

2024
Annual Meeting & Recognition event
gsni



April 27, 2024
NIU Barsema Alumni & Visitors Center
9:00 A.M.

girl scouts 
of northern illinois



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Missing your handouts? Don't worry!

They are all located on our website. Use the QR codes/links to view meeting materials.

2023 Annual Meeting Minutes

www.girlscoutsni.org/annualmeeting#business



2024 New Board Member Bios

www.girlscoutsni.org/annualmeeting#business



Current Board Member Info

www.girlscoutsni.org/gsniboard



Or visit: www.girlscoutsni.org/annualmeeting



Welcome

Welcome to Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois' 2024 Annual Meeting and Recognition Event! We are so glad you are here to celebrate GSNI's accomplishments over the past year—all of which would not be possible without the hard work of our volunteers and staff.

Along with the State of Council report and elections, you will hear from guest speaker, Illinois State Senator Cristina Castro. While all of this is important business of the council, the highlight of today's meeting is sure to be the recognition of our Girl Scouts, volunteers, and community members. Without their assistance and outstanding achievements, GSNI could not be successful in helping Girl Scouts develop the skills that will help them not just today, but throughout their lifetime.

While we will be recognizing outstanding youth and volunteers, today is a celebration for each and every GSNI member. Thank you to all the volunteers dedicating their time to help our Girl Scouts become leaders and to all the Girl Scouts who are solving today's problems.

♣ GSNI is PROUD OF YOU! ♣

Check out our Year in Review!

GSNI Annual Report and Recognition Booklet are online!

Use the QR code/link to view.



www.girlscoutsni.org/publications

Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois Belonging Statement

Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois draws inspiration from our Girl Scout Promise and Law in our Belonging Statement. Being a member of Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois means you are part of a community of diverse races, ethnicities, gender identities, sexual orientations, abilities, and religions. We commit to providing an equitable and accessible Girl Scout Leadership Experience to all Girl Scouts in our council. We are champions for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access.

These are our promises to you:

- We will listen and seek to understand from diverse voices and experiences. We will act on what we have learned.
- We will offer a culture of welcoming and belonging to all members, potential members, and community partners of Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois.
- We will provide brave and safe spaces for Girl Scouts to participate with us. Members can expect to be themselves in a secure and respectful environment.
- We will incorporate the principles of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility at all levels of our movement.
- We believe every member (youth and adult) of Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois should have respect and acceptance in our organization.
- We commit to a journey of being an anti-racist and anti-oppressive organization.
- We welcome you to join us in our movement and mission.

♣ **You belong here.** ♣

Land Acknowledgement Statement

A Land Acknowledgement is an expression of gratitude and way of recognizing the lasting relationship between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional homelands since time immemorial.

The Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois (GSNI) acknowledges that our Camps and Resource Centers are located on the ancestral lands of many Native Nations including the Fox & Sauk, Meskwaki, Peoria, Kickapoo, Ho-chunk and the Potawatomi.

GSNI is dedicated to the preservation of traditional lands. We seek to support Native American heritage by paying our respects to Indigenous peoples and are committed to honor their connection and care for the Land.

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Guest Speaker
Senator Cristina Castro
Illinois State Senator



Born and raised in Elgin, **State Senator Cristina Castro** received an Associate of Science from Elgin Community College, and a Bachelor of Science and Master of Business Administration from Northern Illinois University. She was elected to the Kane County Board in 2008 and elected to the Senate in 2016 and reelected in 2020. Senator Castro is the Majority Caucus Whip for the 103rd General Assembly, and is Chairperson of the Executive Committee. She is a member of the Latino Caucus and also serves on the Appropriations, Energy and Public Utilities, Insurance, Labor and Revenue Committees. Castro and her husband, Joe McKeown, reside on the east side of Elgin with their four dogs.



Community Partner Awards

GSNI's Board of Directors established Community Partner Awards to recognize businesses or organizations that have significantly supported GSNI to better serve our Girl Scouts and volunteers. We are so appreciative of the many partnerships we have throughout the council!

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (I.B.E.W.) Local 416

Contact: Joel D. Pylle II

Nominator: Joselyn Taylor

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (I.B.E.W.) Local 416 in Aurora has been a dedicated supporter of their local Girl Scouts since 2016. I.B.E.W. has allowed troops to hold weekly meetings in their space for free, hosted large events, and created an atmosphere of belonging. They have also hosted Girl Scout Cookie® pickup events and stored cookies. GSNI is happy to recognize I.B.E.W. Local 416 for its support of Girl Scouts.

Sycamore United Methodist Church

Contact: Rev. Luis F. Reyes

Nominator: Kim French

The United Methodist Church located in Sycamore has gone above and beyond to provide a safe and welcoming space for the Double Tree Service Unit and Sycamore area troops over the past 30+ years. The church

continually opens its doors for troop meetings, camping events, service unit events, day camp, council trainings, recruitment events, and more at their location. The staff and clergy at the church have accommodated every need and go out of their way to assist GSNI. Sycamore United Methodist has given GSNI the ability to grow a true connection with the community. GSNI is happy to recognize Sycamore United Methodist Church for its continual support of Girl Scouts in their community.

First Presbyterian Church, Sterling

Contact: Christina Berry

Nominator: Stephanie Olivas

First Presbyterian Church in Sterling has been a supportive partner of GSNI for over four years! From recruitment events, troop meetings, service unit events, and allowing space for the local lead cookie cupboard, First Presbyterian has been open and accommodating. GSNI is happy to recognize First Presbyterian Church for being a strong supporter of Girl Scouts in their community.

thegroundUP

Contact: Sam Furman

Nominator: Erin Berry

thegroundUP has been a charitable collaborator with GSNI troops for over three years. They have donated signs to different troops to mark trails at Camp McCormick and reflective signs for tents. They have also donated and delivered a skid loader for cookie delivery. GSNI is happy to recognize thegroundUP for supporting Girl Scouts in their community.

Geneva Public Library

Contact: Lexy Rodriguez

Nominator: Shannon Baird

The Geneva Public Library has been a tremendous support to troops in the Geneva area for over 10 years. Geneva Public Library offers each individual troop in Geneva a badge event per year. The library offers free space for troops to meet, allows Girl Scouts to use their art supplies, computers, books, and any other items needed to have a successful troop meeting for free. GSNI is happy to recognize the Geneva Public Library for supporting Girl Scouts in the community!

Immanuel Lutheran School, East Dundee

Contacts: Principal Kevin Becker

Nominator: Meredith Feldshau

Immanuel Lutheran School in East Dundee has been an incredible partner to GSNI in the past four years. Not only does the school allow space for troop meetings, but all of Fox Tales Service Unit's special events are hosted there. The school staff have gone above and beyond in making sure the space is set up for events, supporting cookie sales, and allowing usage of their Star Lab for the Space Explorer badge. GSNI is happy to recognize Immanuel Lutheran School for its unwavering and strong support of Girl Scouts.

GSNI Action Team and Task Force Pin



GSNI Action Teams and Task Forces support membership growth and increase a sense of belonging in our communities. These teams are led by GSNI staff members with volunteer and older youth member representation. As GSNI continues to explore and implement ways to create a culture of belonging and acceptance, the volunteers and staff who participate in these groups are vital to GSNI's ability to provide opportunities for all Girl Scouts, volunteers, community members, and future members. We thank them for their time and talents!

