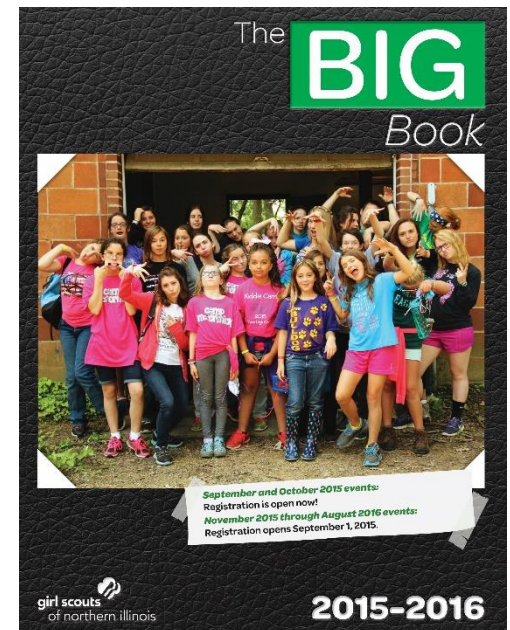


YOUR VOICE MATTERS!

GSNI's Long Range
Program Study 2014-
2015

2014-2015 YEAR IN REVIEW - SUCCESSES

- ❖ Girl Scout membership halted the trend of a 8-10% decline each year, ending the year with only a 2% decrease in overall membership.
- ❖ Volunteers worked hard delivering quality programming to girls, leading to greater re-registration in girl members.
- ❖ Parents, volunteers, and girls sold more cookies than ever – GSNI jumped from an average of 111 boxes sold per girl, to 130 boxes girl!
- ❖ We created the first-ever **BIG Book** of Girl Scout information, programs, events, and “extras”, based on what our parents and volunteers told us they wanted!
- ❖ Our financial position as a council has improved, leading to a clean audit and less of a deficit than in past years.



2014-2015 YEAR IN REVIEW - CHALLENGES

- ❖ Recruiting adult volunteers is still difficult – parents are busier than ever and so are their kids!
- ❖ Communicating with all of our members and potential members is costly and difficult to ensure messages get heard.
- ❖ GSNI still must cancel too many programs due to low registration.
- ❖ Camp properties are not used to their fullest capacity, and resident and troop camping has not increased.
- ❖ For all of these reasons, we chose to embark on the ***Long Range Program Study*** in 2014-2015.

WHAT IS THE LONG RANGE PROGRAM STUDY?

The purpose of the Long Range Program Study is to engage both Girl Scout members AND non-members to find out:

- ❖ What benefits and values girls get out of Girl Scouts;
- ❖ What benefits and values parents want for their girls;
- ❖ What activities can deliver those benefits and values;
- ❖ What activities are girls and parents most interested in;
- ❖ What other activities are already available in our area;
- ❖ What benefits, values, and activities Girl Scouts can offer that makes us different from other organizations;
- ❖ How we can support adult volunteers in leading those activities;
- ❖ And what resources, properties, and financial support we need to provide those activities.

THE PROCESS

Ask our
Volunteers

Town Halls
Nov. 2014

Online
Community
Dec. 2014

Adult
Survey
April 2015

Service Unit
Meetings
April 2015

Ask our
Parents

Town Halls
Nov. 2014

Online
Community
Dec. 2014

Adult
Survey April
2015

Ask our
Girls

G.I.R.L
Advisory
Group
Feb. 2015

Girl Surveys
May 2015

Program
and Event
Surveys
-Ongoing

Ask Non-
Members

Focus
Groups
Nov. 2014

Phone
Surveys
Jan. 2015

Online
Community
Feb. 2015

Research conducted by GSNI

Research
conducted by
Horizon
Insights, Inc.



TOP FINDINGS AMONG GIRL SCOUT VOLUNTEERS

1. When seeking help, Girl Scout volunteers first consult troop leaders (theirs or another), then the service unit, and then GSNI Council staff.
 - *Therefore, GSNI must make sure troop leaders and service units get accurate and helpful information as fast as possible to provide good service.*
2. Participation in training varies widely by Service Unit, which can effect girls' experiences in each region.
 - *Therefore, GSNI must offer a wider selection of training options so every volunteer can participate.*
3. Volunteers still have trouble delivering Journeys in a meaningful and fun way, or have lost interest in doing them all together.
 - *Therefore, GSNI must provide appropriate level-based resources to help leaders incorporate Journeys, and also emphasize other important aspects of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (badges, programs and events, field trips/travel, etc)*
4. The way a volunteer is recruited is important. Volunteers who step up right away are happier and more likely to stay than volunteers who have to be “coerced” into taking a position.
 - *Therefore, GSNI must hone our brand messaging and the benefits to volunteers of being involved in Girl Scouts, so we can help recruit happier volunteers who take their positivity to girls!*

TOP FINDINGS AMONG GIRL SCOUT PARENTS

1. The number one reason why parents sign their daughters up for Girl Scouts is to “improve her confidence”. Other top reasons are making friends, have fun, and gain leadership skills.
2. Parents of Girl Scouts expect their daughters to participate in more “outdoor experiences” – but they do not expect their daughters to participate in more troop camping or resident camp. They want more activities or field trips done outside.
 - Therefore, we must help volunteers feel comfortable leading activities outside and provide ready-made ways to do so.
3. Parents also expect their daughters to participate in community service and Take Action projects more often than they do – potentially between 3 and 6 times per year.
 - Therefore, we must provide training and information to volunteers to make helping your community a priority for girls.
4. Parents are generally very happy with their daughters’ experience in Girl Scouts, but they typically sign girls up to “try” an activity for a while before moving onto to something else as girls get older.
 - Therefore, we must strive to help our program evolve as a girl ages to ensure she stays interested and engaged in Girl Scouts.

