Organization and Worldwide Sisterhood

The national office of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA), located in New York City, employs roughly 400 employees. (To visit GSUSA online, direct your browser to www.girlscouts.org, where you'll find a wealth of resources for both girls and volunteers.) This 97-year-old organization is now affiliated with a worldwide family of 10 million girls and adults in 145 countries through the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS).

As girls engage in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (see Chapter 3), Global Girl Scouting ensures that they have increased awareness about the world, cross-cultural learning opportunities, and education on relevant global issues that may inspire them to take action to make the world a better place. Visit [www.girlscouts.org/who we are/global](http://www.girlscouts.org/who_we_are/global) for additional information.

Juliette Low World Friendship Fund

To honor Juliette Gordon Low's love of travel, of experiencing different cultures, and of making friends, Girl Scouts created the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund in 1927. Today, this fund supports girls' international travel, participation in adult learning, and attendance at other international events—any event that fosters global friendships that connect Girl Scouts and Girl Guides from 145 nations. Visit www.girlscouts.org/juliette_low_fund.asp to find out more or donate to the fund! See Chapter 6 for more on traveling with Girl Scouts.

Since 1925, USA Girl Scouts Overseas (USAGSO; a division of Global Girl Scouting) has helped ease the transition for American families relocating overseas by offering the familiar traditions and exciting opportunities of Girl Scouting to girls. USAGSO now serves thousands of American girls living overseas, as well as girls attending American or international schools.

Through Global Girl Scouting, members participate in World Thinking Day on February 22, visit the four WAGGGS world centers (see Chapter 5), participate in international travel, help promote global friendship and understanding by supporting the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund, and take action on global issues.

Chapter 3: Program—What Girl Scouts Do!

The Girl Scout program—that is, what girls do in Girl Scouting—offers incredible opportunities for girls to grow in their leadership skills, develop lifelong friendships, and earn awards along each step of their leadership journeys, no matter what their grade levels, experiences with Girl Scouting, or background.

The Girl Scout program is centered around the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE), and the best way to deliver the GSLE to girls is through journeys—powerful, exciting books and awards that are the core of the Girl Scout program offering. Each journey offers opportunities to earn prestigious awards, and at the Junior grade level and above, girls then have a chance to go on and earn the highest awards in Girl Scouting: the Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards. Of course, earning and collecting a variety of badges, patches, and pins is also an important Girl Scout tradition that lives on, because doing so encourages girls to learn and demonstrate important skills. A variety of badge activities allow girls to focus on particular interest areas, like financial literacy, healthy living, science and technology, and outdoors and the environment. And Girl Scout ceremonies and songs continue to link girls with not only Girl Scouts peers today but also the lineage of Girl Scouts past. This chapter shares details on each of these exciting elements of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE)

Today’s effective leaders stress collaboration, inclusion, and a commitment to improving the world around them. Girls themselves tell us that a leader is defined not only by the qualities and skills she hones but also by how she uses those skills and qualities to make a difference in the world—to achieve transformational change! For this reason, the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE)—the framework for defining *what* girls do in Girl Scouting, *how* they do it, and *who* will benefit that was borne out of years of research and development—engages girls in three key activities: discovering who they are and what they value; connecting with others; and taking action to make the world a better place.

Three Keys to Leadership

In Girl Scouting, Discover + Connect + Take Action = Leadership. The entire Girl Scout program, regardless of the exact topic, is designed to lead to leadership outcomes (or benefits) that stem from these three keys.

Discover Key

Girls understand themselves and their values and use their knowledge and skills to explore the world. The benefits intended for girls from the discover key include:

- Developing a strong sense of self
- Developing positive values
- Gaining practical life skills and practicing healthy living
- Seeking challenges in the world
- Developing critical thinking skills

Connect Key

Girls care about, inspire, and team with others locally and globally. Benefits for girls include:

- Developing healthy relationships
- Promoting cooperation and team-building
- Resolving conflicts
- Advancing diversity in a multicultural world
- Feeling connected to their local and global communities

Take Action Key

Girls act to make the world a better place. Benefits intended for girls include:

- Identifying community needs
- Working as resourceful problem-solvers
- Educating and inspiring others to act
- Advocating for themselves and others, at home and around the world
- Feeling empowered to make a difference

The most powerful component of the take action key is, not only do Girl Scouts themselves benefit as they grow in their leadership skills, but communities, the nation, and the world benefit as well. Taking action translates to making the world a better place.

Please note: After years of research, the three keys to leadership were introduced in 2008, replacing Girl Scouting’s “four program goals” and the “4Bs” from STUDIO 2B. Publications and Web content that were produced before the introduction of the GSLE continue to offer valuable information and ideas for you, but anytime you see four program goals or 4Bs in older materials, think three keys, instead!

Girl Scout Processes

All activities in the GSLE build on three processes (that is, *how* girls go about doing their activities and how they interact with each other) that make Girl Scouting unique from school and other extracurricular activities.

- **Activities are Girl-Led:** Girls of every grade-level take an active role in determining what, where, when, why, and how they'll structure activities. As part of the adult-girl partnership fostered by Girl Scouts, you use this process to strengthen and support girls' empowerment and decision-making roles in activities. Your role is to provide grade-level-appropriate guidance while ensuring that girls lead as much as possible in the planning, organization, set-up, and evaluation of their activities. The older the girl, the more you serve as a resource and support.
- **Girls Learn by Doing:** Girls use hands-on learning to engage in an ongoing cycle of action and reflection, deepening their understanding of concepts and mastering practical skills. As girls take part in meaningful activities—instead of simply watching them—and then later evaluate what they have learned, learning is far more meaningful, memorable, and long-lasting. You assist girls in this process by facilitating grade-level-appropriate experiences through which girls can learn, and leading discussions that reflect on those experiences. When girls learn by doing, they can better connect their experiences to their own lives, both in and out of Girl Scouting.
- **Girls engage in Cooperative Learning:** Girls share knowledge, skills, and experiences in an atmosphere of respect and cooperation, working together on a common goal that engages each individual girl's diverse talents. In cooperative learning environments, people learn faster, process information more efficiently, and are better able to retain the information learned. This idea, also known as "positive interdependence," engages girls in meaningful ways, encourages and appreciates differences in outlook and skills, and creates a sense of belonging. In your role as a volunteer, you want to structure cooperative-learning activities that will nurture healthy, diverse relationships, and also give continuous feedback to girls on those learning experiences.

These three processes promote the fun and friendship that, for nearly 100 years, have been integral to Girl Scouting. But they do even more: When girls lead, when they learn by doing, and when they engage in cooperative learning, the fifteen leadership outcomes (or benefits) discussed in the preceding section are far more likely to be understood and achieved.

A Journey Awaits

The core component of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience is the leadership journeys, which are a coordinated series of activities grouped around a theme, each with a clear starting point (an invitation to explore and take action) and an ending point (an opportunity to reflect, reward, and celebrate). Each journey includes fun, challenging, and purposeful experiences spread over a series of sessions (which you can expand over several group meetings), and each is tied to some or all of the fifteen national outcomes/benefits for girls. In other words, the GSLE is sewn right into the journeys for you!

Each girls' book immerses Girl Scouts in the topics that make up the journey, while the adult guide features enriching activities for a group of girls, coaching tips, and sample session outlines that you can customize to fit the needs of your group, whether you facilitate a troop, volunteer at a Girl Scout camp, mentor girls on a travel adventure, or engage with girls in a series or event. Together, the girls' books and adult guides ensure that every Girl Scout in every pathway receives a consistent, high-quality experience that ties to the GSLE and engages girls in realizing specific leadership outcomes/benefits.

As you work through a grade-level-specific journey book, you'll have your own learning-by-doing experience, as you come to understand the GSLE even more deeply. As girls work toward and earn the awards that accompany each journey, you'll be sure the girls are receiving the benefits Girl Scouts promises—and you'll be able to apply your understanding of the GSLE to everything else girls go on to do in Girl Scouting.

You can share the GSLE with girls in your group through two sets of journey books. Both invite girls to explore a specific leadership theme for their level, provide meaningful experiences centered on the three keys to leadership for all girls, and each marks their achievements by earning prestigious journey awards.

It's Your World—Change It!

The first series of journey books invites girls to develop a deep understanding of themselves, understand how powerfully they can act when they team up with others who share a vision, and make a difference in their communities by inspiring, educating, and advocating. Books in the first series of journey books include the following:

- ***Welcome to the Daisy Flower Garden:*** When flowers talk, what do they say? Something wonderful? Something wise? Listen close, and then plant a seed—maybe even two or three. In this garden, as in all of Girl Scouts, good things are bound to sprout.
- ***Brownie Quest:*** Pack a bag and join the quest! You'll find trails with friends and fun and all sorts of...well, we can't say what! After all, there's a mystery to solve! And did we mention that special something Girl Scouts have always loved—a bright and shining Brownie Elf?
- ***Agent of Change (for Juniors):*** Power. Everyone's got it—individual power, team power, community power. There's a whole spiral of power waiting, just for you. Toss in some power stories (and a chatty, power-loving spider) and you've got yourself one powerful adventure. Power on!
- ***aMAZE! (for Cadettes):*** Life is a maze. Navigate its twists and turns and you'll find true friendships, meaningful relationships, and lots of confidence to boot. So go ahead, enter the maze. The goal is peace—for you, your world, and the planet, too.
- ***GIRLtopia (for Seniors):*** Imagine a perfect world for girls. Imagining is the first step to creating. Make your vision a reality. That's what leadership is all about.
- ***Your Voice Your World—The Power of Advocacy (for Ambassadors):*** How often have you seen something that really needed to be changed and wondered, “Why isn't someone doing

something about that?” Guess what? You can be that someone! All it takes is your voice joining with other voices and pretty soon, you’ll see just how powerful advocacy can really be. So go ahead, start the winds of change with your own little flutter—be a Girl Scout Ambassador and an advocate.

It’s Your Planet—Love It!

The second series of journey books issues a call for action to the environment, inviting Girl Scouts of every grade level to explore the natural wonders of the world, become stewards of our fragile planet, and investigate the science that keeps our Earth spinning. Books in the second exciting series include:

- ***Between Earth and Sky (for Daisies)***: Sunshine, fresh air, new places to see. When flower friends travel, they enjoy all of these. So come along for the trip. Meet new friends and old. You’ll taste, touch, and smell what fun travel can hold!
- ***WOW! Wonders of Water (for Brownies)***: Water does so much for you! Can you return the favor? On this Wonders of Water journey, you will love water, save water, and share water! That’s a really big WOW!
- ***GET MOVING! (for Juniors)***: Energy puts the sparkle in fireworks, the giddy up in a pony, and the oomph in the everyday. So get moving! Energize, investigate, innovate. Get all the energy in your life flowing in the wisest ways.
- ***Breathe (for Cadettes)***: Take a deep breath. How do you feel? What do you see? Hear? Smell? Get set to focus all your senses on air. This is one airy journey and it’s full of flair!
- ***Sow What? (for Seniors)***: So, what do you hope for from your food? Great taste? Pleasing smell? Good looks, too? As you dig into *Sow What?* and get down to the roots, you’ll crave a whole lot more. You’ll see how your food network can serve up what’s best for Earth—and best for you!
- ***Justice (for Ambassadors)***: We all know what it is. Why is it so hard to achieve? Maybe it needs a brand-new equation—your equation. On this journey, doing the math + some very sage ways = real hope for inspiring justice—for all of Earth and her inhabitants.