Kim Agnello
Jennifer Archer
Holly Bartelt
Marge Blake
Hillary Blevins
Tammy Bognetti
Anna Bower*
Monie Burns
Michael Campbell
Jeanine Contreras
Jennifer Edwards-Amberg
Emma Eschenfeldt
Sara Fair
Lynda Fillipp
Kay Flavin
Kim French
Mary Garza
Louise Glon
Sandra Gonzalez-Adamski
Michael Guy
Annette Happ
Mary Jo Hare
Shannan Harley
Robin Henning
Michelle Hicks
Jessica Hirsch
Chastity Hoarde
Ron Hosick
Lisa Jackson
Christa Jennings*
Jason Jones
John Jones
Shante Jones
Christina Kirsch
Maria Gardner Lara*
Jordann Langner
Theresa Lemont

Emily Lenore
Ericha Lilly-Hosick
Nancy Lopez*
Myah Loria*
Barb Lutz
Brianna MacMullen
Colette Marquardt
MaryBeth Markwell
Vanessa Mendoza-Reynoso
Susan Metzler
Angela Musial
Stephanie Olivas
Melanie Olsen
Sara Ortinau*
Althea Parker
JeanieAnn Parma
Sue Pasetti
Elisha Pendleton*
Heidi Provo
Tasha Reddic
Maggie Rivera
Kari Rockwell
Tiffany Ronimous
Michelle Rossi
Gina Roxas
Maggie Sifuentes
Ann-Marie Soderstrom
Kyla St. Pierre
Joselyn Taylor
Serene Taylor
Lesley Tennesen
Kris Trusk
Dana Vierck
Sharon Wade
Janey Welch

**Denotes new Action Team members in 2023*

Service Unit Goals

The following GSNI service units met or exceeded one or more of the following goals: 2023 Membership Year Girl Scout and/or Adult Membership, 2022 Fall Product Program, or the 2023 Girl Scout Cookie Program! Girl Scouts are great at setting goals and achieving them. These service units are an example to today's Girl Scouts in high achievement. They continue to enable more young people to have access to the Girl Scout Leadership Experience through their efforts.

Youth Membership

Southeast Valley
Wynonwy

Adult Membership

Barrington	Lee
Double Tree	Southern Ogle
Fox Tales	Whiteside-Carroll

Fall Product Program

Barrington	Park North Stateline
Batavia	Potawatomi
Cary-Grove	Southern Ogle
Cheyenne	Spring River
Geneva	Stargazers
Kaskaskia	

Girl Scout Cookie Program

Barrington	Park North Stateline
Batavia	Potawatomi
Cary-Grove	Southern Ogle
Cheyenne	Spring River
Geneva	Stargazers
Kaskaskia	





Volunteer of Excellence

The Volunteer of Excellence Award recognizes those volunteers who have contributed outstanding service while partnering directly with Girl Scouts in any pathway to implement the Girl Scout Leadership Experience through use of the national program portfolio or who have contributed outstanding service in support of the council's mission delivery to youth and adult members.

Barrington

Pamela Gough
Jodie Marshall-Salazar
Cheryl Vu

Batavia

Amanda Lishamer
Renee Martinez
Lindsey Sleeth

Cary-Grove

Jennifer Leverenz

Chippewa

Heather Bernhard

Circle of Friends

Kathy Gaddis
Laura Hohm
Cindy Wendel

Fox Tales

Grace Nelson
Melissa Reyes
Jenny Zambrano

Fox Valley

Kim Hendricks
Suzanne Whittington

Genesis

Jeanine Contreras
Erin Tallman

Geneva

Pamela Whitfield

Green Horizons

Sara Bourquin
Dawn Crowley
Katie Nolan

Lake Zurich

Theresa Lipari
David Schmeltzer

Lee

Susie Bradley
Becca Koehler
Emily Pittman

Park North Stateline

Nikole Behling
Nathan Berry
Laura Furman
Jason Woodard

Potowatomi

Janey Welch

Spring River

Brittney Carr
Randi Nisius
Adele Ratzlaff

Sycamore

Julie Weingarz

Trefoil

Jennifer Kmiec

Whiteside/Carroll

Becka Reese
Jillian Stange

WinDuPec

Jessica Owens

Wynonowy

Michelle Funfsinn



Appreciation Pin

The Appreciation Pin recognizes an individual's exemplary service in support of delivering the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. This service, which has had measurable impact on one geographic area of service, helps reach and surpass the mission-delivery goals of the area.

Chippewa

Brea Barnes
Amber Combs
April Fox

Circle of Friends

Elisha Pendleton

Fox Tales

Amber Burger
Timothy Feldshau
Amber Fornaciari
Ron Hosick

Fox Valley

Kimberly Ramge

Kaskaskia

Amanda Phillips

Lake Zurich

Dawn Miller
Christine Walsh

Park North Stateline

Carly Siriann

Whiteside-Carroll

Amber Cech

Winnebago

Alex Hickey-Zangara



Honor Pin

The Honor Pin recognizes an individual's exemplary service in support of delivering the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, which has had measurable impact on two or more geographic areas of service, allowing the council to reach and surpass its mission-delivery goals.

Batavia

Kathleen Kuchta

Cheyenne

Yvonne Mundorf

Fox Tales

Mareidith Feldshau

Potawatomi

Denise Mercuri



Thanks Badge

The Thanks Badge honors an individual whose ongoing commitment, leadership, and service have had an exceptional, measurable impact on meeting the mission-delivery goals and priorities of the entire council or the entire Girl Scout Movement.

Frank Blacker, Menominee Service Unit

Nominated by: Jason Jones and Christina Kirsch

The GSNI Program and Property Team met Frank through his work with our challenge course trainings. He worked diligently to ensure each participant felt they were empowered to learn and grow at being a facilitator. Frank volunteered with mowing the grass, repairing rails, and decking and was a huge asset to getting the new adventure walk area opened and up and running prior to the 50th celebration at Mary Ann Beebe Center (MABC). He has made GSNI a better place for all Girl Scouts!

Amanda Guffey, Park North Stateline Service Unit

Nominated by: Erin Berry

Mandy has developed the gold standard for recruiting in Park North Stateline! She has cultivated event kick offs where local Girl Scouts can earn badges. Through this, she trains Girl Scout leaders, provides start up supplies, and guides them through parent meetings. She attends the first four meetings and offers levels of support that allow new leaders to easily transition into their roles. Mandy offers full first-year support through cookie Zooms, answering questions, encouraging leader meeting attendance, and guiding others through first-year troop mechanics.

Mandy is the adult in the service unit the girls and leaders seek out at an event. Our service unit would not have bank accounts, training, materials, or a safe space to kick off their Girl Scout Journey. Every leader in the service unit would have to invest 4 more hours a month trying to solve their issues with rosters, eBudde, cookie delivery, and every nuance of troop logistics. Mandy views older Girl Scouts as the foundation for amazing service unit events, from camporee to badge days to cookie rallies. She sees the Girl Scout experience as inclusive and valuable. She has even adopted Girl Scouts into her troop from all over and includes those who have moved out of state. Her leadership style showcases why being girl-led is important. Through understanding each person's needs, she develops the best experience for every Girl Scout.

Mike Guy, Arapaho Service Unit

Nominated by: Jason Jones and Christina Kirsch

Mike holds several volunteer positions at GSNI; however, this award is to recognize his work at MABC. Mike started his volunteer work at camp by building a slingshot range alongside a Girl Scout troop. Mike saw the needs at camp and knew he could make a difference for every camper who visited.

Through his volunteer work with the Arapaho Day Camp, he saw the impact camp has on Girl Scouts and adults. Mike not only shares his time with GSNI but also his knowledge. Each time volunteers work with Mike, they come away knowing a bit more than they started! This shows his true character. Mike has since included his wife, Leslie, in camp improvements and on several occasions brought together several other volunteers to help with projects. GSNI is so grateful to Mike and his family for all they have accomplished these past few years!

Jennifer Hauch, Spring River Service Unit

Nominated by: Olivia Pettit

Jennifer has been very active in Girl Scouts this past year! She and her troop traveled to the National Girl Scout Convention in Florida where they learned how to plan a trip and took part in convention workshops, a community service project, and national bridging ceremony. She also volunteered to facilitate activities at Spring River's G.O.A.T event for Cadette-Ambassadors where 35 Girl Scouts renewed their membership!

As Fall Product/Cookie Coordinator, Jennifer placed a POD in her driveway for a cookie cupboard, making cookies accessible to leaders, Girl Scouts, and their customers. The cupboard was used by troops in Spring River and Park North Stateline.

Jennifer's troop planned Spring River's annual camporee with a theme, troop stations, scavenger hunt, t-shirt, and patch contest. She and her troop contacted a local museum and borrowed fossils and relics, which made a fun and educational addition to the event. She also planned a Me and My Guy Hike at Camp McCormick, braving the weather to make a fun event for Girl Scouts and their special guys. Jennifer and her troop also planned and hosted the service unit's Girl Scout Cookie Rally!