TOP FINDINGS AMONG GIRL SCOUTS

1. Just like girls who are NOT our members, Girl Scout girls are involved in a variety of activities – anywhere from 2 – 6 other activities outside of Girl Scouts. The top activities are sports, religious activities, and the arts.
 - Therefore, we must offer flexible ways that girls can participate to fit within their busy schedules and complement the activities they are already doing.
2. Girls who are already Girl Scouts chose Girl Scouts as their 2nd most favorite activity – behind sports, but ahead of church activities, music, and other extra-curricular activities.
3. Girls who have a good experience with the Three Girl Scout Processes – Girl-Led, Learning by Doing, and Cooperative Learning, are more likely to learn more from the Girl Scout program, gain more leadership skills, and have more confidence.
 - Therefore, we must continue providing training to adult volunteers on the Three Processes so that every girl gets a quality Girl Scout Leadership Experience.
4. Girls who also use those processes are more likely to HAVE FUN and stay in Girl Scouts longer!

Ask Non-
Members

RESEARCH WITH NON-GIRL SCOUTS

- ❖ Conducting research with parents who do NOT already have Girl Scouts at home is much more difficult.
- ❖ In October 2014, GSNI engaged Horizon Insight, Inc., a market research firm located in Louisville, Kentucky, after getting bids from several different firms.
- ❖ Horizon Insight had specific experience working with other Girl Scout councils on similar projects, and several of the researchers also had young daughters in Girl Scouts and therefore had greater understanding of our brand and offerings.



RESEARCH WITH NON-GIRL SCOUTS

What was researched:

1. Perception of the Girl Scout brand
2. Benefits and values parents want for their daughters
3. Activities that parents and their daughters want, and the availability of those activities in their communities.

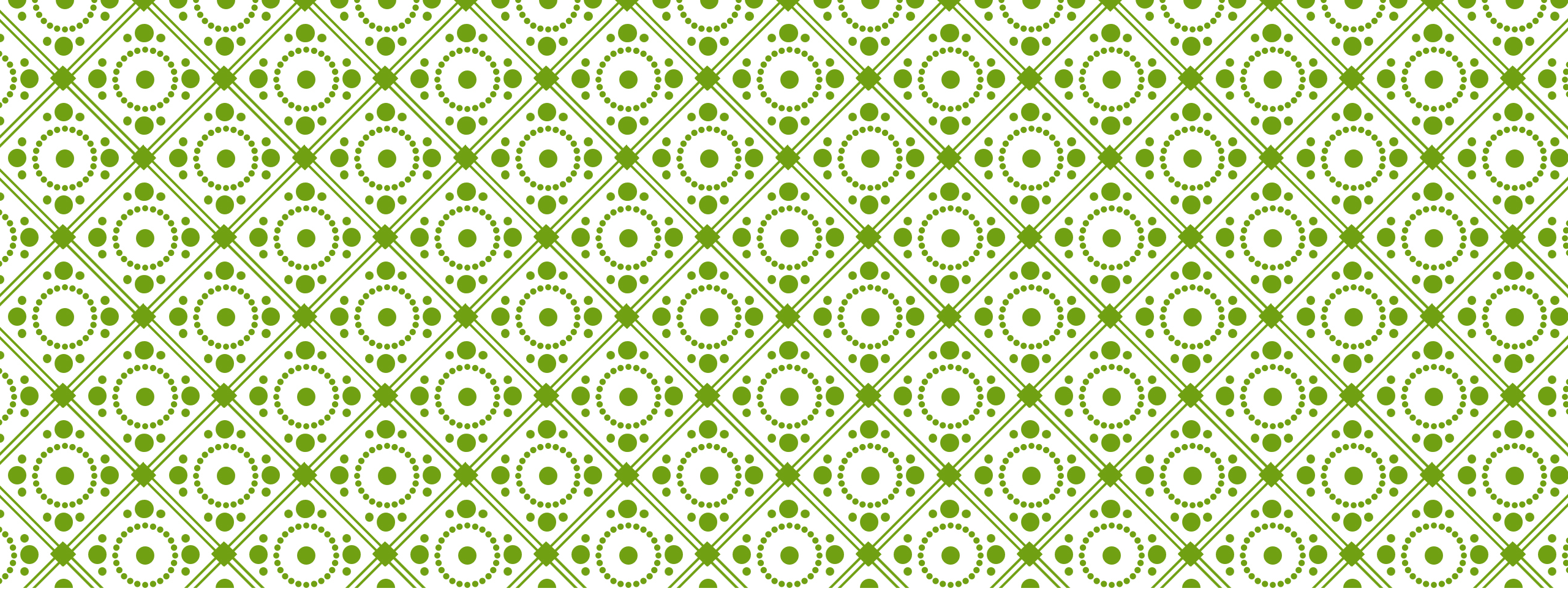
How it was researched:

Ask Non-Members

Focus Groups with moms and dads of girls K-12 grades
November 2014

Phone Surveys with parents of girls in GSNI territory
January 2015

Online Community with parents from phone surveys
February 2015



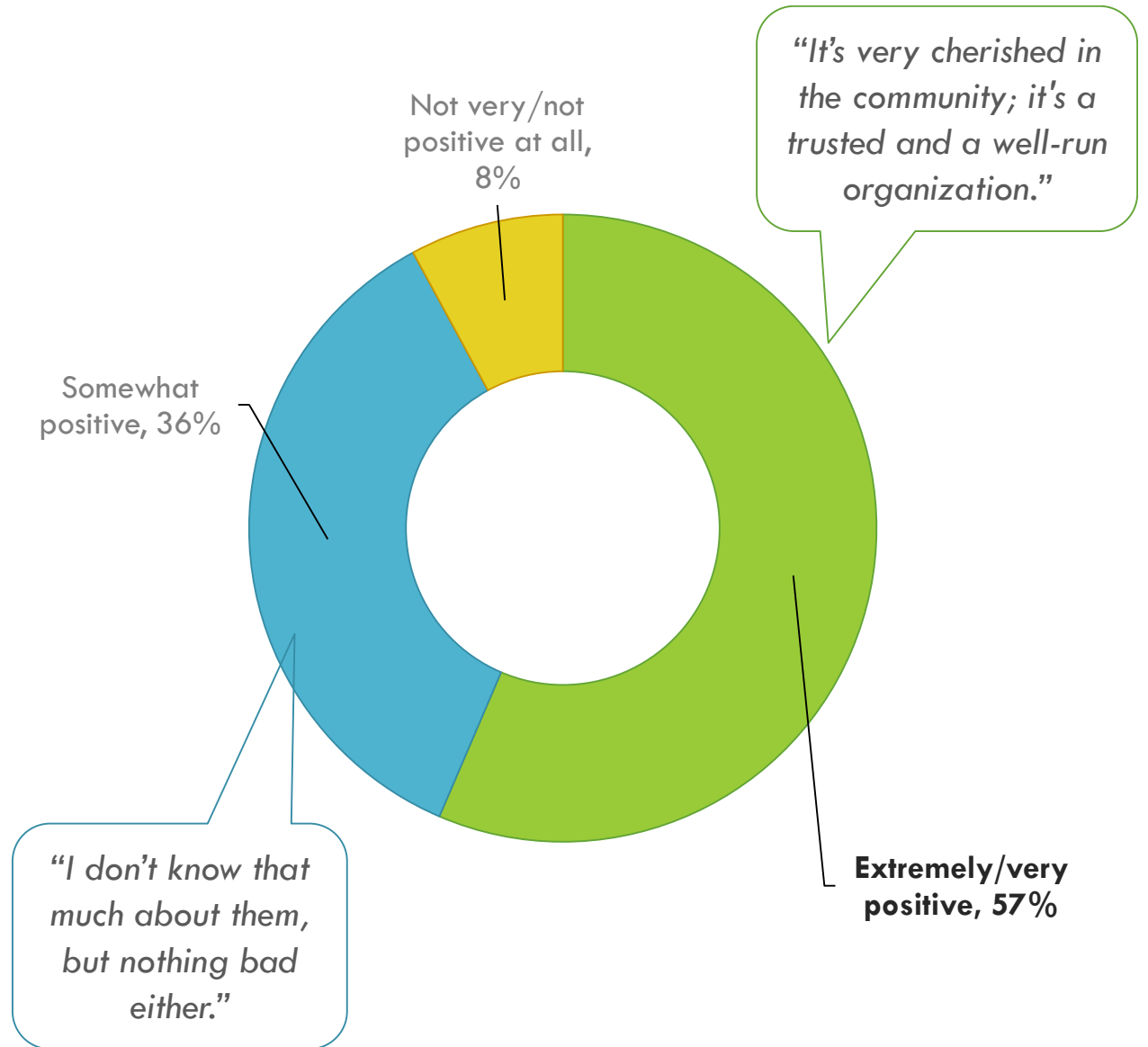
PERCEPTIONS OF THE GIRL SCOUT BRAND



GIRL SCOUT BRAND

Among parents who do **NOT** have daughters in Girl Scouts:

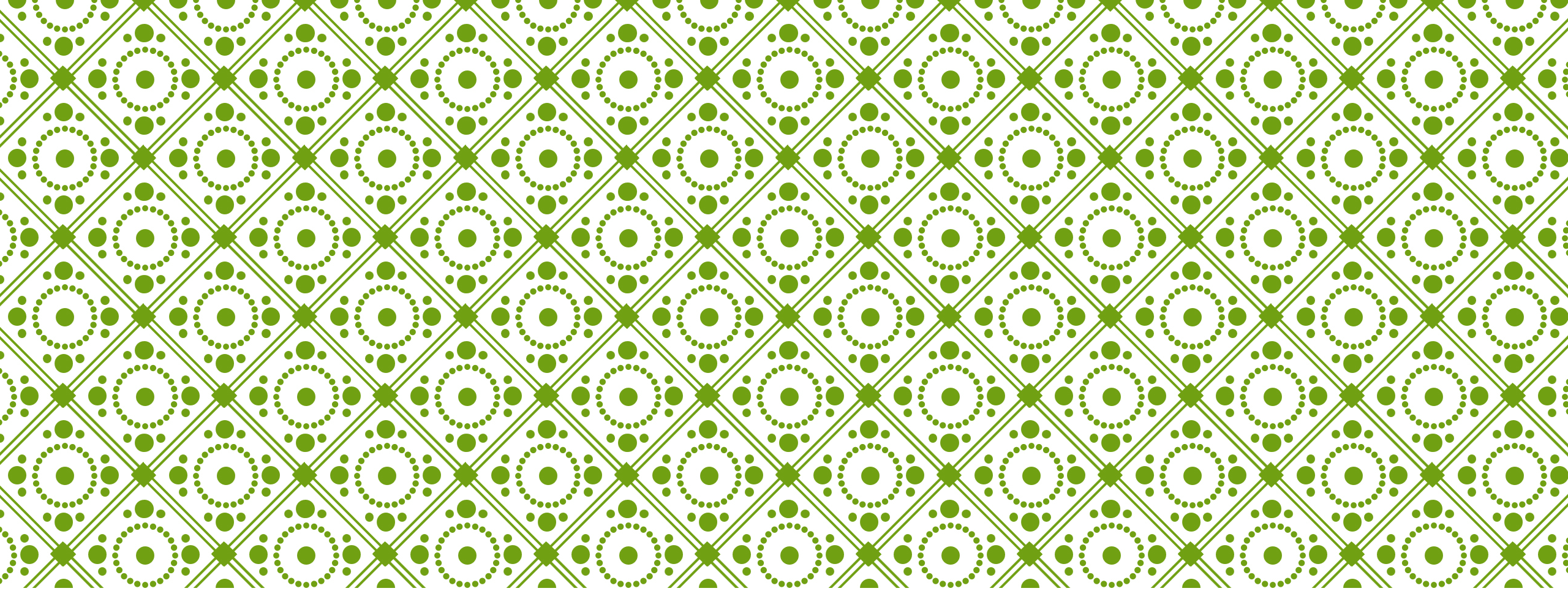
- ❖ Overall feel positive about Girl Scouts; over half see Girl Scouts as “extremely or very positive”.
- ❖ Feel it is organized and well-run, “classic” institution
- ❖ However, there is a knowledge gap about what Girl Scouts offers girls today.