Getting Started with Journey Books

Please keep the following tips in mind as you review the journey adult guides:

- **You and the girls you work with are encouraged to customize the sample sessions.** The journey adult guides provide you with ideas, examples, and encouragement, along with ideas about sequencing experiences, facilitating discussions, and assisting as girls earn awards. But neither the girls’ books nor the adult guides are meant to provide hard-and-fast, unchangeable, lock-step sessions. Have fun creating new activities surrounding each topic. The journey will be much more fun and relevant as girls make it their own!
- **Take your time.** Sample sessions in the journeys have been created to show how it is possible to have a Girl Scout Leadership Experience in six to eight gatherings. Many girls and adults quickly find there is more they want to do, which is why the journey books are filled with tips for you to customize the experience. As their imaginations take hold, girls will have many more ideas about how to extend the journey with guidance from volunteers.
- **Capture girls’ imagination and motivate them to take action by sharing stories.** The journey series engage girls in stories—real and fictional—of girls and women taking action in the world. Make use of these stories and expand upon them whenever you can—in any way that you and girls will enjoy. Stories, after all, capture the imagination and motivate. Ultimately, girls will create their own stories on the journey, meeting new people and taking action in the world. What other stories are going on in the region, and how can girls connect to them? What can girls find in stories—in art or life—that add to the feelings and ideas along this adventure?
- **Connect to the three keys.** As a volunteer in Girl Scouts, your experiences—and your view of leadership—will influence and inspire girls. Use the reflection exercises in the adult guide to think about the three keys to leadership (Discover, Connect and Take Action) and how you can best apply them as you team up with Girl Scouts on their leadership journey.

The Highest Awards in Girl Scouting: The Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards

The Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards are Girl Scouting’s highest awards. As a Girl Scout volunteer, encourage girls to “go for it” by earning these awards at the Junior through Ambassador levels.

The steps toward achieving Girl Scouting’s most prestigious leadership awards offer wonderful learning and growth opportunities to girls. Check out some of the award projects girls are doing at your council. Better yet, talk to a few past recipients of the Girl Scout Gold Award. You’ll quickly be inspired when you see and hear what girls can accomplish right now as leaders—and by the confidence, values, and team-building expertise that girls gain as a result of going after Girl Scouting’s top awards. And imagine the impact girls have on their communities, country, and even the world as they identify problems they care about, team with others, and act to make change happen!

To help girls receive the benefits Girl Scouting promises through our leadership outcomes, the steps toward earning the highest awards have been undergoing an update. Lots of input has been gathered from

around the country, and the new guidelines for the awards are debuting in summer 2009. Talk to your Girl Scout council support team for information about transitioning between new and old guidelines, so that no girls lose out on efforts begun using existing standards. Nationally, the goal is to have all girls using the new guidelines by October 2011, so that girls can truly experience the power of girls together as they take action, using consistent guidelines.

Like everything girls do in Girl Scouting, the steps to earning the awards are rooted in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and its three keys to leadership: girls discover themselves and their values and explore the world, connect with others locally and globally, and take action to make the world a better place.

Going forward, to earn each of these awards, girls first complete a grade-level journey (two journeys for the Gold Award). Journeys provide girls with experience with all three keys to leadership and prepare them to identify community needs, work in partnership with their communities, and create take-action projects that make a lasting difference.

After completing journeys, girls apply their insights and skills to plan and carry out action projects based on their unique visions. The Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards offer girls relevant, -grade-level-appropriate challenges related to teamwork, goal setting, and opportunities to build community networks.

The Girl Scout Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards offer girls incredible opportunities for personal development and community leadership. These awards also engage girls in building networks that will not only support them in their award projects, but also lead them to new educational and career opportunities. All this, of course, starts with you—a Girl Scout volunteer! Encourage girls to go after the highest awards. More information is available at http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_central/insignia/highest_awards/gold_award.asp.

Did you know that a Girl Scout who has earned her Gold Award immediately rises one rank in all four branches of the U.S. Military? A number of college-scholarship opportunities also await Gold Award designees. A girl does not, however, have to earn a Bronze or Silver Award before earning the Girl Scout Gold Award. She is eligible to earn any recognition at the age level in which she is registered.

A Tradition of Honoring Girls

From the beginning of Girl Scouts, one prestigious award has recognized the girls who make a difference in their communities and in their own lives. The first, in 1916, was the Golden Eagle of Merit. In 1919, the name changed The Golden Eaglet, and in 1920, the requirements for The Golden Eaglet were updated. The First Class Award existed for only two years, from 1938–1940, and was replaced in 1940 with The Curved Bar Award, the requirements for which were updated in 1947. In 1963, GSUSA re-introduced the First Class Award, for a girl who was an “all-around” person, with skills in many fields and a proficiency in one. Today’s highest award, the Girl Scout Gold Award, was introduced in 1980 and remains today.

Badges, Try-Its, Pins, and More!

Emblems, awards, and patches refer to items that girls wear on their vests or sashes, each of which records a girl’s adventures and accomplishments as a Girl Scout. The following list describes the differences among them:

- **Emblems** show membership in Girl Scouts, a particular council, a particular troop, or in some other Girl Scout group.
- **Awards** are earned by completing requirements or by demonstrating understanding of a concept. The Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold awards, as well as the journey awards are two prestigious ways girls can earn awards. But girls also earn Daisy Petals, Brownie Try-Its, Junior badges, and Interest Project awards and STUDIO 2B charms (as Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors). Some earned awards take the shape of pins. Additional awards are earned through Girl Scouts requirements or are determined by partner organizations. Examples include religious awards and the President’s Award for Community Service. **Note:** Over the next several years, Girl Scouts will be updating the skill-building badge activities for girls, in order to tie them to the GSLE. Stay tuned for updates! Until then, continue to dip into the existing offering to supplement the journey experience—remember, once you’ve done a journey, you can apply the GSLE to everything else you and the girls choose to do!
- **Participation patches** are developed at the national or council level with a focus on participation. Some come with companion activity booklets, while others are given out at events. Some examples include uniquely ME! patches, EarthPACT patch, and World Thinking Day patch.

Purchase emblems, patches, pins, and earned awards at your council’s Girl Scout shop or by visiting www.girlscoutshop.com. To see the array of Girl Scout emblems, earned awards, patches, and pins, check out www.girlscouts.org/program/gscentral/insignia/list. There, you not only find a cool list of the earned awards for each grade level but also can click on a link that shows you exactly *where* girls can place all their emblems, awards, pins, and patches on vests and sashes!

Other Initiatives and Opportunities

Other exciting initiatives and opportunities exist to support the GSLE. A few examples are listed here, and you can find out how to engage your group in opportunities like these by contacting your local council or by visiting http://www.girlscouts.org/program/program_opportunities. Note that councils may offer different experiences, based on availability of resources and partners in your area.

- **uniquely ME!:** A joint venture between Girl Scouts and Dove/Unilever that helps girls discover the importance of challenging themselves, develop healthy coping skills, evaluate media influences, know what to look for in a friend, and find ways to make a difference in the lives of others.
- **Elliott Wildlife Values Project (EWVP):** Launched more than ten years ago, the EWVP provides girls with resources, collaborations, and opportunities that enable girls to explore nature, protect the environment, and develop a lifelong commitment to wildlife conservation.

- **First LEGO League (FLL):** FLL introduces girls to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) using LEGO MINDSTORMS, programmable robotics that both test girls' technical skills and expose them to leadership skills.
- **NASA collaboration:** Girl Scouts and NASA collaborated more than fifteen years ago, with a shared goal of exposing girls to science careers, creating summer internships for girls, hosting field trips relating to Earth and solar exploration, creating community outreach programs, and providing adult volunteers with training opportunities. To date, more than 100,000 girls have engaged in this program.
- **[Council: You may want to customize with their own program activities]**

Girl Scout Traditions: Pass it On!

Throughout the long history of Girl Scouts, certain traditions remain meaningful and important, and are still practiced today. This section describes the most revered Girl Scout traditions.

Time-Honored Ceremonies

Ceremonies play an important part in Girl Scouts, and are used not only to celebrate accomplishments, experience time-honored traditions, and reinforce the values of the Promise and Law, but also to encourage girls to take a short pause in their busy lives and connect with their fellow Girl Scouts in fun and meaningful ways. Many examples of ceremonies—for awards, meeting openings and closings, and so on—are sewn right into the journey, including ideas for new ceremonies girls can create!

Girls use ceremonies for all sorts of reasons: to open or close meetings, give out awards, welcome new members, renew memberships, and honor special Girl Scout accomplishments. A brief list, in alphabetical order, follows, so that you can become familiar with the most common Girl Scout ceremonies:

- **Bridging** ceremonies mark a girl's move from one grade-level of Girl Scouting to another, such as from Junior to Cadette. (Note that **Fly-Up** is a special bridging ceremony for Girl Scout Brownies who are bridging to Juniors.)
- **Closing** ceremonies finalize the meeting, with expectations for the next. A closing ceremony may be as simple as a hand squeeze while standing in a circle.
- **Court of Awards** is a time to recognize girls who have accomplished something spectacular during the Girl Scout year.
- **Flag** ceremonies can be part of any activity that honors the American flag.
- **Girl Scout Bronze (or Silver or Gold) Award** ceremony honors Girl Scout Juniors who have earned the Girl Scout Bronze Award (Cadettes who have earned the Silver Award; Seniors or Ambassadors who have earned the Gold Award), and is usually held for a group or combined with the council recognition.

- **Girl Scouts' Own** is a girl-led program that allows girls to explore their feelings and beliefs around a topic (such as the importance of friendship or the personal meaning they get from Girl Scout Promise and Law) using the spoken word, favorite songs, poetry, or other methods of expression. It is never a religious ceremony.
- **Investiture** welcomes new members, girls or adults, into the Girl Scout family for the first time. Girls receive their Girl Scout, Brownie Girl Scout, or Daisy Girl Scout pin at this time.
- **Opening** ceremonies start troop meetings and can also begin other group meetings.
- **Pinning** ceremonies help celebrate when girls receive grade-level Girl Scout pins.
- **Rededication** ceremonies are opportunities for girls and adults to renew their commitment to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

For more about ceremonies, visit <http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gscentral/ceremonies>.