Jennifer led her troop in completing requirements to earn Honor Troop and the Girl Scout Silver Award. The Girl Scouts made activity boxes at Troophouse and Greenwood, built to withstand camp use and weather, and stocked them with games and supplies. They also labeled Camp McCormick trails to help visitors navigate their way around the camp.

Jessica Stobart, Spring River Service Unit

Nominated by: Marge Blake

Jessica has gone above and beyond with her troop's community outreach this past year! The troop made cards for people who find themselves in a mental health situation during the holidays. The troop also completed their Silver Award by researching a need in the community at Camp Winnebago. They created a new trail, added peace poles, and created an on-going activity for the camp, impacting all youth who visit Camp Winnebago.

Jessica led her girls with planning and implementing the Service Unit Cookie Rally for over 50 girls! She is also Service Unit Girl Scout Sunday Coordinator, ensuring troop representation at a local church. She lets over 100 parishioners know GSNI is active in their communities and explains how to join, buy cookies, and more when she introduces the troops.

She is heavily active with recruitment and attended several Back-to-School nights, school recruitments, and school fun fairs. She staffed a STEM station at the UW Sports Center in downtown Rockford for a family event that reached over 500 families outside of the service unit's community. She also held a Girl Scout booth for SWAPS at a Touch-a-Truck event where over 500 families attended and instituted the service unit's first Community Trunk-or-Treat at Loves Park City Hall for over 250 families!

In Jessica's role as Volunteer Mentor/GSLE coach, she has helped new troops with their questions, met with troops at their meetings to make sure they feel comfortable and confident in what they are doing, helped leaders find MYGS so they can do their trainings, and set up their Volunteer Toolkits. She is always positive and willing to answer any questions with a smile on her face!



Thanks Badge II

The Thanks Badge II honors a previous Thanks Badge award recipient who has continued to provide exemplary service in a leadership role, resulting in a measurable impact that benefits the entire Girl Scout Movement.

Erin Berry, Park North Stateline

Nominated by: Christina Kirsch

Erin meticulously planned her service unit's cookie delivery, changing the delivery from an all-day process to a more efficient system which takes less than half a day! Erin is monumental in keeping STEM education relevant to today's youth members and has assisted GSNI's Program Team with learning software and equipment to provide programming at Camp Dean's Maker Space. Erin is also helping GSNI with funding for Camp McCormick's Maker Space with the assistance of Collins Aerospace. GSNI is greatly indebted to Erin's STEM expertise for the continued ability to provide relevant Girl Scout-related STEM programming.

Erin has assisted GSNI's STEW committee with task management and implementation prior to the event. She has also been a STEW Workshop Leader who gives other volunteers confidence with tie-dying and STEM activities. Erin has also willingly stepped in as a last-minute fill-in for STEW workshops when a facilitator cancels or an extra lunch workshop is needed.

Erin is a wonderful volunteer who believes and supports the Girl Scout mission! She always thinks of processes and how to make those processes better for the members of GSNI.



President's Award

The President's Award recognizes the efforts of a service-delivery team or committee whose exemplary service in support of delivering the Girl Scout Leadership Experience surpassed team goals and resulted in significant, measurable impact toward reaching the council's overall goals.

Cary-Grove Service Unit, Girl Strong Race Committee

Committee Members: Adam Koester, David Lapekas, Marissa Lapekas, Jennifer Leverenz, Tom Leverenz, and Joe Turner

For the past five years, the Cary-Grove Girl Strong Race Committee has held a cherished tradition: the Girl Strong Race! This event is more than just a race; it is a celebration of creativity, sportsmanship, and family in the service unit. From conception to the final race of the day, plans and activities include welcoming newcomers, guiding them through car design and construction, and offering support as the girls plot the design and creativity of their cars.

This group oversees building the track, ensuring every racer has a level playing field, and fosters sportsmanship through clear rules and promoting camaraderie among competitors. The team organizes inclusive activities for siblings and family and creates a space where everyone feels valued and engaged! Girl Scouts are encouraged to race their cars, overcome challenges and celebrate their individual creativity.

The committee strives to manage resources efficiently and introduce new themes, challenges, and activities each year, making sure the event remains relevant for both veteran racers and newcomers. While the group does some of the bigger planning setup, they also ensure the event is girl-led with race day Program Aides who have opportunities for communication, collaboration, and decision-making!

Cary-Grove Service Unit Team

Committee Members: Kristi Dykstra, Nora Hyde, Helena Kedrok, Marissa Lapekas, Pat Matthews, Liz Oppewal, Ryan O'Reilly, Rita VanderWaal-Dawson, and Trudee Wieting

For the past two years, the Cary-Grove Service Unit Team has been the beating heart of Girl Scouting in their community. The members of this team are truly architects of possibility, building bridges for girls to discover, connect, and grow. Every program, every experience, reflects their unwavering commitment to nurturing the Girl Scout Leadership Experience!

Their dedication has blossomed into results! Troop membership has stabilized, due to strong leadership in those attending service unit events now experiencing a consistent girl-led community. The service unit has stayed focused on a big event each month, allowing larger group participation in programs covering STEM, outdoor adventures, and real-world learning.

The team has partnered with local organizations and their Girl Scout Advisory board to create opportunities for girls to serve their community, learn real-world skills, and build lasting connections. Special events included “Feed My Starving Children” and the Give Back Garden project where girls grow produce over the summer and donate hundreds of pounds of fresh veggies to a local food pantry!

The team’s goal was to retain 90% of leaders, and they exceeded it! All members of the team are focused on creating a supportive network for Girl Scout leaders. Through their mentorship program, they’ve created a plan to build up new leaders with resources, plans, and mentors. They promote transparency in decision-making with troop leaders and focus on messaging to ensure everyone has equal access to opportunities.

The Cary-Grove Service Unit team strives to foster a spirit of sisterhood across troops, age groups, and backgrounds, creating a true support system for every Girl Scout!

Chippewa Day Camp Committee

Committee Members: Brea Barnes, Heather Bernhard, Cathy Johnston, Angela McMeel, Meredith Santerelli, Betty Szwankowski, and Jennifer Warfel

The Chippewa Day Camp Committee planned an amazing day camp—Camp CSI—for the service unit! At camp, Girl Scouts participated in outdoor cooking, badge work, crafts, and exploring the camp. Activities were focused on solving the crime of Juliette Gordon Low’s missing pearl necklace. There were guest speakers from the local police department and detectives who were all women. They talked about their positions and how they started out in their careers. This showed the girls they can do any job they want to do!

Crafts were designed based on each Girl Scout level which meant the challenge was creating ones that were the same but featured different steps to complete. The team also aligned badge work for each level and made sure they followed rules and guidelines for badges. Campers expressed how much fun they had at camp and talked about coming back next year!

Circle of Friends Service Team

Committee Members: Cindy Allen, Kathy Gaddis, Malinda Gonzalez, Laura Hohm, Kristin Maksymiw, Kelly McCleary, Dara Nelson, Robin Shaff, and Cindy Wendel

It was a year of rebuilding leadership in Circle of Friends Service Unit! A group of both new and seasoned volunteers stepped forward to create the best possible experience for Girl Scouts in Aurora and North Aurora. The team especially worked together to plan and implement new programs and continuous leader training.

Through collaboration and support, the group promoted and improved program and community service offerings, including decorating Christmas trees at the Aurora Public Library. Girl Scouts also discovered the joy of a winter fun day at Camp Dean for Frosty Frolic—this was the first time at

camp for many girls! It was such a good experience that members of several troops want to further explore the camp by having the opportunity to stay overnight, which motivated their leaders to take the training needed to make this possible!

More than 100 girls attended Circle of Friends' Thinking Day event where Girl Scouts learned about real world problems refugees face when moving to new countries. Attendees had the opportunity to try public speaking and teaching others about a World Association of Girl Scouts and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) member country through food, crafts, and more. To celebrate the 111th Girl Scout Birthday, a sing-along was held which included Girl Scouts and leaders in GSNI's AmeriCorps troops. This gave members of those troops connections to Girl Scouts in other troops and opportunities in Girl Scouting which hadn't been possible before. The service unit also held a Boo! Fest Fall Fun Day and Founders Day event at Camp Dean.