GIRL SCOUT BRAND

Most Common Perceptions That Become Barriers

- ✓ *Girl Scouts is too “old-fashioned” and not relevant to today’s young girls*
- ✓ *Major time commitment for daughter AND parent*
- ✓ *Girl Scouts is only for young girls; no older than 4th/5th grade*
- ✓ *It’s for girls that don’t “fit” elsewhere*
- ✓ *Too much pressure on girls and parents to sell cookies or volunteer*



PARENTS' DESIRED BENEFITS AND VALUES



BENEFITS DESIRED BY PARENTS FOR DAUGHTERS

❖ Parents were first asked what benefits and values they seek when choosing activities for their daughter(s), i.e. – what they want their daughter(s) to gain by participating in an activity.

The benefits fell into 5 major categories:

1. **Practical** – learning organizational skills, financial skills, or life skills
2. **Social** – meeting new people, forming friendships, and learning to respect others
3. **Esteem** – gaining confidence, feeling accomplished, learning independence
4. **Teamwork** – learning to work in a team, solving problems as a team
5. **Leadership** – gaining leadership skills, making decisions, increasing physical skills

BENEFITS BY AGE GROUP

Parents' desired benefits for their daughter(s) change as the girl ages.
(A ranking of 1 being the highest importance, and 5 being the least important)

Ranking of Benefit/Outcome Components by Age Group	K-3RD GRADE	4TH-8TH GRADE	9TH-12TH GRADE
Practical - <i>Learns good organizational skills, learns financial skills, learns life skills</i>	2	5	1
Social - <i>Meets new people/forms friendships, gains social skills, learns to be independent</i>	1	1	4
Esteem - <i>Gains self-confidence, has a feeling of accomplishment, learns to respect others</i>	3	2	3
Teamwork - <i>Learns about teamwork, becomes a problem solver</i>	5	4	2
Leadership - <i>Gains leadership skills, increases physical skills</i>	4	3	5

OVERALL BENEFITS OF ACTIVITIES

Benefits parents seek for their daughters when choosing activities



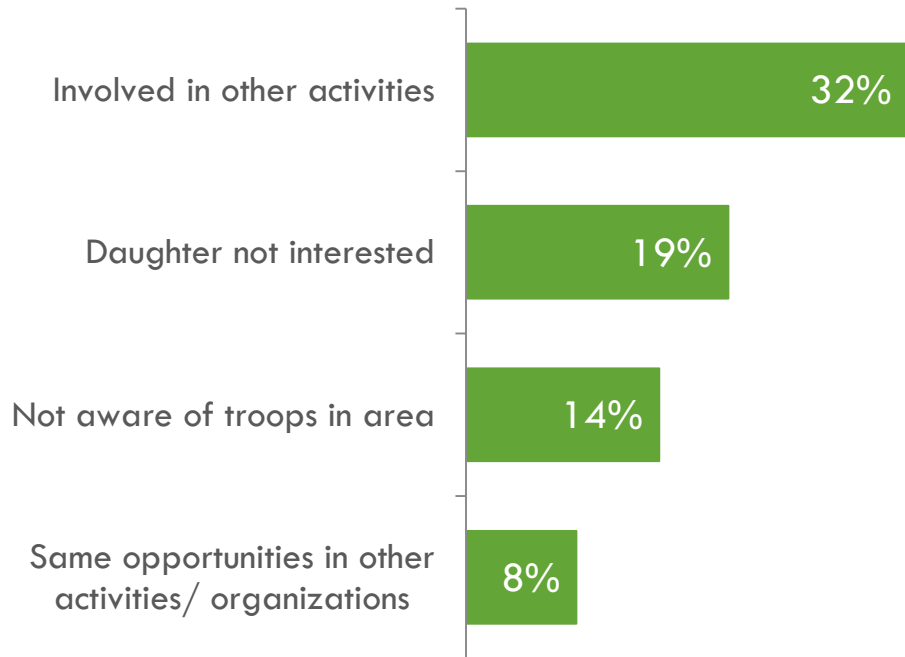
Benefits parents think that Girl Scouts offers



Clearly, Girl Scouts offers the benefits that parents want for their daughters. So why aren't they joining?