Signs, Songs, Handshake, and More!

Over the course of 97 years, any organization is going to develop a few common signals that everyone understands. Such is the case with Girl Scouts, an organization that has developed a few unique ways to greet, acknowledge, and communicate. Examples are listed in the following sections.

Girl Scout Sign

The idea of the sign came from the days of chivalry, when armed knights greeted friendly knights by raising the right hand, palm open, as a sign of friendship. To give the sign yourself, raise the three middle fingers of the right hand palm forward and shoulder high (the three extended fingers represent the three parts of the Girl Scout Promise). Girls give the sign when they:

- Say the Promise or Law.
- Are welcomed in Girl Scouts at an investiture ceremony that welcomes new members.
- Receive an award, patch, pin, or other recognition.
- Greet other Girl Scouts and Girl Guides.

Girl Scout Handshake

The handshake is a more formal way of greeting other Girl Scouts, and is also an appropriate way to receive an award. To do the handshake, shake left hands and give the Girl Scout Sign with your right hand.

Quiet Sign

The quiet sign can be extremely useful to you as a volunteer—teach this to girls during your first meeting! The sign is made by raising your right hand high. As girls in the group see the sign, they stop talking and also raise their hands. Once everyone is silent, the meeting can begin.

Girl Scout Slogan and Motto

The Girl Scout slogan is, “Do a good turn daily.” The Girl Scout motto is, “Be prepared.”

Songs

Whether singing around a campfire or lifting a chorus of voices on the Mall in Washington, D.C., Girl Scouts have always enjoyed the fun and fellowship that music creates. In fact, the first *Girl Scout Song Book*, a collection of songs put together by girl members, was published in 1925. Since then, the organization’s love of music has grown along with the girls it has empowered.

Songs can be used to open or close meetings, enhance ceremonies, lighten a load while hiking, or just share a special moment with other Girl Scouts. For tips on choosing and leading songs, go to http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_central/activity_ideas/songleading.asp. A variety of songbooks are also available for purchase. Check out your council’s shop or visit <http://goshop.girlscouts.org/GSUSAOnline/GSBasicLandingPage.aspx?subCatId=Books-Other>.

Chapter 4:

Engaging Girls at All Grade Levels

As a Girl Scout volunteer, you'll be working with girls of all backgrounds, behaviors, skills, and abilities. No matter what a girl's grade level or background, however, it's your job to engage her in meaningful ways, help her grow in maturity and skills, and encourage her to feel safe and accepted. This chapter gives you tips for doing just that.

Understanding Healthy Development in Girls

Just being attentive to what girls are experiencing, feeling pressured by, and enjoying as they mature is a big help to girls. So take some time to understand the likes and needs of girls, then consider how you can dip into the "what and how" of creating quality Girl Scout experiences together.

As you listen and learn along with girls, you may find it useful to review the highlights of their development. Here are some developmental characteristics of girls at different grade levels. Of course, each girl is an individual, so these descriptions are only guidelines that help you address each girl as the wonderful, complex person she is.

Girl-Adult Partnership

Since the group meets for the enjoyment and benefit of the girls, meetings are built around the girls' ideas. When you put the girl first, you're helping develop a team relationship, making space for the development of leadership skills, and allowing girls to benefit from the guidance, mentoring, and coaching of caring adults.

The three leadership processes of girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning are key to the foundation of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (see Chapter 2) and integral to the girl/adult partnership. Take time to read over the description of these processes and think about how to incorporate them into your group's experiences.

Girl Scout Daisy Development

At the Daisy level (kindergarten and 1st grade), girls:

- Develop coordinated large motor skills (such as skipping, running, and climbing) and fine motor skills (such as tying shoelaces, buttoning shirts, using scissors, and drawing recognizable figures)
- Interact with and learn about the world through play activities
- Experience the world through exploration; feel inquisitive about self and surroundings
- Feel curiosity about bodies; may play games like doctor

- Understand what is good and bad (although she may not understand why) and follow rules
- Express emotions physically and seek hugs and kisses
- Develop relationships with peers and learn to recognize some as friends and others as people they don't like

Girl Scout Brownie Development

At the Brownie level (2nd and 3rd grades), girls:

- Think in concrete terms, but are beginning to process more abstract concepts/complex ideas
- Spend more time with their peer group and turn to peers for information
- Develop an increased attention span; are able to focus on the past, future, and present
- Improve in self-control, can conform to adult ideas of what is “proper” behavior, and recognize appropriateness in behavior
- Become more modest and want more privacy; want more emotional freedom/space from parents/guardians
- Prefer to be with other girls (rather than boys); have a stronger self-concept in terms of sex and body image
- Understand more complex emotions such as confusion and excitement; become better at controlling and concealing feelings

Girl Scout Junior Development

At the Junior level (4th and 5th grades), girls:

- Think in concrete ways but are beginning to think logically and symbolically
- Move toward understanding abstract ideas; things are often “right or wrong” or “all or nothing,” with little middle ground
- Have a strong need to feel accepted and worthwhile
- Begin to take responsibility for own actions
- Develop decision-making skills
- Prefer to be with other girls (rather than boys)

Girl Scout Cadette Development

At the Cadette level (Grades 6, 7, and 8), girls:

- Feel unique, as though no one else has ever felt the way they do

- Display excellent planning skills, long attention spans, and total absorption in their passions (though they may discover a new passion frequently)
- Are extremely concerned with and put a lot of energy and interest into their friends and peer relationships (they may develop self-consciousness in front of peers)
- Are interested in boys and crushes
- Are into “what’s hot” and “what’s not” in fashion, music, celebrities, and style
- Are committed to communicating with and getting along with parents/guardians
- Feel a lot of pressure from the social scene at school, and think that adults don’t understand how complicated and stressful their social lives are
- Typically have good communication skills and, with guidance, can present issues effectively in public forums
- Like to be with and serve people directly—it’s their social nature!

Girl Scout Senior Development

At the Senior level (9th and 10th grades), girls:

- Like to be included in setting rules
- Are beginning to clarify their own values
- Are beginning to promote individuality; thrive with acknowledgment of strengths, skills, and talents
- Can sometimes be in a “know-it-all phase”
- Are developing stronger logic and problem-solving skills

Girl Scout Ambassador Development

At the Ambassador level (11th and 12th grades), girls:

- Are striving for a strong sense of self as they move out into the world
- Are working toward independence and freedom, seeking to make their own decisions
- Crave friends to turn to and trust; eager to belong to trusted groups of friends where they feel emotionally safe and connected
- Are exploring risk taking as a rite of passage and managing the responsibilities of new privileges (such as driving)
- Are juggling life decisions and pressures (college, job, intimate relationships)

Advocating For Girls

The Girl Scouts Public Policy and Advocacy Office in Washington, D.C., builds relationships with members of Congress, officials at the White House, and other federal departments and agencies, continuously informing and educating them about issues important to girls and Girl Scouting. These advocacy efforts help demonstrate to lawmakers that Girl Scouts is a resource and an authority on issues affecting girls. Visit the Advocacy office at http://www.girlscouts.org/who_we_are/advocacy.

Creating a Safe Space for Girls

A “safe space” is one in which girls feel as though they can be themselves, without explanation, judgment, or ridicule. Girl Scout research shows that girls are looking for an emotionally safe environment, where confidentiality is respected and they can express themselves without fear.

The environment you create, therefore, is key to developing the sort of group that girls want to be part of. The following sections share some tips on creating a warm, safe environment for girls.

Recognition and Acceptance

Girls look up to their volunteers. They need to know you consider each of them an important person. They can survive a poor meeting place or an activity that flops, but they cannot endure being ignored or rejected. Recognize acts of trying as well as instances of clear success. Emphasize the positive qualities that make each girl worthy and unique. Be generous with praise and stingy with rebuke. Help girls find ways to show acceptance and support for one another.

Fairness

Girls are sensitive to injustice. They forgive mistakes if they are sure you are trying to be fair. They look for fairness in the ways responsibilities are shared, in handling of disagreements, in responses to performance and accomplishment. When possible, consult girls as to what they think is fair before decisions are made. Explain your reasoning and show why you did something. Be willing to apologize if it is needed. Try to see that the chances for feeling important, as well as the responsibilities, are equally divided. Help girls explore and decide for themselves the fair ways of solving problems, carrying out activities, and looking at behavior and accomplishments.

Trust

Girls need your belief in them and your support when they try new things. They must be sure you will not betray a confidence. Show girls you trust them to think for themselves and use their own judgment. Help them make the important decisions in the group. Help them correct their own mistakes. Help girls give and show trust toward one another. Help them see how trust can be built, lost, and strengthened.

Effective Conflict Management

Conflicts and disagreements are an inevitable part of life, and when handled constructively can actually enhance communication and relationships. At the very least, Girl Scouts need to practice self-control and diplomacy so that conflicts do not erupt into regrettable incidents. (Shouting, verbal abuse, or physical confrontations are never warranted and cannot be tolerated in the Girl Scout environment.)

When a conflict arises between girls or a girl and a volunteer, get those involved to sit down together and talk calmly and in a nonjudgmental manner. (Each party may need some time—even a few days or a week—to calm down before being able to do this.) Although talking in this way can be uncomfortable and difficult, it does lay the groundwork for working well together in the future. Whatever you do, don't spread your complaint around to others—gossip does not help the situation and causes only embarrassment and anger.

If a conflict persists, be sure you explain the matter to your volunteer support team. If the supervisor cannot resolve the issues satisfactorily (or if the problem involves the supervisor), the issue can be taken to the next level of supervision and, ultimately, contact your council if you need extra help.

Open Communication

Girls want someone who will listen seriously to what they think, feel, and want to do. They like someone they can talk to about important things, including some things that might not seem important to adults. Listen to girls. Respond with words and actions. Speak your mind openly when you are happy or concerned about something, and encourage girls to do this, too. Leave the door open for girls to seek advice, share ideas and feelings, and propose plans or improvements. Help girls see how open communication can result in action, discovery, better understand of self and others, and a more comfortable climate for fun and accomplishment.

Communicating with Girls

When communicating with girls, consider the following tips:

- **Listen:** Listening to girls, as opposed to telling them what to think, feel, or do (no “you shoulds”) is the first step in helping them take ownership of their program.
- **Be honest:** If you're not comfortable with a topic or activity, say so. No one expects you to be an expert on every topic. Ask for alternatives or seek out volunteers with the required expertise. (You can always consult a staff person from your council for help with this.) Also be honest when you make a mistake. Owning up to mistakes—and apologizing for them—goes a long way with girls.
- **Be open to real issues:** For girls, important topics are things like relationships, peer pressure, school, money, drugs, and other serious issues. (You'll also have plenty of time to discuss less weighty subjects.) When you don't know, listen. Also seek help from your council if you need assistance or need more information than you currently have.
- **Show respect:** Girls often say that their best experiences were the ones where adults treated them as equal partners. Being spoken to as a young adult helps them grow.