Circle of Friends also held a Cookie Kick-off Rally to help prepare and motivate Girl Scouts and leaders for Girl Scout Cookie season!

Spring River Service Unit Community Trunk-or-Treat

Committee Members: Marge Blake, Jennifer Hauch, Olivia Martinez, Adele Ratzlaff, and Jessica Stobart

The Spring River Service Unit worked together to plan and launch a free Community Trunk-or-Treat event! The event was open to the public, and the team worked with local schools and Facebook groups to share the information. There were just under 30 participating "trunks", including all kinds of fun themes such as camping Girl Scout skeletons! Each car prepared 500 pieces of candy which was fortunate as candy ran out in just about one hour. Thankfully, every participant received candy!

This event was an achievement for the service unit as their goal had been to offer an event to the local community at little to no cost. In addition, service unit leadership staffed a Girl Scout recruiting information table where leaders spoke to every family who attended. Some families lined up to find out more, and several joined Girl Scouts on the spot! Girl Scouts were invited to an upcoming event to learn more information. This event impacted the Machesney Park community, along with Spring River Service Unit troops and their families.

Families of Spring River Girl Scouts witnessed how togetherness brought service to the community. Girl Scouts were supported by their troop leaders, including planning a theme and decorating. Many Girl Scouts' costumes also went along with the trunk theme and highlighted their personalities. Best of all, the local community experienced a safe and fun way to gather on a Sunday afternoon and learn more about Girl Scouts!

Spring River G.O.A.T. Day Committee

Committee Members: Marge Blake, Jennifer Hauch, Olivia Martinez, and Jessica Stobart

This amazing team planned G.O.A.T. Day at Camp McCormick (Greatest Of

All Time) to focus on the service unit's Girl Scouts at the Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador levels and invited existing and future Girl Scouts from fifth grade.

At the event, girls learned new skills and how to work together. They played Gaga Ball, learned fire starting techniques, threw tomahawks, used sling shots, did archery, and went on a hike combined with a scavenger hunt. The girls also prepared and cooked a foil pack lunch, including their own pie iron dessert. Unexpectedly, they also learned to adapt to the weather, as the day included sleet, snow, sunshine, and rain—all in one afternoon!

It was the first time many of the Girl Scouts had cooked food over a campfire. They were convinced the food wouldn't be cooked all the way through or taste good. However, after the meal was ready, they were impressed with the results (especially the dessert pies!).

Genesis Service Unit Hiking Club

Committee Members: Kim Balder, Alisa Carlin, Julie Dzierzynski, Nicole Johnson, Carrie Lapidus, Kelly Schwartz, Kristi Sparbanie, and Amy Zientarski

The Genesis Hiking Club was founded in October 2022 to give Junior–Ambassador Girl Scouts an extra-troop space to explore the outdoors, practice stewardship of the environment, and lead others in enjoying public trails safely and respectfully. This is done with monthly hikes, twice-annual family hikes open to the entire service unit, quarterly meetings, and volunteer opportunities.

Monthly hikes are varied in distance and location to accommodate differing skill levels and include many trails. Girl Scouts helped lead the hikes by setting the pace and utilizing trail aides such as maps, compasses, or handheld GPS devices for geocaching and the Camp Dean Goat Hunt.

Twice a year, Genesis Hiking Club sponsors a Family Hike, open to Girl Scouts of all ages in the service unit with their families. The Fall Family Hike is held in conjunction with Girl Scouts Love State Parks at Silver Springs State Park. In May, the Family Hike is held on Mother's Day weekend. For the May 2023 Family Hike, 15 families totaling over 50 participants hiked together at Waterfall Glen!

At quarterly meetings, Girl Scouts decide on hike locations and are awarded for meeting mileage goals. The Genesis Hiking Club leaders worked to develop the program with incentives, such as medallions and compasses for their hiking sticks, to keep hiking club members motivated to—literally—go further. The quarterly meetings are also used to complete badge requirements.

In July 2023, at the Starved Rock State Park Junior Ranger Day, the Genesis Hiking Club hosted a booth, educating others about trail safety and promoting Girl Scouts to the community. In September 2023, Genesis Hiking Club Girl Scouts helped a Brownie Troop earn their Hiker badge and led them on a 1-mile hike at a local park, singing camp songs along the way!

Genesis Service Unit

Committee Members: Kim Balder, Jeanine Contreras, Sara Fair, Trisha Goodnough, Lori Janis, Nicole Johnson, Gloria Olson, Catherine Perry, and Erin Tallman

The fact that Genesis Service Unit has so many dedicated members on their committee indicates how these volunteers have gone above and beyond! With so many roles to fill, it can be a challenge to achieve all the desired goals.

This year, the service unit's Onboarding Specialist and Volunteer Mentor have done an amazing job of reaching out to the community and making sure the opportunity to join Girl Scouts was communicated efficiently. All the service unit's Retention and New Girl goals have been met and exceeded!

The team includes a well-seasoned group of volunteers dedicated to the service unit and growth of Girl Scouts. They continue to host monthly events, celebrating old and new badges, and create a welcoming atmosphere where new and upcoming leaders can join in the fun and learn.

Each member of the team has spent many, many hours to ensure the service unit is successful, while still expanding with new ideas. One committee member proposed the idea of a Hispanic Heritage Committee and implemented programming for the 2023–24 year. Another committee member dedicated time to getting Girl Scouts outdoors and created a Hiking Club and started a Trailblazer Troop. The service unit heartily encourages "outside the box" thinking and helps with implementation whenever needed!

Green Horizons Service Unit Team

Committee Members: Sara Bourquin, Dawn Crowley, Annette Happ, Sabrina Lewis, Barb Lutz, Heather Moore, GariLynne Reed, and Bridget Toay

Members of Green Horizons Service Unit team clearly respect one another and enjoy working together to create, plan, and staff gatherings and events throughout their local community. Their work has been productive as they've seen the number of members and troops attending service unit events increase!

The team provided events for all ages in the service unit—some for all ages and some for specific groups. They take pride in having Girl Scouts from Daisy all the way to Ambassador level and love seeing the girls make friends within and outside of their troops. The service unit is comprised of small towns in rural areas and are encouraged by the ongoing growth of their troops. They were also able to exceed their goal for the Fall Product Program which was quite an accomplishment!

The service unit held a Girl Scouts Love State Park Weekend which was a great success. The event featured two female Department of Natural Resources Officers who spoke with attendees and provided a large selection of hands-on nature displays!



Hall of Fame Award

The Hall of Fame Award recognizes a lifetime commitment to the Girl Scout Movement within Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois. The recipients have supported GSNI in a variety of ways including advocating for Girl Scouts in the community, volunteering in a variety of roles, and financially supporting GSNI. The Hall of Fame Award can be given posthumously.

Barb Lutz

Nominated by Kris Trusk

Endorsed by Ann-Marie Soderstrom and Michelle Hicks

Barb has held many different positions in her service unit and fully supports delivery of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. She oversees meaningful, educational, and fun service unit events. For example, in April 2023, she worked with her service unit to provide a recruitment and retention event revolving around the Resilient. Ready. Strong. GSUSA patch program. At the event, she welcomed potential members and met with existing members to provide programming that addresses the mental health crisis youth face today. She found a local veterinarian who spoke to the Girl Scouts about how to care for animals, brought in a petting zoo, provided healthy snacks, and gave each Girl Scout supplies to help them journal their feelings.

Barb helped her daughter's Brownie troop years ago which led to her becoming a troop leader for a Junior troop. She stayed on as a Junior troop leader in the Rock City, Davis, and Dakota areas for well over 25 years because she loved the age group of fourth and fifth graders as they were open to learning, growing, and creating their own adventures.

Barb has been a local Girl Scout volunteer for years and has held various roles including Troop Leader for 5146, Service Unit Manager, Service Unit Fall and Cookie Product Program Coordinator, Onboarding Coach, Council Facilitator, Troop/Community Organizer, Volunteer Mentor, and member for various service unit and council committees. She has also served as an Onboarding Trainer for New Leaders throughout the council, helped with Gold Award Trainings, and volunteered countless hours at events and other activities. Barb has been extremely dedicated throughout her 40 years in Girl Scouts, spending seven years as a girl member and then over 30 years as a volunteer.