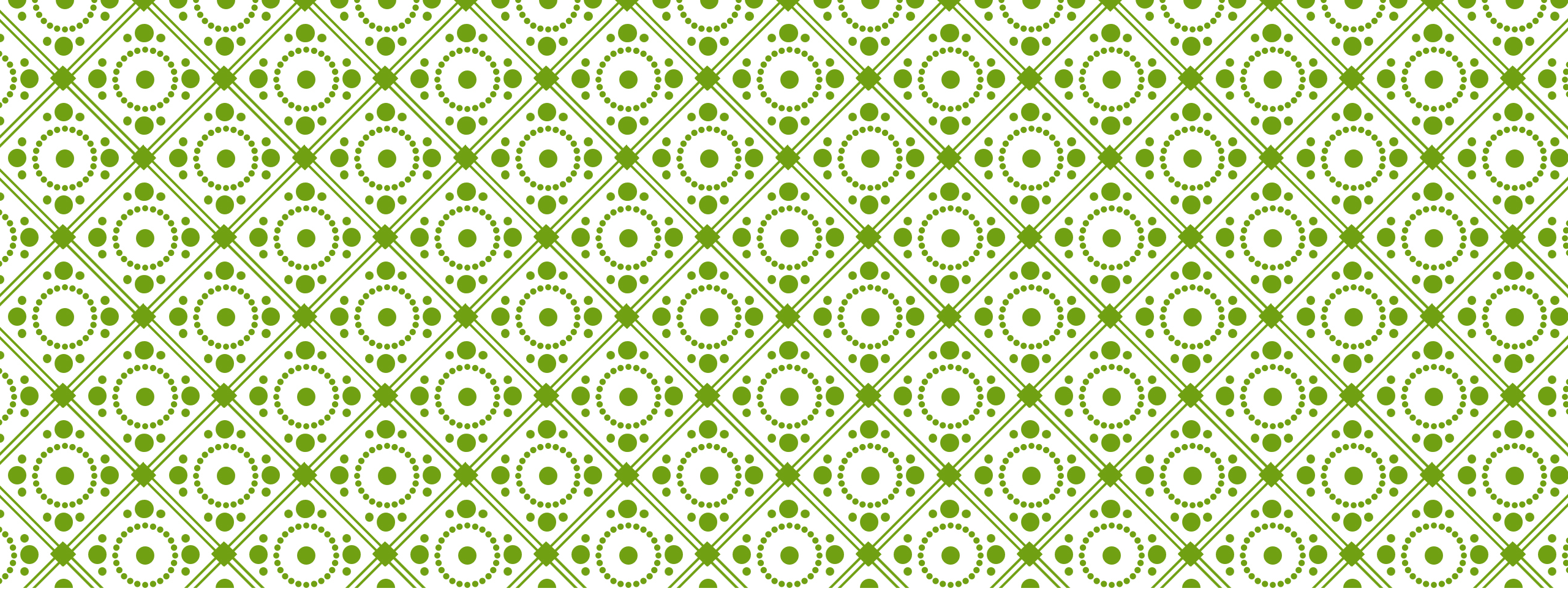
WHY NOT GIRL SCOUTS?

Top Barriers for Participation



When asked why their daughter(s) is/are NOT in Girl Scouts, parents mostly answered that Girl Scouts is not the “priority” activity to participate in and they do not have time due to other activities.

“Most of the time, it is because of time constraints and that activity was lowest on the list for priorities.”

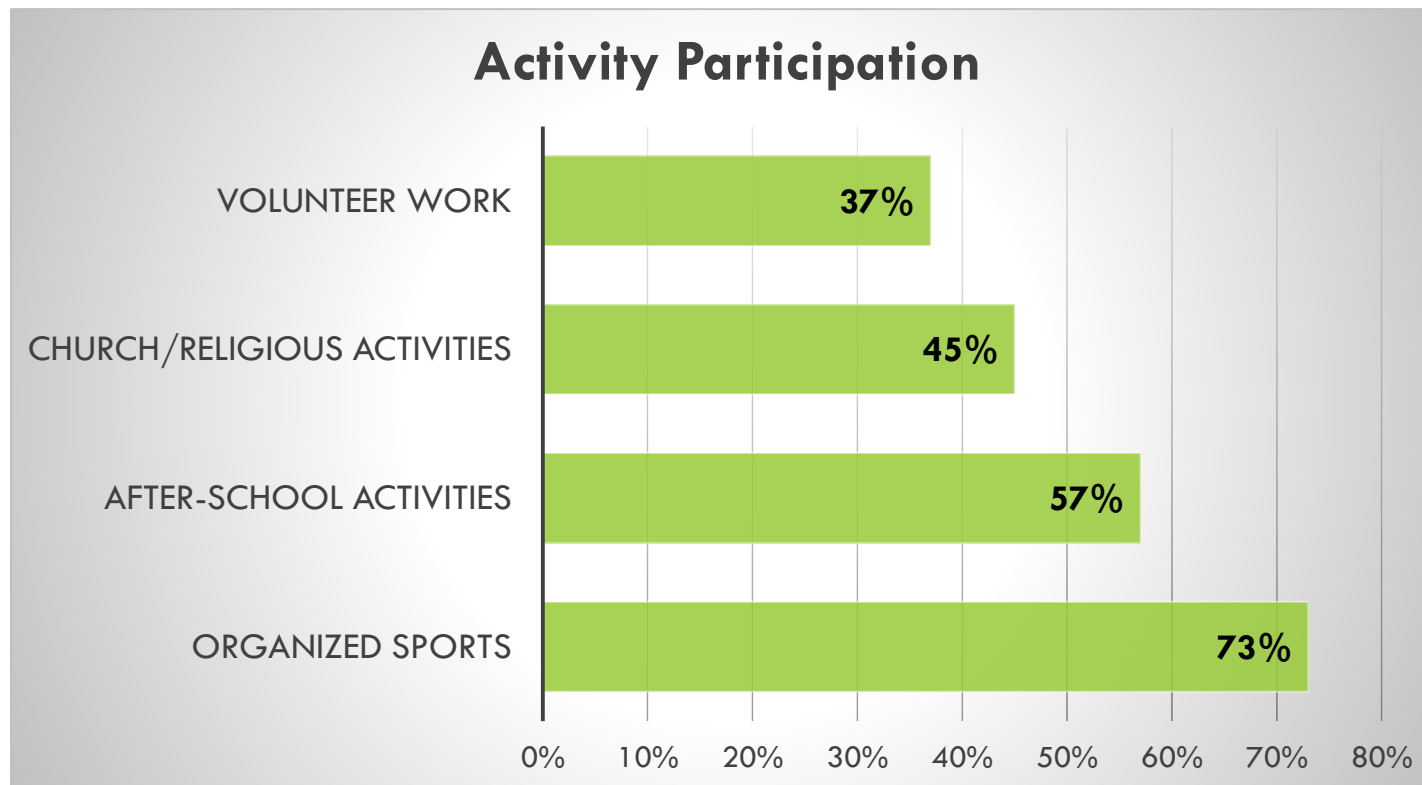


PARENTS' DESIRED ACTIVITIES



ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION

- ❖ Parents were first asked which activities their daughter(s) is/are **already involved in.***
- ❖ On average, girls in grades K-12 are involved in 3-4 activities.