- **Offer options:** Providing flexibility in meeting changing needs and interests shows that you respect the girls and their busy lives. But whatever option is chosen, girls at every grade level also want guidance and parameters.
- **Stay current:** Be aware of the TV shows girls watch, the movies they like, the books and magazines they read, and the music they listen to—not to pretend you have the same interests, but to show you’re interested in their world. One easy way to check in with girls is to visit <http://lmk.girlscouts.org>, an interactive Web site for girls from Microsoft Windows and Girl Scouts. You might also want to direct parents to this site, which includes information about online safety, cyber-bullying, and social networking, among other topics.

Working with Teens

Consider the following tips when working specifically with teenage girls:

- Think of yourself a coach or mentor (not a “leader”)
- Ask girls what rules they need for safety and what group agreements they need to be a good team.
- Understand that girls need time to talk, unwind, and have fun together.
- Ask what they think and what they want to do.
- Encourage girls to speak their minds.
- Provide structure but don’t micromanage.
- Give everyone a voice in the group.
- Treat girls like partners.
- Don’t repeat what’s said in the group to anyone outside of it.

One way to communicate with girls is through the LUTE method—listen, understand, tolerate, and empathize. This of the acronym LUTE to remind you of how to respond when a girl is upset, angry, or confused.

- **L = Listen:** Hear her out, ask for details, and reflect back what you hear, such as, “What happened next?” or “What did she say?”
- **U = Understand:** Try to be understanding of her feelings, with comments such as, “So what I hear you saying is…” “I’m sure that upset you,” “I understand why you’re unhappy,” and “Your feelings are hurt; mine would be, too.”
- **T = Tolerate:** You can tolerate the feelings that she just can’t handle right now on her own. This doesn’t mean that you necessarily agree with her idea. It just signifies that you can listen and accept how she is feeling about the situation. Suggestions, “Try talking to me about it. I’ll listen,” “I know you’re mad—talking it out helps,” and “I can handle it—say whatever you want to.”
- **E = Empathize:** Let her know you can imagine feeling what she’s feeling, with comments such as, “I’m sure that really hurts” or “I can imagine how painful this is for you.”

The Girl Scout Research Institute

The Girl Scout Research Institute (GSRI), a world-class center for research and public information on the healthy development of girls, ensures that the complex and ever-changing needs of girls will continue to be addressed. GSRI supplies cutting-edge information to educational, not-for-profit, and public policy organizations; to parents/guardians seeking ways to support their daughters; and to girls themselves. For more about the work of the Girl Scout Research Institute, visit www.girlscouts.org/research.

Discussing Sensitive Topics

According to *Feeling Safe: What Girls Say* (2003), a Girl Scout Research Institute study, girls are looking for groups that allow connection and a sense of intimacy and closeness. They want volunteers who are teen savvy and can help them with issues they face, such as bullying and other conflicts (online and offline), peer pressure, dating, sexual harassment (online and offline), academic or athletic performance, eating disorders, alcohol and drug abuse, depression, and more. When Girl Scout activities involve sensitive issues, your role is that of caring adult who can help girls acquire their own skills and knowledge in a supportive atmosphere, not someone who advocates any particular position. Check with your council about which sensitive issues may require additional council support to present and discuss, as well as whether parent/guardian permission is required. **[Council: You may want to customize here]**

Listen and Ask

As the preceding sections suggest, you can help most just by being an empathetic listener. That's right: Just by listening, you're helping! Sometimes, you may also find that by asking questions, you can help girls figure out how to get more information and guidance at school or at home. You don't have to solve their issues, but you can put them on the trail toward solving them.

Arrange for Education

If you observe that girls need or want more information on a topic that concerns them, check with your Girl Scout council about opportunities for arranging topical discussions with experts, on areas such as healthy eating, coping with bullies and cliques, and sex education. Every region of the country differs in terms of what families feel is okay for girls to discuss at various grade levels. So do be sure to check in with your Girl Scout council—many councils advise getting parental permission *before* any planned discussions!

[Council: Update the above, as needed]

Don't feel that you have to solve everything! Your role is helping girls get information from those trained people who provide it. And if you're unsure who to ask to fill this role, count on your council, which has built up relationships with community experts who can help.

If It Sounds Serious

There may be times when you worry about the health and wellbeing of girls in your group. Alcohol, drugs, sex, bullying, abuse, depression, and eating disorders are some of the issues girls may find themselves coping with. If you believe a girl is at risk or hurting herself or others, your role is to get her the expert assistance she needs:

- Contact staff members at your Girl Scout council and find out how to refer girls and their parents/guardians to experts at school or in the community.
- Share your concern with the girl’s family, if this is feasible.

Here are a few signs that could indicate a girl needs expert help:

- Marked changes in behavior or personality (for example, unusual moodiness, aggressiveness, or sensitivity)
- Declining academic performance and/or inability to concentrate
- Withdrawal from school, family activities, or friendships
- Fatigue, apathy, or loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities
- Sleep disturbances
- Increased secretiveness
- Deterioration in appearance and personal hygiene.
- Eating extremes, unexplained weight loss, distorted body image
- Tendency toward perfectionism
- Giving away prized possessions; preoccupation with the subject of death.
- Unexplained injuries such as bruises, burns, or fractures
- Avoidance of eye contact or physical contact
- Excessive fearfulness or distrust of adults
- Abusive behavior toward other children, especially younger ones

Communicating with Parents or Guardians

Most parents and guardians are helpful and supportive and sincerely appreciate your time and effort on behalf of their daughters. And you almost always have the same goal, which is to make Girl Scouting an enriching experience for their girls. Encourage them to check out www.girlscouts4girls.org to find out how to expand their roles as advocates for their daughters.

As you know, however, families today are terribly busy—parents and guardians may want to be involved but may sometimes need a reminder or specific guidelines. Perhaps the most important tip with communicating with parents/guardians is for you to use “I” statements instead of “you” statements. “I” statements tell a parent what you need from her or him, while “you” statements may make a parent/guardian feel defensive.

Here are some examples of “you” statements:

- “Your daughter just isn’t responsible.”
- “You’re not doing your share.”

Now look at “I” statements:

- “I’d really like to help your daughter learn to take more responsibility.”
- “I’d appreciate it if you could help me with registration.”

If you need help with specific scenarios involving parents/guardians, try the following:

If a Parent or Guardian...	You Can Say...
Is uninvolved and asks how she can help but seems to have no idea of how to follow through or take leadership of even the smallest activity,	“I do need your help. Here are some written guidelines on how to prepare for our camping trip.”
Constantly talks about all the ways you could make the group better,	“I need your leadership. Project ideas you would like to develop and lead can fit in well with our plan. Please put your ideas in writing, and perhaps I can help you carry them out.”
Tells you things like, “Denise’s mother is on welfare, and Denise really doesn’t belong in this group,”	“I need your sensitivity. Girl Scouting is for all girls, and by teaching your daughter to be sensitive to others’ feelings you help teach the whole group sensitivity.”
Shifts parental responsibilities to you and is so busy with her own life that she allows no time to help,	“I love volunteering for Girl Scouts and want to make a difference. If you could take a few moments from your busy schedule to let me know what you value about what we’re doing, I’d appreciate it. It would keep me going for another year.”

Creating an Atmosphere of Acceptance and Inclusion

Girl Scouts embraces girls of all abilities, backgrounds, and heritage, with a specific and positive philosophy of inclusion that benefits everyone. Each girl—without regard to socioeconomic status, race,

physical or cognitive ability, ethnicity, primary language, or religion—is an equal and valued member of the group, and groups reflect the diversity of the community.

“Inclusion” is an approach and an attitude, rather than a set of guidelines. Inclusion is about belonging, about all girls being offered the same opportunities, about respect and dignity, and about honoring the uniqueness of and differences among us all. You’re being accepting and inclusive when you:

- Welcome every girl and focus on building community
- Emphasize cooperation instead of competition
- Provide a safe and socially comfortable environment for girls
- Teach respect for, understanding of, and dignity toward all girls and their families
- Actively reach out to girls and families who are traditionally excluded or marginalized
- Foster a sense of belonging to community as a respected and valued peer
- Honor the intrinsic value of each person’s life

What a wonderful opportunity such an approach will offer to the girls you mentor!

A Variety of Formats for Publications

The Hispanic population is the largest-growing in the United States, which is why Girls Scouts has translated many of our publications into Spanish. Over time, Girl Scouts will continue to identify members’ needs and produce the resources to support those needs, including translating publications into additional languages and other formats.

As you think about where, when, and how often to meet with your group, you will find yourself considering the needs, resources, safety, and beliefs of all members and potential members. As you do this, include the special needs of any members who have disabilities, or whose parents or guardians have disabilities. But please don’t rely on visual cues to inform you of a disability: Approximately 20 percent of the U.S. population has a disability—that’s one in five people, of every socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, and religion.

As a volunteer, your interactions with girls present an opportunity to improve the way society views girls (and their parents/guardians) with disabilities. Historically, disabilities have been looked at from a deficit viewpoint with a focus on how people with disabilities could be fixed. Today, the focus is on a person’s abilities—on what she *can* do rather than on what she cannot.

If you want to find out what a girl with a disability needs to make her Girl Scout experience successful, simply ask her or her parents or guardians. If you are frank and accessible, it’s likely they will respond in kind, creating an atmosphere that enriches everyone.

It’s important for all girls to be rewarded based on their best efforts—not completion of a task. Give any girl the opportunity to do her best and she will. Sometimes that means changing a few rules or approaching an activity in a more creative way. Here are some examples of ways to modify activities:

- Invite a girl to complete an activity after she has observed others doing it.

- If you are visiting a museum to view sculpture, find out if a girl who is blind might be given permission to touch the pieces.
- If an activity requires running, a girl who is unable to run could be asked to walk or do another physical movement.

In addition, note that “people-first” language puts the person before the disability.

You Can Say...	Instead of Saying...
She has a learning disability	She is learning disabled
She has a developmental delay	She is mentally retarded; she is slow
She uses a wheelchair	She is wheelchair-bound

When interacting with a girl (or parent/guardian) with a disability, consider these final tips:

- When talking to a girl with a disability, speak directly to her, not through a parent or friend.
- It is okay to offer assistance to a girl with a disability, but wait until your offer is accepted before you begin to help. Listen closely to any instructions the person may have.
- Leaning on a girl’s wheelchair is invading her space and is considered annoying and rude.
- When speaking to a girl who is deaf and using an interpreter, speak to the girl, not to her interpreter.
- When speaking for more than a few minutes to a girl who uses wheelchair, place yourself at eye level.
- When greeting a girl with a visual disability, always identify yourself and others. You might say, “Hi, it’s Sheryl. Tara is on my right, and Chris is on my left.”