So much can be said about Barb, but it can best be summed up by the impact she has had and continues to have on the girls within her troops and service unit. Recently, I spoke with a young lady who was a member of Barb's troop over 10 years ago, and she described Barb as her "other mom" who always took the time to listen to her and encourage her to step outside of her comfort zone by trying new things.

Barb is a caring individual who believes in the mission of Girl Scouts. She strives to help girls develop the skills to improve their own lives and the world around them. Barb is a testament to the highest principles of the Girl Scout Promise and Law, and she embodies what it means to be a leader of

courage, confidence, and character to make the world a better place. This is only one small example of the type of work Barb does. She frequently thinks about the needs of the youth in her area, while also providing excellent support to her service unit volunteers.

In her partnership with council staff and her entire local service area, she shows remarkable kindness, fairness, and always keeps what's best for her Girl Scouts as a priority. It is for qualities like this that Barb was nominated for and awarded GSUSA's Appreciation Pin, Honor Pin, and Thanks Badge.

Barb is known for providing many hands-on activities for Girl Scouts and includes her Girl Scouts in all aspects of planning. She encourages them to lead in the decision-making from what badges they earn, to where they visit, to what service projects they do. She believes Girl Scouts—when given the chance—can lead others in a safe, accepting environment and hone skills they'll use for the rest of their lives.

Barb truly believes in the Girl Scout Law and Promise and encourages other volunteers to be the best role models they can be. I believe Barb is a great role model for the other volunteers, and I am grateful for her continued support of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience in all she does.

Kelly McCleary

Nominated by Robin Shaff

Endorsed by Dara Nelson and Kristen Maksymiw

Kelly McCleary has had a huge impact on the Girl Scouts and adult volunteers of Girl Scouts in northern Illinois in her 55 years of membership in Girl Scouts.

She was very active in Fox Valley Council (a GSNI legacy council) during her 11 years as a girl member. She earned the First Class Award, the highest award in Girl Scouts at the time, and represented Fox Valley Council on two Wider Opportunities to Our Cabana in Mexico, and as a participant in Fox Valley Council's "Moccasins to Megalopolis," as well as serving as a Counselor-in-Training and Camp Counselor at Camp Dean and Camp Adahi, multiple times. She also served as a girl member of the Fox Valley Council Board of Directors.

After graduating from high school, Kelly became a member of the Fox Valley Girl Scout Council's Camp Committee for six years. She also began to lead training at Camp Dean for Overnight License training for leaders. In 1985, Kelly joined the Fox Valley Girl Scout Council Program Committee. She helped create and coordinate an average of two council-sponsored programs for each level of Girl Scouts per year. Kelly served on the Fox Valley Girl Scout Council Nominating Committee for three years until her husband joined the Girl Scout Board of Directors.

In 1994, Kelly, along with her sister, Robin, and mother, Sylvia, began to work with a committee of volunteers and council employees to bring another Wider Opportunity (now called Destinations), to Fox Valley Girl Scout Council. In the Summer of 1997, Fox Valley Girl Scout Council hosted,

“Coasters, Cabins and Mrs. O’Leary’s Cow” Wider Op. The program brought 56 Girl Scouts and adults from across the United States along with three girls from El Salvador to Illinois to learn about Illinois history and earn the new (at the time) badge called “Engineering the Future.” (This was before STEM!). Kelly was pregnant with her daughter at the time of the event but worked tirelessly behind the scenes of the event on logistics and support, so participants and adult advisors had a fabulous time.

Kelly was also a Unit Leader and then Director of North Aurora and Oakhurst Day Camps for multiple years. Even while she was taking classes one summer to earn her master’s degree, she was the shopper for Oakhurst Day Camp. At this time, Kelly began working with the Fox Valley Council Fund Development team on the adult fundraiser silent auction known as “Holiday Harvest.” She helped at or chaired this event for more than 10 years with tens of thousands of dollars being raised each year to support membership and programming for the girls in Fox Valley Council. During the merger of the four legacy councils that eventually formed Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois, she continued to chair “Holiday Harvest” for the council for an additional three years.

In 2001, Kelly became an Assistant Leader of a GSUSA Daisy troop pilot program for four-year-old preschoolers at Allen School in Aurora, where she was the Assistant Principal. This troop included her daughter, Kara. The Daisy program did not include badges or Journeys at that time, so Kelly and her co-leaders had to plan their own Girl Scout age-appropriate program for the girls.

In Summer 2002, she again volunteered at Girl Scout day camp as a Unit Leader of a Daisy Unit at Bliss Woods Day Camp. Kelly continued as a Day Camp Unit Leader with many of the original girls in her unit each year as they moved up to the next level until the girls finished as Aides-In-Training, or at seven years. The next year she became the Day Camp Director at Bliss Woods Forest Preserve. She served as Day Camp Director for several more years.

When Kelly became Principal at Johnson School in Aurora, Troop #4785 became Brownies and eventually Junior Girl Scouts. The girls had many great experiences and opportunities to try new and exciting things in Girl Scouts. One of their favorite events was the annual Service Unit Lock-In event Kelly hosted at Johnson School every year. The troop later moved to St. Olaf’s Lutheran Church in Montgomery when the girls became Cadettes. During this time Kelly was an Assistant Leader and mentored two girls to earn their Girl Scout Bronze and Silver Awards. In 2005, Kelly mentored a Senior Girl Scout as she earned her Girl Scout Gold Award. At the same time, she also served on the GSNI Adult Recognition Committee. She was a member of the Recognition Committee for four years.

For the past five years, Kelly has served as a member of GSNI’s Gold Award Committee by mentoring Girl Scouts and helping to approve and encourage them to complete their Gold Award journey. In Summer 2023, she worked closely with several girls throughout GSNI to assist with understanding the Girl Scout Gold Award process and help to educate girls and parents in the requirements to earn Girl Scouts’ highest award. She has volunteered a lot of

her time traveling to other parts of the council to work with girls to complete their Gold Award Applications. At the same time, Kelly continues to interview applicants and approve Gold Award Project proposals.

In November 2020, GSNI saw completion of the McCleary-Shaff Lodge at Camp Dean. This would not have been possible without the financial support from Kelly and her husband, Scott. In addition to helping to pay for the construction of the building, they also donated the cost of the eight double-bunk beds for McCleary-Shaff Lodge, which she and her husband, daughter, sister and Troop #4785 helped assemble. Kelly and Scott also donated the four porch swings on both McCleary-Shaff and Charlie's Lodges.

There was a great need for more troop camping space at Camp Dean, and Kelly and Scott made sure the girls of today and in the future would have a quality place to stay while at Camp Dean. When there was a need for naming the McCleary-Shaff Lodge's twin and honoring longtime Camp Ranger Charlie Qualls at Camp Dean, Kelly worked with the GSNI staff members to dedicate Pondsides Lodge in Charlie's name. Again, Kelly and Scott donated to honor Charlie in his retirement. Also, Kelly and her family helped keep the surprise reveal from Charlie at the 75th Anniversary party at Camp Dean.

In November 2022, Kelly, along with others, stepped in to assist in reestablishing Circle of Friends Service Unit's leadership team. While assisting with many service unit activities, Kelly has organized several well-attended events such as Frosty Frolic and the 2024 Circle of Friends Cookie Rally. She has assisted and encouraged other volunteers to take leadership roles for other events. If a Circle of Friends troop needs a place to meet or hold an event, Kelly helps find a place for Girl Scouts, whether at the Santori Aurora Public Library or Wesley United Methodist Church, where she taught and directed the preschool classes for more than 10 years. Kelly also stepped up to find an easily accessible place for cookie pick up for Circle of Friends and Batavia Service Units for the past two years. She also joined Dara Nelson to co-chair the Fall Product and Cookie Programs for Circle of Friends Service Unit.

For her many years of selfless service, we proudly endorse Kelly McCleary to receive the Hall of Fame Award!



The poster features two anthropomorphic Thin Mints running. One is wearing a white cap with a yellow flower, and the other is wearing a red and white GSNI cap with a torch. They are surrounded by a laurel wreath. Text on the poster includes: "Success isn't given... It's earned!", "Thin Mint Sprint 5K run/walk", "Early-bird Registration: \$35 per person Ends July 31, 2024", "Registration: \$40 per person After July 31, 2024", "Lions Park in Fox River Grove Neighborhood Run | Virtual Options", "September 14 | 8:30 a.m.", and "girl scouts of northern illinois 20th Anniversary!".