**These results are almost exactly the same as results for girls who are already involved in Girl Scouts.*

ACTIVITIES FOR GIRLS - INTEREST

❖ Then, parents were asked what activities they or their daughters are interested in.

The top activities were (in order of interest):

1. **Arts** – organized music, dance, painting/drawing, or theater/drama classes
2. **Healthy relationships/anti-bullying** – activities that teach ways to prevent bullying, conflict resolution skills, and understanding and appreciating diversity
3. **Life skills** - activities that teach financial responsibility, money management, household organizational skills, do-it-yourself skills, or applying to and transitioning to college
4. **Health and wellness** – activities that teach nutrition, stress reduction/life balance, but not organized sports
5. **Religious or spiritual activities** – attending religious services and groups, private or group study
6. **Positive values and avoiding risks** – activities that teach drug and alcohol prevention, sex education, abuse/dating awareness, and other value-based education
7. **Organized sports** – team or club sports or individual/group sports lessons

ACTIVITIES FOR GIRLS - AVAILABILITY

❖ Next, parents were asked what activities were already offered and available in their community.

The activities that are available in every community are (in order of most availability):

1. Organized sports
2. Religious or spiritual activities
3. Arts
4. Environmental or outdoor activities
5. Healthy relationships and anti-bullying activities
6. Health and wellness activities
7. STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) activities

ACTIVITIES FOR GIRLS - OPPORTUNITIES

- ❖ Finally, Horizon Insight, Inc. created a mathematical comparison between parents' interest in an activity for their daughters and the availability of that activity in each community.
 - ❖ This will help Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois determine **which activities we should NOT offer** because there are already plenty of opportunities for parents and girls to find those activities in their communities.
 - ❖ It will also tell GSNi **which activities we SHOULD offer** because parents and girls are very interested in them, but they are not available in their communities.
 - ❖ It will also tell us **which activities we should offer to EACH AGE GROUP** based on their interest and needs in the community.
 - ❖ Finally, it will help us determine **which communities need MORE programs and activities**, and which communities will be difficult for us to compete in because there are already many activities for girls.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GSNI, BY AGE

K-3rd Grade

Most Important Benefits

Social



Practical

Top Activities for Delivery

- ✓ **Life Skills**
- ✓ Global citizenry and world issues
- ✓ Health and wellness

4th – 8th Grade

Most Important Benefits

Social



Esteem

Top Activities for Delivery

- ✓ Healthy relationships and anti-bullying
- ✓ **Life skills**
- ✓ Career exploration