Registering Girls with Cognitive Disabilities

Girls with cognitive disabilities can be registered as closely as possible to their chronological ages. They wear the uniform of that grade level. Make any adaptations for the girl to ongoing activities of the grade level to which the group belongs. Young women with cognitive disorders may choose to retain her girl membership through their 21st year, and then move into an adult membership category.

Chapter 5: Staying Safe—Always!

In Girl Scouting, the emotional and physical safety and well-being of girls is always a top priority! Here's what you need to know.

Knowing Your Responsibilities

You, the parents/guardians of the girls in your group, and the girls themselves share the responsibility for staying safe. The next three sections flesh out who's responsible for what.

Responsibilities of the Volunteer

One of your responsibilities as a volunteer is to safeguard the health of the girls in your group and instill in them a sense of safety. This responsibility may take the form of:

- Preventing injury and illness to participants in Girl Scout activities
- Demonstrating a concern for the health and welfare of the individuals for whom you are responsible
- Honoring pluralism and diversity so that girls feel emotionally safe—that is, accepted by and connected with you and other girls in your group

Girl Scouts trusts you to:

- Observe all safety guidelines and activity-specific checkpoints, as well as procedures outlined by your council, including those that supplement or augment Girl Scouts standards. That information is available both in this chapter and in *Safety-Wise*, a book available from your council. Also be sure to follow local, state, and federal laws and ordinances.
- Take advantage of the learning opportunities offered by your council.
- Involve girls in safety planning (events should be girl-led, but girls will require guidance from you on staying safe).
- Be a role model for girls, adhering to the following guidelines at all time:
 - Never, ever, ever use illegal drugs!
 - Don't smoke cigarettes or drink alcohol in the presence of girls.

- Never carry firearms or ammunition in the presence of girls. If you're facilitating a marksmanship activity, transport weapons separately.
- Never engage in child abuse of any kind, as defined by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. Abuse includes neglect, physical injury, emotional maltreatment including verbal abuse of a child, and sexual abuse. Sexual advances, improper touching, and sexual activity of any kind with girl members are strictly prohibited.

Responsibilities of Parents and Guardians

You want to engage each parent or guardian in assisting you in ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of girls. Clearly communicate to parents and guardians that they are expected to do the following:

- Provide permission for their daughters to participate in Girl Scouting as well as provide additional consent for activities that take place outside the scheduled meeting place, involve overnight travel, involve the use of special equipment, and/or cover sensitive issues.
- Make provisions for their daughters to get to and from meeting places or other designated sites in a timely manner and inform you if someone other than the parent or guardian will drop off or pick up the child.
- Provide their daughters with appropriate clothing and equipment for activities, or contact you before the activity to find sources for the necessary clothing and equipment.
- Follow Girl Scout safety guidelines and encourage their children to do the same.
- Assist you in planning and carrying out program activities as safely as possible.
- Participate in parent/guardian meetings.
- Be aware of appropriate behavior expected of their daughters as determined by the council and you.
- Assist volunteers if their daughters have special needs or abilities and their help is solicited.

Responsibilities of Girls

Girls who learn about and practice safe and healthy behaviors are likely to establish lifelong habits of safety consciousness. For that reason, each Girl Scout is expected to:

- Assist you and other volunteers in safety planning.
- Listen to and follow your instructions and suggestions.
- Learn and practice safety skills.
- Learn to “think safety” at all times and to be prepared.
- Identify and evaluate an unsafe situation.

- Know how, when, and where to get help when needed.

Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need

Girl Scouts has established adult-to-girl ratios—that is, a chart that shows the minimum number of adults needed to supervise a specific number of girls. (Councils may also establish maximums due to size or cost restrictions.) These supervision ratios were devised to ensure the safety and health of girls—for example, if one adult has to respond to an emergency, a second adult is always on-hand for the rest of the girls. It may take you a minute to get used to the layout of this chart, but once you start to use it, you’ll find the chart extremely helpful.

	Group meetings: Two non-related adults (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls	Group meetings: Plus one adult for each additional number of girls	Series, travel, and camping: Two unrelated adults (at least one of whom is female) for each number of girls	Series, travel, and camping: Plus one adult for each additional number of girls
Girl Scout Daisy (K–1)	12	6	6	4
Girl Scout Brownie (2–3)	20	8	12	6
Girl Scout Junior (4–5)	25	10	16	8
Girl Scout Cadette (6–8)	25	12	20	10
Girl Scout Senior (9–10)	30	15	24	12

Girl Scout Ambassador (11–12)	30	15	24	12
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Here are some examples: If you have a group meeting with 17 Daisies, you need three non-related adults (in other words, not your sister, spouse, parent, or child), at least one of which is female. If, however, you have 17 Cadettes attending a group meeting, you need only two non-related adults, at least one of which is female. Likewise, if you’re taking 13 Brownies on a trip, you need three non-related adults present, at least one of which is female. But 13 Seniors on a trip requires only two non-related adults, at least one of which is female.

In addition to the adult-to-girl ratio chart, please remember that adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old (or at the age of majority defined by the state if it is older than 18),

Approaching Activities

How can you, as a Girl Scout volunteer, determine whether an activity is safe and appropriate? Good judgment and common sense often dictate the answer. What is safe in one circumstance may not be safe in another. An incoming storm, for example, might force you to assess or discontinue an activity. If you are uncertain about the safety of an activity, call your council staff with full details and don’t proceed without approval. Err on the side of caution and make the safety of girls your most important consideration. One of the most oft-used components of *Safety-Wise* is the list of activity checkpoints in the second half of that book. Volunteers who are about to engage with girls in an activity—say, bicycling—can turn to *Safety-Wise*, read the Bicycling Activity Checkpoint, and understand all the safety precautions that must be taken.

When planning activities with girls, note the abilities of each girl and carefully consider the progression of skills from the easiest part to the most difficult. Make sure the complexity of the activity does not exceed girls’ individual skills—bear in mind that skill levels decline when people are tired, hungry, or under stress. Also use activities as opportunities for teamwork, which is one of the outcomes for the connect key in the GSLE (see Chapter 3)!

Health Histories (Including Examinations and Immunizations)

Each council handles health histories differently. The staff at your council office may take care of obtaining and storing girls’ health histories—which may include a physician’s examination and a list of immunizations—as needed. Or, you may be asked to maintain these records for your group. Either way, please keep in mind that information from a health examination is confidential and may be shared only with people who must know this information (like a girl herself and her parent/guardian).

[Council: Update to match your council’s process]

For philosophical or religious reasons, some parents/guardians may object to immunizations or medical examinations. Councils must attempt to make provisions for these girls to attend Girl Scout functions in a way that accommodates these beliefs.

It is important for you to also be aware of any medications a girl may take or allergies she may have.

- Medication, including over-the-counter products, must never be dispensed without prior written permission from a girl's custodial parent or guardian. (Your council can provide this form.) Some girls may need to carry and administer their own medications, such as bronchial inhalers, an EpiPen, or diabetes medication.
- Common food allergies include dairy products, eggs, soy, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts, and seafood. This means that, before you serve peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches, cookies, or chips as a snack, *ask* whether anyone is allergic to peanuts, dairy products, or wheat!

Girl Scout Activity Insurance

A portion of your annual registration dues pays for supplementary insurance for that member only. This insurance provides up to the specified maximum for medical expenses incurred as a result of an accident while the members is participating in an approved, supervised Girl Scout activity, after your primary insurance pays out. Non-registered parents, tag-alongs (brothers, sisters, friends), and other persons assisting you are not covered by basic coverage.

This insurance coverage is not intended to diminish the need for or replace family health insurance. And it does not duplicate medical expense benefits collected under other programs, so after approximately \$100 in benefits have been paid under this plan, the family's medical insurance takes over. If there is no family insurance or health care program, a specified maximum of medical benefits is available.

An optional plan of activity insurance is available for Girl Scouts taking extended trips and for non-members who participate in Girl Scout activities. These plans are secondary insurance that individuals are entitled to receive while participating in any approved, supervised Girl Scout activity. Optional insurance coverage is available for any Girl Scout activity that involves non-Girl Scouts or lasts longer than three days and two nights. Contact your council to find out how to apply.

[Council: Update to match your council's process]

Review the Girl Scouts insurance plan description by going to http://www.mutualofomaha.com/girl_scouts_of_the_usa/index.html.

Providing Emergency Care

As you know, emergencies can happen. Girls need to receive proper instruction in how to care for themselves and others in emergencies. They also need to learn the importance of reporting to adults any accidents, illnesses, or unusual behaviors. To this end, you can help girls:

- **Know what to report.** See the “Procedures for Accidents” section later in this chapter.
- **Establish and practice procedures for weather emergencies.** Certain extreme-weather conditions may occur in your area. Please consult with your council for the most relevant information for you to share with girls.
- **Establish and practice procedures for such circumstances as fire evacuation, lost persons, and building-security responses.** Every girl and adult must know how to act in these situations. For example, you and the girls, with the help of a fire department representative, should design a fire evacuation plan for meeting places used by the group.
- **Assemble a well-stocked first-aid kit that is always accessible.** First-aid administered in the first few minutes can mean the difference between life and death. In an emergency, secure professional medical assistance as soon as possible, normally by calling 911.

First-Aid/CPR

Emergencies require prompt action and quick judgment. Girl Scouts recommends that, when girls are present, at least one adult volunteer be first-aid/CRP certified. For that reason, if you have the opportunity to get trained in council-approved first-aid/CPR, do it! You can take advantage of first-aid/CPR training offered by chapters of the American Red Cross, National Safety Council, EMP America, American Heart Association, or other sponsoring organizations approved by your council. CPR training must be adequate for the participants in the activity—that is, you must take child CPR if younger girls are present and adult CPR when working with older girls and adults. Among other things, these training sessions will teach you how to protect yourself and others from spreading infectious diseases (including HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, and others). You will also learn to assemble a first-aid kit that includes appropriate items for the activities you’re sharing with girls.

Make sure a general first-aid kit is available at your group meeting place and when girls are transported to and from an event. Please be aware that you may need to provide this kit, if one is not available at your meeting place. You can purchase a Girl Scout first-aid kit, you can buy a commercial kit, or you and the girls can assemble a kit yourselves. In addition to standard materials, all kits should contain a copy of a recognized first-aid book and your council and emergency telephone numbers (which you can get from your council contact). Girl Scout activity insurance forms, parent consent forms, and health histories need to be included, as well.