Membership Milestones

Five years

Aubri Ammons
Caroline Berry
Lucy Berry
Nathan Berry
Kayla Burlingame
Betty Corey
Julie Dzierzynski
Iris Feldshau
Meredith Feldshau
Tim Feldshau
Tim Funfsinn
Olivia Gaziano
Sophie Gaziano
Pamela Gough
Rachel Haung
Aubri Heck
Alex Hickey
Charlotte Hohm
Cheyenne Hosick
Brynleigh Krupke
Ericha Lilly-Hosick
Kyra Maksymiw
Amanda Martin
Allison Misiura
Cecilia Moore
Zanyah Morataya
Nevaeh Nisius
Hugo Olivas Jr.
Paula O'Neil
Tammy O'Neil
Khloie Rather-Corey
Kayla Sandrok
Rosalie Sirianni
Seeley Slater
Savannah Speerstra
Angelina Tanig
Michella Tanig

Paisley Vander Kuur
Addison Wendel
Taylor Wendel
EllaMae Wise

Ten Years

Sachi Arora
Julia Baird
Nikole Behling
Grace Bourbon
Anna Bower
Laura Bower
Rebekah Bumgarner
Michael Campbell
Sylvia Christensen
Angela D'Andrea
Terran D'Andrea
Hannah Guffey
Samantha Guffey
Olivia Hauch
Cara Hickey
Kathryn Hogan
Tracy Hooper
Margaret Martin
Jodie Marshall-Salazar
Michaela McClain-Smith
Lily McConnell
Izabelle Nelson-Carrillo
Melanie Olsen
Lillian Robles
Bianca Santucci
Dawn Santucci
Angelina Sirianni
Isabelle Tanig
Cami Tchoi
Lauren Viebrock
Amelia Weingarz
Julie Weingarz
Katherine Wood

Fifteen Years

Marge Blake
Dawn Crowley
Amanda Guffey
Christa McClain-Smith
Yvonne Mundorf
Katrina Rath

Twenty Years

Brea Barnes
Barbara Bundy
Serene Taylor
Cheri Wickert

Twenty-Five Years

Shannon Baird
Amber Burger
Lori Farris
Stacy Grutsch
Angela Musial

Thirty-Five Years

Jacqueline Nelson
Erin Tallman

Forty Years

Hillary Blevins
Patricia Graw

Fifty-Five Years

Mary Ann Knoll
Carol McPhillips
Kelly McCleary

Sixty Years

Dana Vierck



President's Volunteer Service Award

The President's Volunteer Service Award recognizes United States citizens and lawfully admitted permanent residents of the United States who have achieved the required number of hours of service during a specified time frame.

Award Recipients, ages 5–10

Bronze, 26–49 hours

Emma Bennington, *Spring River Service Unit, Troop 241*
Emma Bourquin, *Green Horizons Service Unit, Troop 5076*
C. Joshua Bumgarner, *Kaskaskia Service Unit, Troop 1620*
Julliana Castanedo, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 150*
Dream Donald, *Green Horizons Service Unit, Troop 1189*
Eden Feldshau, *Fox Tales Service Unit, Troop 2386*
Iris Feldshau, *Fox Tales Service Unit, Troop 2386*
Journee Foat, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 150*
Olivia Gaziano, *Spring River Service Unit, Troop 241*
Callie Hollowell, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 150*
Edison Hooper, *Double Tree Service Unit, Troop 353*

Natalie Lane, *Spring River Service Unit Troop, 241*
Aliannah McCleary, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 150*
Legacy McLaughlin, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 150*
Khloie Rather-Corey, *Spring River Service Unit, Troop 241*
Angelina Tanig, *Fox Valley Service Unit, Troop 2407*
Addyson White, *Spring River Service Unit, Troop 241*
Emelia Willis, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 150*
Mattea Woods, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 150*

Silver, 50-74 hours

Sadie Castro, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 150*
Liliana Cech, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 150*
Anniah Garcia, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 150*
Aubri Heck, *Green Horizons Service Unit, Troop 1189*
Ava Hollowell, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 150*
Hugo Joel Olivas, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 150*
Marcilyn Wise, *Green Horizons Service Unit, Troop 1189*

Gold, 75+ hours

Victoria Castanedo, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 150*
Lennox Euell, *Green Horizons Service Unit, Troop 1189*
Reese Euell, *Green Horizons Service Unit, Troop 1189*
Rachel Huang, *Green Horizons Service Unit, Troop 1189*
Rita Huang, *Green Horizons Service Unit, Troop 1189*
Brynleigh Krupke, *Green Horizons Service Unit, Troop 1189*
Isabelle Olivas, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 150*

Award Recipients, ages 11–15

Bronze, 50–74 hours

Isaac Blevins, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 1504*
Ava Castro, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 150*
Sophia Gallegos, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 150*
Tessa Karolyi, *Barrington Service Unit, Troop 441*
Emma Leuders, *Barrington Service Unit, Troop 441*
Frances McGroarty, *Geneva Service Unit, Troop 1384*
Cecilia Moore, *Wynonwy Service Unit, Troop 466*
Lillian Robles, *Fox Valley Service Unit, Troop 830*
Karis Tchoi, *Barrington Service Unit, Troop 1763*

Silver, 75-99 hours

E'Mira Allen, *Green Horizons Service Unit, Troop 1189*

Destiny Jackson, *Green Horizons Service Unit, Troop 1189*

Olivia Nelson, *Park North Stateline Service Unit, Troop 2219*

Gold, 100+ hours

Aubri Ammons, *Green Horizons Service Unit Troop 1189*

Rebekah Bumgarner, *Kaskaskia Service Unit, Troop 1620*

Allivia Fennessy, *Boone Service Unit, Troop 1650*

Olivia Hauch, *Spring River Service Unit, Troop 1095*

Eleanor Hooper, *Double Tree Service Unit, Troop 353*

Nona Klassen, *Kaskaskia Service Unit, Troop 2055*

Yvette Lapidus, *Genesis Service Unit, Troop 1336*

Megan Schlarmann, *Spring River Service Unit, Troop 1095*

Isabelle Tanig, *Fox Valley Service Unit, Troop 4622*

EllaMae Wise, *Green Horizons Service Unit, Troop 1189*

Genesis Hiking Club, *Genesis Service Unit*

Award Recipients, ages 16-25

Bronze, 100-174 hours

Kate DeGreve, *Batavia Service Unit, Troop 1200*

Lily McConnell, *Geneva Service Unit, Troop 1384*

Silver, 175-249 hours

Julia Baird, *Geneva Service Unit, Troop 1384*

Annabelle Blevins, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 1504*

Cassie Boyer, *Green Horizons Service Unit, Troop 5047*

Gold, 250+ hours

Noel Maina, *Boone Service Unit, Troop 191*

Samantha Tallman, *Genesis Service Unit, Troop 1417*

Award Recipients, ages 26+

Bronze, 100-249 hours

Racheal Asencio, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 150*

Melissa Bardzinski, *Batavia Service Unit, Troop 890*

Sara Bourquin, *Green Horizons Service Unit, Troop 5076*

Deziree Bushar, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 150*

Amber Cech, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 150*

Annette Happ, *Green Horizons Service Unit Service Unit Team*
Nancy Lopez, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 150*
Amanda Speerstra, *Geneva Service Unit, Troops 311 & 609*
Pamela Whitfield, *Geneva Service Unit, Troop 526*
Katherine Wood, *Fox Valley Service Unit, Troop 830*
Carmella Zigler, *Lee Service Unit, Troop 567*