9th – 12th Grade

Most Important Benefits

Practical



Teamwork

Top Activities for Delivery

- ✓ **Life skills**
- ✓ Career exploration
- ✓ Global citizenry and world issues

Girl Scouts “Evolution” Model

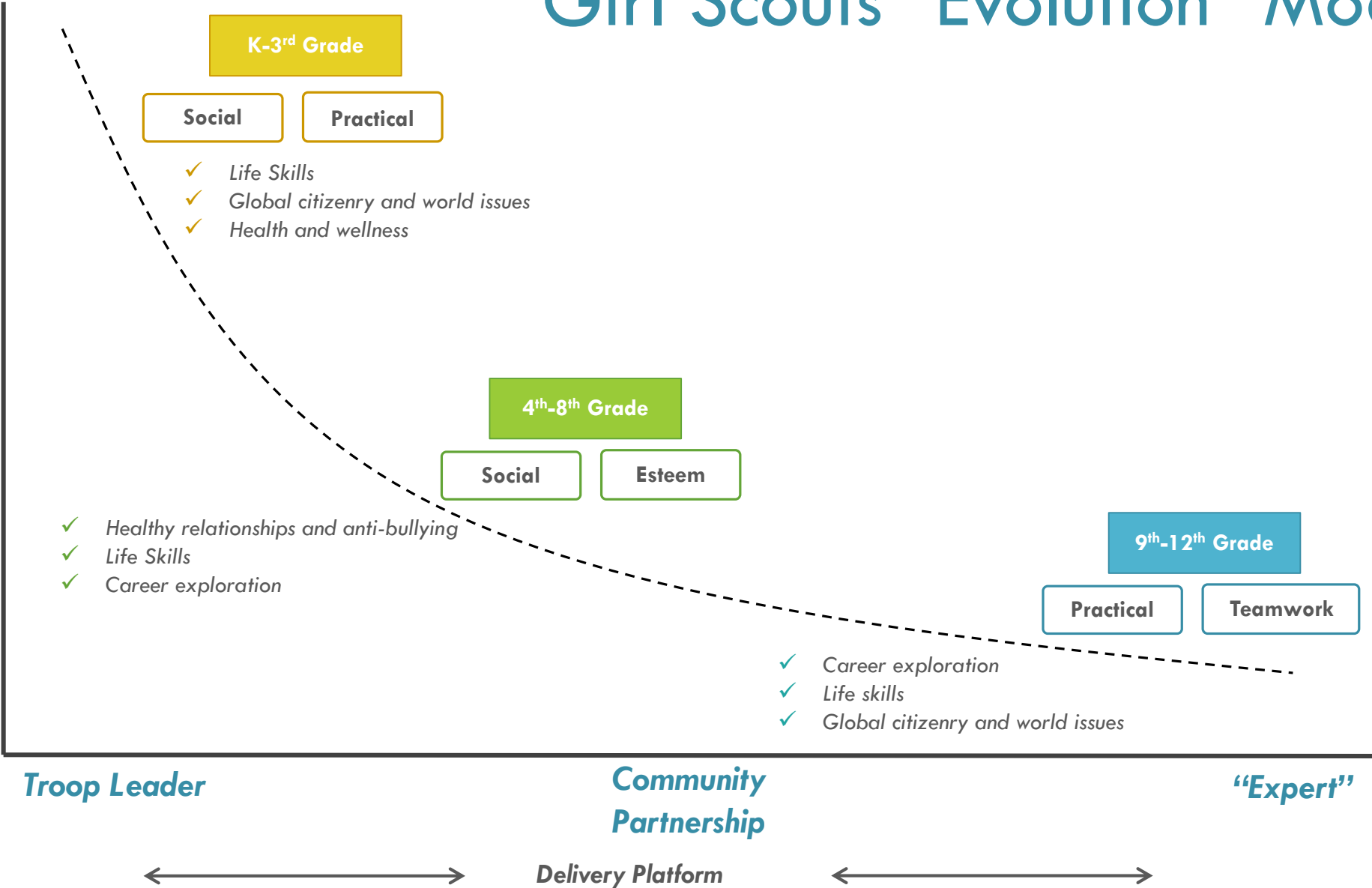
Broad-Based



Focus



Specialized



OPPORTUNITIES FOR GSNI, BY REGION

West (Carroll, JoDaviess, Lee, and Whiteside)	Central (Boone, DeKalb, Ogle, Winnebago, and Stephenson)	Northeast* (Lake, McHenry, Northern Kane)	Southeast (Kendall, DuPage, and Southern Kane)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Life skills• Health and wellness• Positive values• STEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Life skills• Career Exploration• Travel• Health and wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Healthy relationships• Global citizenry• Life skills• Career Exploration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Career Exploration• Global citizenry• Healthy relationships• Life skills

**The Northeast represents the region of our council that parents feel has the LEAST number of available opportunities for girls, which therefore is an opportunity for GSNI to grow our presence in this area.*

SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR GSNI

“Life skills” represents the greatest opportunity for Girl Scouts to deliver to ANY AGE, in EVERY REGION.

❖ **But what are “Life Skills”?** You can help us define them!

❖ Some ideas from the research are:

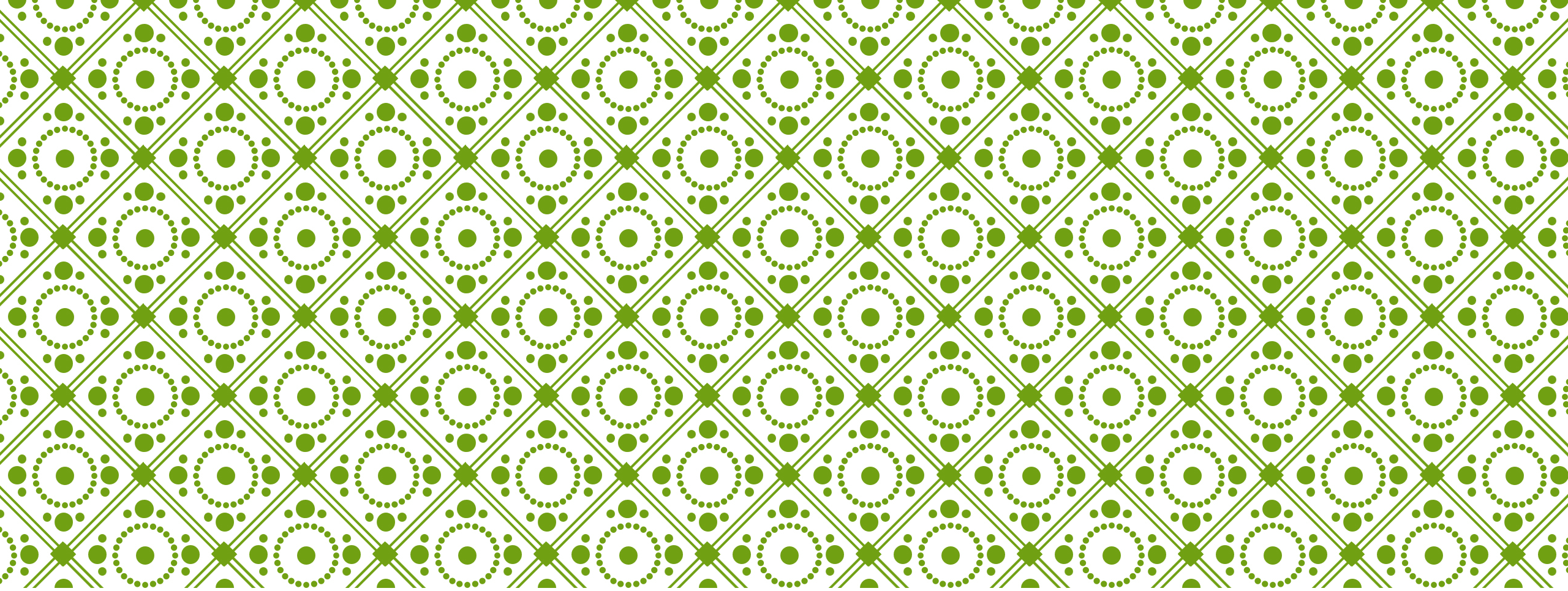
❖ Financial literacy skills, like making change or managing a budget

❖ Soft skills, like being responsible and a good citizen

❖ Household management skills, like being organized and taking care of yourself and your belongings

❖ Do-it-yourself skills, like building, making, and fixing things

❖ College readiness skills, like career exploration and learning independence



SUMMARY OF THE LONG RANGE PROGRAM STUDY

WHAT'S NEXT?