First-Aider

A first-aider is an adult volunteer who has taken Girl Scout–approved first-aid and CPR training that includes specific instructions for child CPR. If, through the American Red Cross, National Safety Council, EMP America, or American Heart Association, you have a chance to be fully trained in first-aid and CPR, doing so may make event- and activity-planning go a little more smoothly. The activity checkpoints in *Safety-Wise* tell you when a first-aider needs to be present—so, and if you’re a first-aider, you’ll be all set!

Procedures for Accidents

Although you hope the worst never happens, you must observe council procedures for handling serious accidents or and fatalities. At the scene of an accident, first provide all possible care for the sick or injured person. Follow established council procedures for obtaining medical assistance and reporting the emergency. To do this, you must always have on hand the names and telephone numbers of council staff, parents/guardians, and local emergency services such as the police, fire department, or hospital emergency technicians. Check with you council for emergency contact information. **[Council: You may want to insert emergency contact info]**

After receiving a report of an accident, council staff will immediately arrange for additional assistance, if needed, at the scene. She or he will notify custodial parents/guardians or other appropriate adults. If a child needs emergency medical care as the result of an accident or injury, first contact emergency medical services, and then follow council procedures for accidents and incidents. Your adherence to these procedures is critical, especially with regard to notifying parents or guardians. If the media is involved, let council-designated staff discuss the incident with these representatives.

In the event of a fatality or other serious accident, notify the police. A responsible adult must remain at the scene. In the case of a fatality, do not disturb the victim or surroundings. Follow police instructions. Do not share information about the accident with anyone but the police, your council, and, if applicable, insurance representatives or legal counsel.

Certain extreme-weather conditions may occur in your area. Please consult with your council for the most relevant information.

[Council: Update to match your council's process]

Chapter 6:

Taking Trips and Hosting Events

Some of the most memorable moments in a Girl Scout's life happen while attending special events and taking trips. This chapter helps you prepare girls to attend local or regional events, plan for and take trips of any scope and duration, and even begin to plan an event of their own creation.

Remember that every time a group meets at a time and location different from the regular group meeting, you must use a permission form—even if the girls are responsible for getting to that location on their own. Permission forms give parents the “who, what, when, where, and why,” so that they can decide whether their daughter can participate in an event or go on a trip. A signed permission form permits you to include the girl in the activity and also provides you with up-to-date emergency contact information.

Also be sure to discuss all the following with the girls before you leave on any trip (you may also want to put this information in writing and have girls sign it):

- Who her buddy is—and how the buddy system works
- What to do if she is accidentally separated from the group
- What to do if emergency help is needed
- How to perform basic first-aid procedures
- How to deal with a large crowd (if applicable)
- What behaviors you expect—and what consequences exist for not living up to those behaviors

Travel Security and Safety Tips

Share these safety tips with girls before you leave on any trip that involves a stay at a hotel, motel, hostel, or dormitory:

- Always lock the door behind you, using the deadbolt and the chain or anchor.
- Do not open the door for strangers; if hotel staff is at the door, call the front desk to confirm.
- Don't shout out or display your room number when in the presence of strangers.
- Never leave jewelry, cameras, electronics, cash, or credit cards in your room.
- Never leave luggage unattended in the hotel lobby (or, for that matter, in an airport or train station).
- When arriving at the hotel, locate emergency exits.
- Keep a small flashlight on your bedside table, along with a small bag with your room key, wallet, passport, and cell phone. Take the flashlight and bag with you if you have to leave the room in an emergency.
- If a fire alarm goes off, get out as quickly as possible without stopping to pack your suitcase.



- Before leaving your room, feel the door: If it is warm, do not open it. Stay in your room and stuff towels around the door. Call the hotel operator immediately. If the door is cool, proceed slowly out the door, looking for flames or smoke. Repeat these instructions for any door you encounter.
- Also contact the front desk to clear out any minibars or refrigerators in girls' rooms, to ensure that inappropriate movies are not accessible through TVs, and to disallow any long-distance calls from being placed from girls' rooms. Alert the hotel management that underage girls are staying in the hotel, and ask them to contact you if any girls are out of their rooms after bedtime.

Taking Trips with Girls

Girls love trips. And Girl Scouts is a great place for them to learn how to plan and take trips, because travel is built on a progression activities—that is, one activity leads to the next. Girl Scout Daisies, for example, can begin with a discovery walk. As girls grow in their travel skills and experience and can better manage the planning process, they progress to longer trips. Here are some examples of the progression of events and trips:

- **Short trips to points of interest in the neighborhood (Daisies and older):** A walk to the nearby garden or a short ride by car or public transportation to the firehouse or courthouse
- **Day trip (Brownies and older):** An all-day visit to the point of historical or natural interest (bringing their own lunch) or a day-long trip to a nearby city (stopping at a restaurant for a meal)
- **Overnight trips (Brownies and older):** One (or, possibly two) nights away to a state or national park, historic city, or nearby city for sightseeing, staying in a hotel, motel, or campground
- **Extended overnight trips (Juniors and older):** Three or four nights camping or a stay in a hotel, motel, or hostel within a girls' home region (for example, New England, the Upper Midwest, the Southeast, the Pacific Northwest, and so on)
- **National trips (Cadettes and older):** Travel anywhere in the country, often lasting a week or more
- **International trips (Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors):** Travel around the world, often requiring one or two years of preparation; when girls show an interest in traveling abroad, contact your council to get permission to plan the trip and download the Global Travel Toolkit, which is available at www.girlscouts.org/program/gscentral/travel

Of course, local trips that last a day or less aren't only for Daisies. On the contrary: Short, local outings are an opportunity for girls of all grade levels to spend time with other Girl Scouts for all sorts of reasons. Girls may volunteer as a group to work with Habitat for Humanity on successive Saturdays to help build a house for a family, or they may get together for a long bike ride on a greenway or bike trail and end with a picnic lunch.

The World Centers

Four lodges are available in England, Mexico, Switzerland, and India for use by Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, each with hostel- or dormitory-style accommodations. These centers are operated by WAGGGS (World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts) and offer low-cost accommodations and special programs. They are also a great way to meet Girl Guides and Girl Scouts from around the world. Visit www.wagggsworld.org for more information.

Taking trips is an ideal way to offer girls leadership opportunities. This is why ideas for field trips, camping trips, and retreats are sewn into the journey books! The three processes discussed in Chapter 3 (girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning) work beautifully as girls lead their own trip-planning, cooperatively plan every aspect of the trip, and learn through their travels what works and what doesn't. In the same way, the three leadership keys stretch girls as they spend weeks, months, or even years group-planning a trip, which may include an extensive take action component.

Given how much opportunity exists for girls to grow in their leadership skills by traveling with other Girl Scouts, travel is one of the Girl Scout pathways discussed in Chapter 1. This means that although some girls who are in a group (for example, a troop of Cadettes) may decide to travel together, a pathway also exists for girls who are not otherwise involved in Girl Scouts—or who are involved in one or more pathways but want to do additional traveling with other girls—to get together specifically for the purpose of traveling locally, regionally, and even internationally.

To ensure that any travel you do with girls infuses the GSLE at every opportunity, limit your role to facilitating the girls' brainstorming and planning—but never doing the work for them. Allow the girls to lead, allow them to learn collaboratively, and let them learn by doing (and by making mistakes). All the while, however, provide ideas and insight, ask tough questions when you have to, and support all their decisions with enthusiasm and encouragement!

Tips for Girls Traveling Alone

If a Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador will be traveling alone, use the opportunity to help her feel comfortable with and capable of being on her own. Always talk first with her parents to assess her maturity and ability to handle herself, and have them complete an emergency form. If she is flying, also discuss the possibility of booking a non-stop flight to make her trip that much less stressful, and ask parents to contact the airline, which will make special arrangements for any unaccompanied minor. With the girl herself, develop a trip plan, discuss hotel security and safety, and talk about avoiding excess communication with strangers, *not* wearing a nametag, and avoiding exposing money or other items (such as high-end cell phones and iPods) that are attractive to pickpockets.

Facilitating Girl-Led Trip Planning

Whether the trip is a day hike or a cross-country trek, basic steps of trip planning are essentially the same. It's true that as the destination gets farther, more complex, or is of greater duration, the details become richer and more complex, but planning every trip—from a day-long event to an international trek—starts by asking the following:

- What do we hope to experience?
- Who will we want to talk to and meet? What will you ask?
- Where are we interested in going?

- When are we all available to go?
- Will everyone in our group be able to go?
- Are there physical barriers that cannot be accommodated?
- What are visiting hours and the need for advance reservations?
- What are our options for getting there?
- What's the least this trip could cost? What's the most?
- What can we do now to get ourselves ready?
- How will we earn the money?
- What's the availability of drinking water, restrooms, and eating places?
- Where is emergency help available?
- What safety factors must we consider?
- What will we do as we travel?
- What will we do when we get there?
- What will we do when we return home?

As girls answer these questions, they begin the trip-planning process. In time, girls begin to make specific arrangements, attend to a myriad of details, create a budget and handle money, and accept responsibility for their personal conduct and safety. And later, after they've returned from a successful event or trip, girls also have the chance to evaluate their experiences and share them with others.

Travel Checklist

If your group is thinking about travel, consider first whether the girls are mature enough to handle the trip. In determining a group's readiness for travel, assess the group's:

- Ability to be away from their parents and their home
- Ability to adapt to unfamiliar surroundings and situations
- Ability to make decisions well and easily
- Previous cross-cultural experiences
- Ability to get along with each other and handle challenges
- Ability to work well as a team
- Skills and interests
- Language skills (where applicable)

Obtaining Council Permission for Trips

Before any trip, no matter how short, you need to obtain council permission. Please provide the following information when seeking approval:

- Detailed itinerary
- Specific activities involved

- Location and type of premises to be used
- Inclusive dates and times
- Numbers of girls who will be participating (parental permissions must be obtained)
- Numbers of adults participating, their gender, and their roles
- Participants' skill levels, if applicable
- Consultants or resource people who will be involved
- Other groups or organizations that will be involved
- Planned safety precautions
- Any specialized equipment that will be used
- Mode of transportation
- Required agreements or contracts (for example, hiring a bus, use of premises)

Transporting Girls

Transportation decisions are an important aspect to any event or trip planning, and your greatest concern is *always* safety. If you or the girls are arranging group transportation, whether for a day trip or for a much longer travel event, consider the basics of both private and public transit (which is preferred).

Public Transportation

Public transportation includes trains, subways, buses, ferries, and airlines. Public transportation is regulated, which makes it preferable to chartered vehicles, but this mode of transportation is not without challenges. The biggest challenge with any public transportation is staying together as a group, so be sure everyone has directions and a map, and always designate a meet-up area if anyone gets separated. Girls also need to stay vigilant for criminals, both those who might do them bodily harm and those who are interested in stealing their money, jewelry, and electronic devices. But as long as you prepare them for their exciting journeys on public transportation, and they'll have an adventure they'll remember for years!