Silver, 250-499 hours

Peggy Bartelt, *SU411, GSNI Historians*
Marshall Blevins, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 1504*
Clyde Bumgarner, *Kaskaskia Service Unit, Troop 1620*
Desiree Danesi, *Fox Valley Service Unit, Troops 407, 522 & 2407*
Timothy Feldshau, *Fox Tales Service Unit, Troop 2386*
Jennifer Hauch, *Spring River Service Unit, Troop 1095*
Jacquie Helminiak, *North Star Service Unit, Troop 2385*
Laura Hohm, *Circle of Friends Service Unit, Troop 147*
Samantha Josefowski, *Potowatomi Service Unit, Troop 828*
Tracy Knight, *Park North Stateline Service Unit, Troop 1303*
Rebecca Koehler, *Lee Service Unit, Troop 2189*
Donna Leitzinger, *WinDuPec Service Unit, Troop 791*
Sabrina Lewis, *Green Horizons Service Unit, Troop 5410*
Barbara Lutz, *Green Horizons Service Unit, Troops 565, 1816 & 5047*
Kaleen Martin, *Cheyenne Service Unit, Troop 556*
Denise Mercuri, *Potowatomi Service Unit, TNT 611613*
Hugo Olivas Jr, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 150*
Melanie Olsen, *Lee Service Unit, Troop 2189*
GariLynne Reed, *Green Horizons Service Unit, Troop 5410*
Sarah Sandrok, *Geneva Service Unit, Troop 160*
Heather Simo, *Southern Ogle Service Unit, Troop 409*
Rebecca Spindler, *Green Horizons Service Unit, Troop 1189*
Natasha Stevens, *Geneva Service Unit, Troop 526*
Camille Tchoi, *Barrington Service Unit, Troop 125 & 1763*
Amber Theis, *Fox Valley Service Unit, Troop 380*
Stephanie Vavra, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 1504*
Janey Welch, *Potowatomi Service Unit Service Unit Team*
Suzanne Whittington, *Fox Valley Service Unit, Troop 380*
Cheri Wickert, *Lee Service Unit, Troop 2189*

Gold, 500+ hours

Shannon Baird, *Geneva Service Unit, Troops 144 & 1384*

Erin Berry, *Park North Stateline Service Unit, Troops 1398 & 1243*

Marge Blake, *Spring River Service Unit, Troop 475*

Hillary Blevins, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 1504*

Bobbie Bredemeier, *Chippewa Service Unit, Troop 603*

Staci Bumgarner, *Kaskaskia Service Unit, Troop 1620*

Sylvia Christensen, *Wynonwy Service Unit, Troop 466*

Amber Combs, *Chippewa Service Unit, Troop 387*

Jennifer Edwards-Amberg, *Lake Zurich Service Unit, Troops 166, 1409 & 1897*

Mareidith Feldshau, *Fox Tales Service Unit, Troop 2386*

April Fox, *Chippewa Service Unit, Troop 755*

Leslie Guy, *Arapaho Service Unit, Troop 473*

Michael Guy, *Arapaho Service Unit, Troop 473*

Ryan Hooper, *Double Tree Service Unit, Troop 353*

Tracy Hooper, *Double Tree Service Unit, Troop 353*

Pattie Klassen, *Kaskaskia Service Unit, Troop 2055*

Lucinda Maina, *Boone Service Unit, Troops 191 & 1031*

Dawn Miller, *Lake Zurich Service Unit, Troop 445*

Sarah Nelson, *Park North Stateline Service Unit, Troop 2219*

Stephanie Olivas, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 150*

Lisa Perrault, *Fox Valley Service Unit, Troop 1743*

Jennifer Robinson, *Southern Ogle Service Unit, Troop 257*

Michelle Rossi, *North Star Service Unit, Troop 2385*

Carly Siriann, *Park North Stateline Service Unit, Troop 3361*

Mandy Stutenberg, *Batavia Service Unit, Troop 796*

Michella Tanig, *Fox Valley Service Unit, Troop 2407*

Christine Walsh, *Lake Zurich Service Unit, Troops 294 & 745*

Lifetime Award Recipients, 4,000 hours+

Stephanie Vavra, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 1504*

Blevins Family, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 1504*

Group & Family Award Recipients

Bronze, 200-499 hours

Olsen Family, *Lee Service Unit, Troop 2189*

Zigler Family, *Lee Service Unit, Troops 567 & 2189*

Troop 2386, *Fox Tales Service Unit*

Troop 1384, *Geneva Service Unit*

Silver 500-999 hours

Bourquin Family, *Green Horizons Service Unit, Troop 5076*

Castanedo Lopez Family, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 150*

Wickert Family, *Lee Service Unit, Troop 2189*

Gold, 1,000+ hours

Asencio-Bushar-Castro Family, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 150*

Baird Family, *Geneva Service Unit, Troops 144 & 1384*

Better Together Event Planning Committee, *GSNI*

Blevins Family, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 1504*

Bumgarner Family, *Kaskaskia Service Unit, Troop 1620*

Christensen Moore Family, *Wynonwy Service Unit, Troop 466*

Feldshau Family, *Fox Tales Service Unit, Troop 2386*

Fox-Evert Family, *Chippewa Service Unit, Troop 755*

G & V Volunteer Day Camp, *Genesis Service Unit*

Genesis Service Unit Team

Geneva Service Unit Team

Hooper Family, *Double Tree Service Unit, Troop 353*

Klassen Family, *Kaskaskia Service Unit, Troop 2055*

Olivas Family, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit, Troop 150*

Tanig Family, *Fox Valley Service Unit, Troops 2407 & 4622*

Troop 144, *Geneva Service Unit*

Troop 150, *Whiteside Carroll Service Unit*

girl scouts
of northern illinois

We're Hiring!
SCAN for your next career!

GSNI Scholarship Recipients

Each year through an application and interview process, GSNI awards scholarships to registered, graduating Girl Scouts who have been actively involved in Girl Scouting during their high school years. These Girl Scouts have committed to furthering their education, demonstrated their understanding of the Girl Scout Promise and Law, and live by those values. Thanks to generous donors for providing GSNI's 2024 Scholarships.

GSNI Gold Award Scholarship

Kaitlin Liu, *Maple Park*

GSNI Ambassador Scholarships

Madeline Archer, *Roscoe*

Alyssa Bognett, *Elgin*

Samantha Tallman, *Plainfield*

Lauren Viebrock, *Elgin*

Loretta Woodard, *Poplar Grove*



girl scouts
of northern illinois

2024 GSNI Scholarship Recipients



Kaitlin Liu
GSNI Gold
Award
Scholarship



Madeline Archer
GSNI
Ambassador
Scholarship



Alyssa Bognetti
GSNI
Ambassador
Scholarship



Samantha Tallman
GSNI
Ambassador
Scholarship



Lauren Viebrock
GSNI
Ambassador
Scholarship



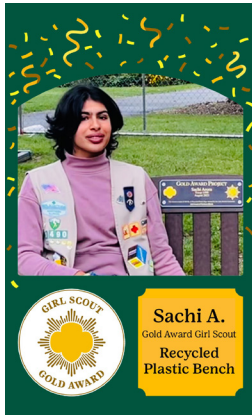
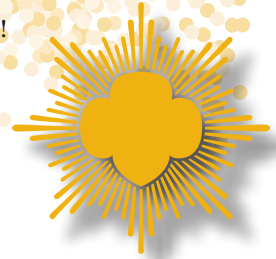
Loretta Woodard
GSNI
Ambassador
Scholarship

For more information:
www.girlscoutsni.org/scholarships

Girl Scout Gold Awards - 2024

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the mark of the truly remarkable! It recognizes Girl Scouts in grades 9–12 who demonstrated extraordinary leadership through sustainable and measurable Take Action projects. Since 1916, a Gold Award Girl Scout has been the dreamer and doer who takes “make the world a better place” to the next level. Gold Award Girl Scouts are driven, passionate, and optimistic. They are the leaders of tomorrow today.

We are proud to present the 2024 Gold Award Girl Scouts!



Sachi Arora, Recycled Plastic Bench

Lake Zurich, Lake Zurich Service Unit

Sachi's Gold Award project addressed the environmental impact caused by the improper disposal of plastic waste. Thanks to Sachi, over 500 pounds of plastic bags were collected through a collaboration with schools, businesses, companies, and public services. The recycled bags were then turned into a park bench, which was placed at a local park. Sachi also empowered younger generations to learn and reflect on plastic waste by educating and engaging both preschool and high school classrooms through recycled-focused discussions and games!



