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**NEW GIRL SCOUT RESEARCH EXPOSES
REALITY TV IMPACT ON GIRLS**

Northern Illinois - As reality TV has become staple entertainment for young people and adults alike, tween and teen girls who regularly view reality TV accept and expect a higher level of drama, aggression, and bullying in their own lives, and measure their worth primarily by their physical appearance, according to *Real to Me: Girls and Reality TV*, a national survey released today by the Girl Scout Research Institute.

The study found that the vast majority of girls think reality shows "often pit girls against each other to make the shows more exciting" (86 percent). When comparing the propensity for relational aggression between viewers and non-viewers of reality TV, 78 percent vs. 54 percent state that "gossiping is a normal part of a relationship between girls."

Regarding romantic relationships, reality TV viewers are more likely than non-viewers to say "girls often have to compete for a guy's attention" (74 percent vs. 63 percent), and are happier when they are dating someone or have a boyfriend/significant other (49 percent vs. 28 percent).

"Girls today are bombarded with media—reality TV and otherwise—that more frequently portrays girls and women in competition with one another rather than in support or collaboration. This perpetuates a 'mean-girl' stereotype and normalizes this behavior among girls," states Andrea Bastiani Archibald, Ph.D. Developmental Psychologist, Girl Scouts of the USA. "We don't want girls to avoid reality TV, but want them, along with their parents, to know what they are getting into when they watch it. Our national leadership program equips girls with the skills to decipher media fact from fiction and make healthy decisions for their own lives—separate from their sources of entertainment."

Girls who view reality TV regularly are also more focused on the value of physical appearance. 72 percent say they spend a lot of time on their appearance vs. 42 percent of non-viewers, while more than a third (38 percent) think that a girl's value is based on how she looks.

At the same time, girls surveyed who regularly view reality TV are more self-assured than non-viewers when it comes to an overwhelming majority of personal characteristics, with the majority considering themselves mature, a good influence, smart, funny, and outgoing. They are more likely than non-viewers to both aspire to leadership (46 percent vs. 27 percent) and to think they are currently seen as a leader (75 percent vs. 63 percent). In addition, they are more likely to see themselves as role models for other girls (75 percent vs. 61 percent).

The study revealed that reality TV has many upsides as well. 68 percent of girls agree that reality shows "make me think I can achieve anything in life" and 48 percent that they "help me realize there are people out there like me." Seventy-five percent of girls say that reality TV depicts people with different backgrounds and beliefs.

"We also want to emphasize the many positive benefits to reality TV, including its role as a learning and motivational tool," states Kimberlee Salmond, Senior Researcher, Girl Scout Research Institute. "For example, we know that many girls receive inspiration and comfort from reality TV and that 62 percent of girls say that these types of shows have raised their awareness of social issues and causes."

About the Girl Scouts Research Institute

Since its founding in 2000, the Girl Scout Research Institute has become an internationally recognized center for research and public policy information on the development and well-being of girls. Not just Girl Scouts, but all girls.

About Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois

Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois serves over 20,000 girls and nearly 6,000 adult volunteers in parts or all of Boone, Carroll, Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Jo Daviess, Kane, Kendall, Lake, LaSalle, Lee, McHenry, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside, and Winnebago counties.

Through the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, girls in grades K through 12 are engaged in discovering themselves, connecting with others, and taking action to make the world a better place. Girls develop leadership potential by participating in age-appropriate activities that enable

them to discover their values, skills, and the world around them. Activities in science and technology, business and economic literacy, and outdoor and environmental awareness provide girls with opportunities for fun and friendship while fostering the development of leadership skills and self-esteem.

To find out how you can become part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, call 800-242-5591, or visit our website at www.girlscoutsni.org.

About Girl Scouts of the USA

Founded in 1912, Girl Scouts of the USA is the preeminent leadership development organization for girls with 3.2 million girl and adult members worldwide. Girl Scouts is the leading authority on girls' healthy development, and builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. The organization serves girls from every corner of the United States and its territories. Girl Scouts of the USA also serves American girls and their classmates attending American or international schools overseas in 90 countries. For more information on how to join, volunteer, reconnect, or donate to Girl Scouts, call (800) GSUSA 4 U or visit www.girlscouts.org.

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