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR GSNI, SHORT-TERM

For Volunteers

- ❖ Increased resources with an online Volunteer Toolkit
- ❖ Increased opportunities for training
- ❖ More programming and “expert” partners for troops to utilize
- ❖ Tools to help volunteers learn how to tailor programs to younger and older girls
- ❖ Ideas and training for volunteers to engage in group activities outdoors, appropriate for each age level
- ❖ Increased customer service and support from GSNI

For Parents and Girls

- ❖ Working to define and develop programs and activities that help girls learn “life skills”, like financial literacy, do-it-yourself skills, career exploration, and household skills.
- ❖ Council-sponsored programs and activities that evolve as girls age
- ❖ Customized offerings for girls by geography depending on the needs/interests of that region
- ❖ More staff-led and partially staff-led groups for girls with little parental support

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR GSNI, SHORT TERM

For Non-Members

- ❖ Targeted marketing that speaks to the interests of parents in that region
- ❖ Programs that meet the needs and interests of parents and girls in each region
- ❖ More after-school programs for girls using school and community partners to build interest in Girl Scouts
- ❖ Easier registration and volunteer placement process
- ❖ Recruiting “non-traditional” adult volunteers to assist our current volunteers and deliver events and programs



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR GSNI, LONG-TERM

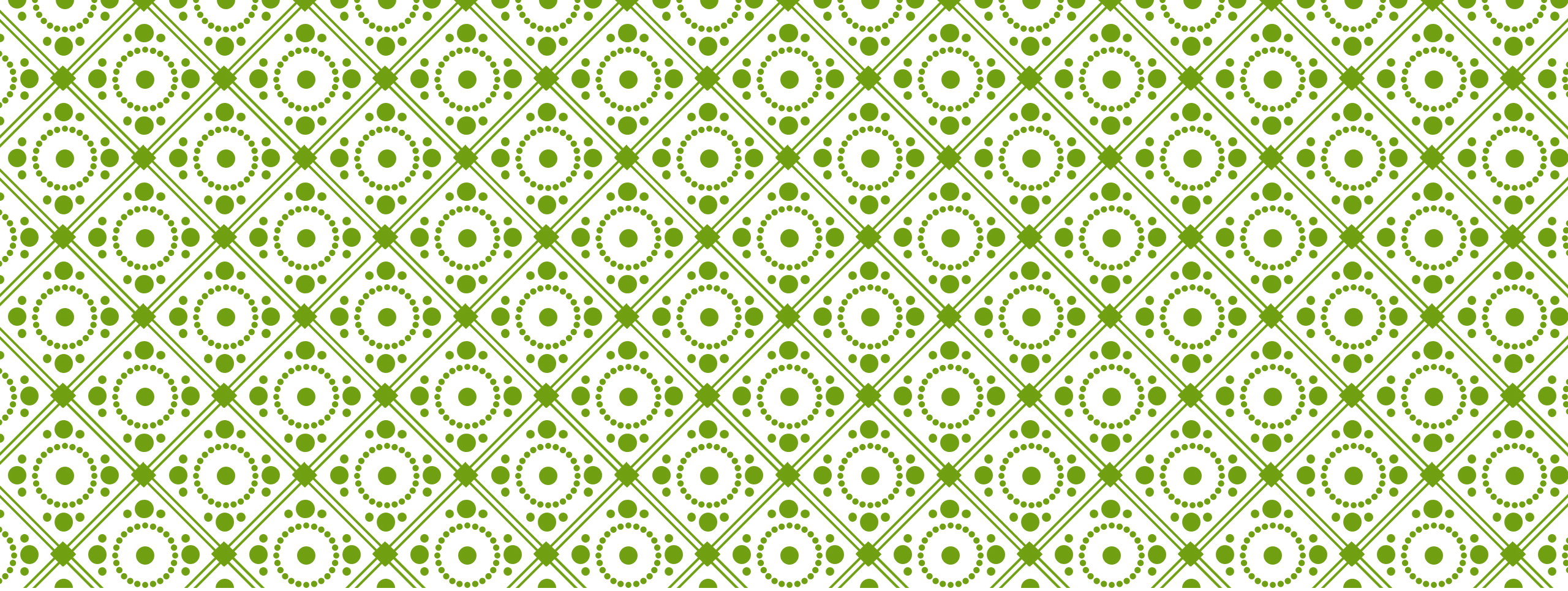


For the Future

- ❖ Developing a plan for camp properties that will maximize usage and manage expense.
- ❖ Developing a plan for infrastructure improvements at camps that will make accommodations more welcoming and comfortable.
- ❖ Developing a plan for retail stores that allows parents and volunteers to get needed supplies while managing our footprint.
- ❖ Creating an office plan that will allow staff to spend more time in the community they serve and offer better customer service.

WHAT THIS DOES **NOT** MEAN FOR GSNI

- ❖ Change does not happen overnight – findings from this research will be used to make strategic decisions for the next 10 years.
- ❖ While we know we have opportunity to offer activities in some regions more than others, we will not stop offering programs and services in any of our regions. In order to be successful, we need all of our Girl Scout members to support us by unifying as one Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois!
- ❖ Though we will emphasize “life skills” and skill-building badges, it does NOT mean that Journeys will go away. Journeys are part of our National Program Portfolio and we will continue to provide training to volunteers on how to incorporate them into the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.
- ❖ “Life skills” programming will not be the only programming offered by GSNI. We will continue to offer a variety of outdoor, STEM, health and wellness, and other activities, because “life skills” can be learned in a variety of ways!



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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