Private Transportation

Private transportation includes private passenger vehicles, rental cars, privately owned or rented recreational vehicles and campers, chartered buses, chartered boats, and chartered flights. Anyone who is driving a vehicle with more than 12 passengers must be an professional driver who possesses a commercial driver's license (CDL)—check with your council to determine specific rules about renting large vehicles.

[Council: You may want to customize the above]

Please keep in mind the following non-negotiable points regarding private transportation:

- Even though written agreements are always required when renting or charting, you are *not* authorized to sign an agreement or contract. Such an agreement must instead be signed by the person designated by your council's board of directors.
- Check with your council to make sure you are following accepted practices when using private transportation; this ensures that both you and your council are protected by liability insurance in the event of an accident.

When driving a car, RV, or camper (and please do not ever transport girls in flatbed or panel trucks, in the bed of a pickup, or in a camper-trailer!), take the following precautions and ask any other drivers (and all drivers must be adults—girls should not be transporting other girls!) to do the same:

- Keep directions and a road map in the car, along with a first-aid kit and a flashlight.
- Check your lights, signals, tires, windshield wipers, horns, and fluid levels before each trip and check them periodically on long trips.
- Wear your seat belt at all times, and insist that all passengers do the same; keep girls under 12 in the back seats to avoid injury from an airbag deploying.
- Follow all the established rules of the road in your state (following the speed limit, keeping a two-car-length between you and the car ahead of you, not talking or texting on a cell phone, driving with your headlights on, and so on).
- Avoid driving for extended periods at night, when tired, or taking medication that makes you drowsy.
- Plan rest stops every few hours; if driving with others, prearrange stopping places along the way.
- If the car is rented, be sure the car is adequately insured.

Alternately, girls need to adhere to the following when riding in vehicles. You may want to create a contract listing the following that girls sign before leaving on any trip. Girls will:

- Follow all rules and instructions for this trip.
- Keep seat belts fastened at all times.
- Don't argue, yell, or throw things.
- Play games or listen to music *quietly* with other passengers.
- Stay with the group during stops.
- Alert the driver to a missing buddy, an obstacle, or an open door or trunk.

Hosting an Event

Girls may decide they're ready to host an event for other Girl Scouts, for members of your community, or for national or international attendees—chiefly as one of the take action outcomes of elevating and

inspiring others. Ideas for girl-led events with family, friends, and community experts are also available in the journey guides!

This section gives you a brief overview but does not substitute for the expertise of your council staff, which means that if girls in your group are interested in hosting an event, work closely with your council, first to obtain permission and second to ensure that the girls have covered every aspect of event planning.

As with any other activity, be sure girls are leading the event-planning, instead of sitting by passively while you or another adult plans the event. To get girls started, ask them to think about the following:

- What sort of event do we have in mind?
- Who is our intended audience?
- Does the audience have to be invited, or can anyone come?
- What's our main topic or focus?
- What's our objective—what do we hope to accomplish at the end of the day?
- Will one or more speakers need to be invited? If so, who? How do we find speakers?
- Where will the event take place?
- Is there a charge for this venue?
- Is the venue large enough to accommodate the audience?
- Do we have to obtain permission to use this venue? If so, from whom?
- Are there adequate facilities for the audience? If not, how much will extra port-a-pots cost and how many do we need?
- Is there adequate parking or a drop-off point for girls?
- Do we need tables? chairs? podiums? microphones? speakers?
- What sort of entertainment will be provide?
- Will we provide or sell refreshments? If so, what kinds?
- How many chaperones will we need? Who will we ask?
- What emergency care do we need to plan for? Is the event large enough that local police and fire departments need to be notified?
- Do we need to purchase additional insurance for non-Girl Scouts?
- How will we advertise the event?
- What decorations will we use?
- Will we give away any keepsakes?
- Will we charge for the event?
- Who will set up the event?
- Who will clean up after the event?
- How will we determine whether the event was a success?

Getting Back Together After Your Trip or Event

After your event or trip, take time to reminisce, tell stories, and share photos. Also plan some formal debriefing time with the girls for the following:

- Clean up and return borrowed or rented equipment.
- Write thank-you notes to people who helped along the way.
- Post photos and captions on your council's Web site.
- Evaluate the trip or event by discussing what was worthwhile and what the group would change or eliminate.
- Brainstorm ways to share the experience with others (especially younger Girl Scouts or school groups).
- Brainstorm ways to make the event better or bigger next year—or decide that one year was enough!
- Discuss potential take-action projects that could come from this trip or event.
- Encourage girls to keep in touch with friends made along the way.

Chapter 7: Managing Group Finances

Every Girl Scout group is responsible for planning and financing its own activities. This puts girls in charge, giving them the opportunity (with your oversight) to cooperatively set goals, manage a budget, spend responsibly, maintain records, and develop good math and finance skills.

Girl Scout groups are funded by a share of money earned through council-sponsored product sale activities (such as Girl Scout Cookie sales), group money-earning activities (council-approved, of course!), and any dues your group may charge. (This is in addition to the \$12 annual membership dues that goes to the national organization.) This chapter gives you the ins and outs of helping girls manage their group finances, practice successful product-sales techniques, and develop additional group money-earning ideas, if needed.

Establishing an Account

If you're taking over an existing group, you'll likely inherit a checking account, but if you're starting a new group, you'll want to open a new account. This usually happens when there is money to deposit, such as from group dues, product sales, or group money-earning activities.

Follow your council's financial policies and procedures for setting up an account. Most council-sponsored produce sales have specific banking procedures, as well.

[Council: You may want to insert local financial policies and procedures here]

Closing a Bank Account

Girl Scout funds do not become the property of any individual girl or adult. Instead, the group may decide to donate any unused funds to a worthwhile organization, to another group, or for girl activities. As when closing a personal account, be sure all checks and other debits have cleared the account before you close it, and realize that you may have to close the account in person. Turn all remaining funds over to a council staff member.

Money-Earning Basics

Girls earn money in two distinct ways:

- “Council-sponsored product sales” are council-wide sales of Girl Scout–authorized products (such as Girl Scout Cookies, calendars, magazines, or nuts and candy), in which members participate.

- “Group money-earning” refers to activities organized by the group (not by the council) that are planned and carried out by girls (in partnership with adults) and that earn money for the group. These activities must be approved by the council.

Girls’ participation in both council-sponsored product sale activities and group money-earning projects is based upon the following:

- Voluntary participation
- Written permission of each girl’s parent or guardian
- An understanding of (and ability to explain clearly to others) why the money is needed
- An understanding that money-earning should not exceed what the group needs to support its activities.
- Observance of local ordinances related to involvement of children in money-earning activities, as well as health and safety laws
- Vigilance in protecting the personal safety of each girl
- Arrangements for safeguarding the money

In addition, consider the following reminders or cautions:

- Girl Scout Daisies (in kindergarten and first grades) may be involved in council-sponsored product sale activities, but they cannot collect money in any other way except through group dues or parental contributions.
- Group money-earning activities need to be suited to the age and abilities of the girls and consistent with the principles of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.
- Money raised is for Girl Scout activities and is not to be retained by individuals. Girls can, however, be awarded sales incentives and/or may earn credits from their Girl Scout product sales.
- Girl Scouts forbids use of games of chance, the direct solicitation of cash, and product-demonstration parties.
- Obtain written approval from your council before a group money-earning event; most councils ask that you submit a request for approval of a group money-earning event form.
- Money-earning may not be conducted on the Internet. Girls can, however, send e-mails to friends and families to market cookies and other products; girls 13 and older can also use social networking site to do the same.
- Groups are encouraged to participate in council product sales as their primary money-earning activity; any group money-earning shouldn’t compete with the Girl Scout Cookie Program or other council product sales.
- Funds acquired through group money-earning projects must be reported and accounted for by the group, while following council procedures.

The best way to earn money for your group is to start with Girl Scout Cookie sales and other council-sponsored product sales. From there, your group may decide to earn additional funds on its own.

Helping Girls with Financial Planning

One of your opportunities as a volunteer is to facilitate girl-led financial planning, which may include the following steps.

1. **Set goals for money-earning activities.** What do girls hope to accomplish through this activity? In addition to earning money, what skills do they hope to build? What leadership opportunities present themselves?
2. **Create a budget.** Use a budget worksheet that includes both expenses (the cost of supplies, admission to events, travel, and so on) and available income (the group's account balance, projected Cookie sale proceeds, and so on).
3. **Determine how much the group needs to earn.** Subtract expenses from available income to determine how much money your group needs to earn.
4. **Make a plan.** The group can brainstorm and make decisions about their financial plans. Will Cookie and other product sales—if approached proactively and energetically—earn enough money to meet the groups goals? If not, which group money-earning activities might offset the difference in anticipated expense and anticipated income? Will more than one group money-earning activity be necessary to achieve the group's financial goal? In this planning stage, engage the girls through the Girl Scout processes (girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning) and consider the value of any potential activity. Have them weigh feasibility, implementation, and safety factors.
5. **Write it out.** Once the group has decided on its financial plan, describe it in writing. If the plan involves a group money-earning activity, fill out an application for approval from your council and submit it along with the budget worksheet the girls created.

Remember: It's great for girls to have opportunities, like the Girl Scout Cookie sale, to earn funds that help them fulfill their goals. As a volunteer, try to help girls balance the money-earning they do with opportunities to enjoy other activities that have less emphasis on earning and spending money. Take-action projects, for example, may not always require girls to spend a lot of money!

Understanding Financial and Sales Abilities by Grade Level

As with other activities, girls progress in their financial and sales abilities as they get older. This section gives you some examples of the abilities of girls at each grade level.

Girl Scout Daisies

At the Daisy level (kindergarten and 1st grade),

- The group volunteer handles money, keeps financial records, and does all group budgeting.
- Parents/guardians may decide they will contribute to the cost of activities.
- Girls can participate in Girl Scout Cookie sales and other council-sponsored product sales.
- Daisies are always paired with an adult when selling anything. Girls do the asking and deliver the product, but adults handle the money and keep the girls secure.

Girl Scout Brownies

At the Brownie level (2nd and 3rd grades),

- The group volunteer handles money, keeps financial records, and shares some of the group-budgeting responsibilities.
- Girls discuss the cost of activities (supplies, fees, transportation, rentals, and so on).
- Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product sales.
- Girls may decide to pay dues.

Girl Scout Juniors

At the Junior level (4th and 5th grades)

- The group volunteer retains overall responsibility for long-term budgeting and record-keeping, but shares or delegates all other financial responsibilities.
- Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product sales.
- Girls decide on group dues, if any. Dues are collected by girls and recorded by a group treasurer (selected by the girls).
- Girls budget for the short-term needs of the group, on the basis on plans and income from the group dues.
- Girls budget for more long-term activities, such as overnight trips, group camping, and special events.
- Girls budget for take-action projects, including the Girl Scout Bronze Award, if they are pursuing it.

Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors

At the Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador levels (Grades 6 through 12),

- Girls estimate costs based on plans.

- Girls determine the amount of group dues (if any) and the scope of money-earning projects.
- Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product sales.
- Girls carry out budgeting, planning, and group money-earning projects.
- Girls budget for extended travel, take-action projects, and leadership projects.
- Girls may be involved in seeking donations for take-action project, with council approval.
- Girls keep their own financial records and give reports to parents and group volunteers.
- Girls budget for take-action projects, including the Girl Scout Silver or Gold Awards, if they are pursuing them.

One critical task for each group, no matter what age, is to keep excellent records and establish a clear money trail. As the group volunteer, you're in charge of making sure money is spent wisely and that excellent records are kept (keeping copies of all receipts in a binder or folder), and tracking all income, too. For older girls, your job is to oversee their work, as *they* learn to keep impeccable records.

Selling Cookies (and Other Great Stuff): Continuing a Time-Honored Girl Scout Tradition

The selling of Girl Scout Cookies and other council-sponsored products is an integral part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, focusing particularly on financial literacy. In fact, Girl Scout Cookie and other product sales is the leading entrepreneurial program for girls: Many successful business women today say they got their start selling Girl Scout Cookies. Girls practice life skills like goal setting, money management, and teamwork, all while having a lot of fun! During cookie activities, girls are members of a team working toward a common goal, with each girl striving to do her best.

A Sweet Tradition

It has been 90 years since Girl Scouts began selling home-baked cookies to raise money. The idea was so popular that, in 1936, Girl Scouts enlisted bakers to handle the growing demand!

Two commercial bakers are licensed by Girl Scouts of the USA to produce Girl Scout Cookies—Little Brownie Bakers and ABC/Interbake Foods—and each council selects the baker of its choice. Each baker gets to name its own cookies (which is why some cookies have two names) and gets to decide which flavors it will offer in a given year, besides the three mandatory flavors (Thin Mints®, Do-Si-Dos®/Peanut Butter Sandwich®, and Trefoils®/Shortbread®).

Up to eight varieties are offered each year, including three mandatory flavors:

- **Thin Mints®:** Round dark-chocolate mint-flavored cookies.
- **Do-Si-Dos®/Peanut Butter Sandwich®:** Two oatmeal cookies with a layer of peanut butter sandwiched in between
- **Trefoils®/Shortbread®:** Shortbread cookies shaped like the Girl Scout trefoil

Other varieties have included:

- **Samoas® (Caramel deLites®):** Caramel, coconut, and chocolate doughnut-shaped cookies
- **Tagalongs® (Peanut Butter Patties®):** Round cookies with a layer of peanut butter that's covered in chocolate
- **Dulce de Leche®:** Rich cookies with caramel chips and stripes
- **Thanks-A-Lot®:** Shortbread cookies with a layer of fudge on the bottom
- **Lemonades®:** Shortbread cookies with lemon icing
- **Lemon Chalet Cremes®:** A sandwich cookie with a cinnamon-spice flavor
- **Daisy Go Rounds®:** Reduced-fat cinnamon cookies
- **Thank U Berry Munch®:** Crispy vanilla cookie with cranberries and white chocolate flakes

Note that all cookies are kosher and have zero transfat per serving (at the minimum serving, based on FDA guidelines); several varieties are also nut-free. Complete nutritional information and descriptions of each year's varieties are available online at www.girlscoutcookies.org and on your baker's Web site.

In addition, council product sales may include nuts, candies, and magazines. Check with your local council for exact products and sales dates.

[Council: You may want to customize here]

Tying Product Sales to the GSLE

Selling Girl Scout Cookies and other products gives girls a chance to run a business and practice leadership skills they can use in their lives. Girls will enjoy all the benefits this important component of the GSLE has to offer: They'll engage in planning and goal-setting (aiming to achieve their personal best), teamwork, marketing, money management (including the importance of saving for future needs), and the enduring skill of customer service. As girls grow, they will get to know their product (ingredients and calories, for example) and design innovative and creative marketing strategies and tools. Girls will also be encouraged to share with customers how product sales help their council and their community. Volunteers can help girls develop leadership skills while they engage in Girl Scout Cookie activities by using the Girl Scout processes of girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning. And as they participate in product sales, girls will:

- **Discover** a strong sense of self and gain practical life skills when they create personal goals, deliver presentations, and find ways to customize a marketing plan, for example. A girl can discover a lot about herself and her values as she makes decisions about money-earning, customer-management, and so on.
- **Connect** with their group members as they set group goals and develop a list of positions related to cookie activities such as accounting manager, event planner, public relations specialist, and graphic designer. Girls can learn about their communities as they meet families, mentors, and business owners who have worked in these roles. Girls can also use the Cookie Program as an

opportunity to talk to customers about ways to improve the community or to solicit ideas for a local take-action idea bank.

- **Take action** as they learn to map neighborhood business and other resources that can help them consider community service needs. Girls use product sale money to make a difference in their communities, whether through a take-action project or a philanthropic donation. And don't forget: Money that goes to the council from product sales allows councils to take action by serving all Girl Scouts!

Determining Who Can Participate

All girl members (including Daisies)—in any pathway (travel, camp, series, or troop)—may participate in council-sponsored product sales activities, under volunteer supervision. Your council provides training on the procedures to follow during each sale through a cascading staff and volunteer effort. Your council also establishes guidelines and procedures for conducting the sale and determines how the proceeds and recognition system will be managed.

Knowing Where the Proceeds Go

Your council will provide a breakdown of “how the cookie crumbles” in your council. Share this information with girls and their parents/guardians! Proceeds resulting from product sales support program activities—in fact, council-sponsored product sales are a primary way in which your council funds itself. The percentage of money to be allocated to participating groups (like yours) is determined by the council and explained to girls and adults as part of the product sale activity orientation.

The income from product sales does not become the property of individual girl members. Girls are, however, eligible for incentives and credits that they put toward Girl Scout activities, such as camp. Girls may earn official Girl Scout grade-appropriate awards related to product sale activities, and each council may choose to provide items such as participation patches, sales awards, and council credit for event fees, camp fees, grants for travel and take-action projects, as well as materials and supplies for program activities. The council plan for recognition applies equally to all girls participating in the product sale activity. Where at all possible, councils try to involve girls in the selection of awards and administration of money given to girls from product sales.

Safely Selling Girl Scout Cookies and Other Products

A few other considerations:

- Girl Scout councils do not sell cookies and other products; girls sell them.
- Parents and guardians must grant permission for girls to participate and are informed about the girls' whereabouts when they are engaged in product sale activities.

- Girl should be identifiable as Girl Scouts by wearing a Membership Pin, official uniform, tunic, sash or vest, or other Girl Scout clothing.
- Adult volunteers must monitor, supervise, and guide the sale activities of all age levels.
- Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors must be accompanied by an adult at all times. Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors who participate in door-to-door sales must be supervised by (but do not need to be directly accompanied by) an adult. Girls must *always* use the buddy system.
- Money due for sold products is collected when the products are delivered to the customer (or as directed by your council). Girls will need to know whether they can accept checks and to whom customers should write checks—find out from your council staff.
- Personal customer information should remain private. Customer credit-card information should not be collected by girls and should not be asked for on any form collected by girls.
- Girls can participate in no more than two council-sponsored product sale activities each year and only one of these may be a cookie sale.
- Girls or their families may not engage in selling Girl Scout Cookies or other products approved for council-sponsored product sales on the Internet. Girls can use e-mail as a marketing tool to let family, friends, and former customers know about the sale. Girls or their parents cannot set up online ordering or payment on private Web pages.
- Girls 14 and older may, with parent/guardian permission, use social networking (such as Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter) to market their Cookie sales.
- Before beginning any Cookies or other product sales with your group, refer to the Girl Scout Central section of www.girlscouts.org, under “Cookies.”

Additional Group Money-Earning

If the girls in your group find that, after cookie and other product sales results are in, they need additional money to meet their goals, they have other options available to them. The following sections help you understand both the opportunities and a few guidelines you need to be aware of.

Building upon the following list of ideas, facilitate a group brainstorming session to determine how your group will earn money:

- Washing cars, raking leaves, and doing other lawn work
- Holding a garage or tag sale
- Recycling items
- Hosting an event, such as a games or badge workshop for your council
- Making and selling craft items

- Ushering or helping in other ways at special events in the community
- Sponsoring dances, talent shows, fashion shows, or other forms of entertainment
- Group babysitting, such as at a service unit meeting, council function, or community organization's event or meeting
- Putting on parties or story hours for children
- Hosting a face-painting booth at a special event

Once an idea or two starts to gel, use the tips in the “Helping Girls with Financial Planning” section earlier in this chapter to facilitate a girl-led planning session. Have them plan all details of the event, and be sure to review with them the safety guidelines for any event in which they participate.

Collaborating with Sponsors and Other Organizations

Sponsors help Girl Scout councils ensure that all girls in the community have an opportunity to participate in Girl Scouting. Community organizations, businesses, and individuals may be sponsors and may provide group meeting places, volunteer their time, provide activity materials, loan equipment, or give financial support to Girl Scout groups. The sponsor's contribution can then be recognized by arranging for the girls to send thank-you cards, inviting the sponsor to a meeting or ceremony, or working together on a take-action project.

For information on working with a sponsor, consult your local council staff, who can give you guidance on the availability of sponsors, recruiting responsibility, and any council policies or practices that must be followed.

When collaborating with any other organization, keep two additional guidelines in mind:

- **Avoiding fundraising for other organizations:** Girl Scouts are not allowed, when identifying ourselves as Girl Scouts (such as wearing a uniform, a sash or vest, official pins, and so on), to solicit money on behalf of another organization. This includes participating in a walkathon or telethon while in uniform. You and your group can, however, support another organization through take-action projects or by making a donation from your group's account. And Girl Scouts as individuals are able to participate in whatever events they choose, so long as they're not wearing anything that officially identifies them as “Girl Scouts.”
- **Steering clear of political fundraisers:** When in an official Girl Scout capacity or in any way identifying yourselves as Girl Scouts, your group may not participate (directly or indirectly) in any political campaign or work on behalf of or in opposition to a candidate for public office. Letter-writing campaigns are not allowed, nor is participating in a political rally, circulating a petition, or carrying a political banner.

Appendix: Forms

[Council: Insert any forms here that you want volunteers to use throughout the year.]

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[Council: Adjust, based on new content, and double-check for accuracy before finalizing!]

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