Grace Bourbon, Genealogy Center

West Dundee, Fox Tales Service Unit

Grace's Gold Award project aimed to improve everyone's access to family genealogy and family military records. Researching and presenting ways to access overall genealogy and family records, Grace was inspired to help her community grow by learning more about their ethnicities, heritage, and family story. Grace collaborated with her local historical society and VFW to explore current genealogical tools for her community and created instructional guides on their use. Guests of the historical society frequently use the guides Grace created and her referenced genealogy programs and resources!



Kathryn Hogan, Spartan Thrift

Sycamore, Double Tree Service Unit

For her Gold Award project, Kathryn created Spartan Thrift Store in her high school. The store includes clothing for anyone, including shoes, accessories, and seasonal items for prom, homecoming, performances, and presentations. Everything is priced at five dollars or less. For students needing extra support, everything in the store is free and includes access to additional hygienic supplies. Students may schedule private times to shop, if preferred. All thrift items are donated by the community with unusable items being recycled, helping to reduce waste.

Spartan Thrift partnered with Sycamore's ABLE program for students with intellectual and physical disabilities. This helped ABLE students practice job readiness by stocking a store and learning customer service. The store also partnered with Sycamore's Spartan Food Pantry to give students in need easier access to additional support if needed. Spartan Thrift is going strong staffed by current students and staff members!



Kaitlin Liu, Launching Girls' Curiosity in STEM by Creating Hi-Tech Maker Spaces at Camp Dean and Camp McCormick

Maple Park, Trefoil Service Unit

Kaitlin wanted to inspire girls to be a part of the cutting-edge future in STEM using Girl Scout badges. She realized GSNI did not have the equipment and tools for these badges or a place for girls to work on them. For her Gold Award project, she created Tech Camp GSNI. She worked with GSNI and led a team of over 50 volunteers to create Maker Spaces at Camps Dean and McCormick. At Camp Dean, her team renovated White Tail Lodge and brought in robotics, tablets, a smart TV, 3D printer, microscopes, sewing machines, and more. At Camp McCormick, her team set up two Maker Space cabinets in the Welcome Lodge stocked with hi-tech equipment.

Kaitlin is grateful for project grants provided by the Community Foundation of the Fox River Valley, the Kane County Riverboat Fund, the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois, the Kiwanis Club of Rockford, SciTech, and many donors.



Alaina Nelson-Carrillo, Creators League

Aurora, Circle of Friends Service Unit

Alaina's Gold Award project addressed the increase of mental health concerns in teens and tween girls by providing safe and creative spaces to express oneself through art. Through research viewing the social and mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, Alaina saw a decrease in opportunities and communities promoting healthy coping mechanisms for young women. Taking inspiration from her own interest in art, Alaina created mental health-based workshops utilizing art lessons and techniques. The new artists had the opportunity to display their work in a community art show hosted by Alaina and her team!



Katrina Rath, Sleigh Bells Ring Extravaganza

Village of Lakewood, North Star Service Unit

Katrina was concerned about local students lacking funds to purchase new clothing and accessories for both band and chorus. For her Gold Award project, she created Second Verse Clothing Closet in the school's band room. To stock the closet, she promoted and hosted a donation drive for gently used concert attire and marching band accessories at the Sleigh Bells Ring Extravaganza and during her school's Spring Concert Week. Once the closet was fully stocked, she advertised it in a welcoming and friendly manner to make sure students felt comfortable using the new resource! The closet will be sustained through ongoing school advertising and the National Honor Society hosting a similar drive each year.



Kate Shondy, Sensory Boxes for Developing Brains

Lake Zurich, Lake Zurich Service Unit

Kate wanted to encourage creativity, exploration, and problem-solving in local elementary school-age kids. Her Gold Award project was the creation of “unplugged” sensory boxes to inspire children to use their minds in exploratory ways while thinking productively, as opposed to relying solely on visual technology. She included items in the boxes to ensure children would be excited to do something not related to technology. Boxes were designed to benefit children in sensory exploration, improvement of fine motor skills, cognitive development, and keeping calm. Kate researched items to place in the boxes, including something to touch (such as fidget spinners), smell (such as scented play dough), hear (such as a music box), and look (positive images). Kate also wanted to provide a safe way for children to deal with mental health-related challenges.



Kathleen Thomas, Recycling and Life Skills

Woodstock, Potowatomi Service Unit

Kathleen’s Gold Award project tackled the lack of a recycling program at Harvard Jr. High School. She worked with the administration, and her team was able to place recycling bins in all the classrooms! Kathleen also created a program for life skills and general education students to work together each week to empty bins and collect all recycling in the school. Additionally, the recycling volunteers all met for fun and games where life skills and general education students played together and enjoyed each other’s company!



Graduating Girl Scouts

GSNI is happy to present our graduating Girl Scout Ambassadors for 2024.

Congratulations! May you take your Girl Scout experience with you wherever you go!

Jenna Allen, *Oswego*

Sarah Pearl Anderson, *Rockford*

Konstantina Antoniou, *Algonquin*

Madeline Archer, *Roscoe*

Abigail Arends, *Geneva*

Sachi Arora, *Deer Park*

Clare Bailey, *Crystal Lake*

Cadance Baumgartner, *Warren*

Carolyn Begun, *Gilberts*

Lillian Belstra, *Crystal Lake*

Rebecca Benton, *Marengo*

Alyssa Bognetti, *Elgin*

Megan Bomgarden, *Winnebago*

Grace Bourbon, *West Dundee*

Jade Brewington, *Chana*

Faith Brooks, *Algonquin*

Anna Brossart, *Spring Grove*

Brianna Cadena, *Aurora*

Lily Chamberlin, *Gilberts*

Ashley Cotter, *Saint Charles*

Niara Crigler, *Elgin*

Antonia Crutcher, *Rockford*

Angela D'Andrea, *Geneva*

Emma DeGreve, *Batavia*

Kate DeGreve, *Batavia*

Mckayla Dennis, *Loves Park*

Jessica Dove, *Oswego*

Mahala Englehart, *Marengo*

Alexia Esquivias, *Rockford*

Abbigale Fennessy, *Belvidere*

Sarah Fogel, *Deer Park*

Allison Foley, *Bartlett*

Keira Frey, *Oswego*

Anahi Garcia, *Aurora*

Katherine Gentry, *Deer Park*

Reagan Georgy, *Crystal Lake*

Lauren Givens, *Lake Zurich*

Laya Gopalakrishnan, *Algonquin*

Aubrey Groff, *Rockford*

Caroline Groth, *Deer Park*

Anna Gugulska, *Hoffman Estates*

Emma Harper, *Lake Zurich*

Kathleen Higgins, *Barrington*

Caitlyn Hoffmann, *Hampshire*

Rylee King, *Bartlett*

Rebecca Klunder, *Lake Zurich*

Allison Kopacz, *Island Lake*

Puja Krishnan, *South Barrington*

Mia Kuzelka, *Marengo*

Jacinda Labinski, *Bartlett*

Veronica Laubenstein, *Caledonia*

Emerald Lendi, *Sugar Grove*

Morgan Lesniewicz, *Lake Zurich*

Kymberly Lipps, *Dekalb*

Elyse Listerud, *Freeport*

Kaitlin Liu, *Maple Park*

Hailey Llamas, *Huntley*

Declan Lord, *Fox River Grove*

Libby Mason-Campbell, *Fox River Grove*

Makayla Maurer, *Hampshire*

Serenity Maynard, *Loves Park*

Jasmine McCaskel, *Richmond*

Megan McChrystal, *Geneva*

Aliana McKee, *Rockford*
Isabella McKenna, *Barrington*
Olivia Mikelson, *Oswego*
Julianne Millar, *Lake Zurich*
Micaela Miller, *Stockton*
Emily Mobley, *Algonquin*
Lillianne Mueller, *Crystal Lake*
Izabelle Nelson-Carrillo, *Aurora*
Natalie Nesheim, *Deer Park*
Beatrice Nott, *Crystal Lake*
Margaret O'Reilly, *Crystal Lake*
Abigail Penticoff, *Shannon*
Fallon Perry, *Rockford*
Dorothy Pike, *Aurora*
Rebecca Pinedo, *Deer Park*
Simone Potjeau, *Aurora*
Brielle Rach, *Rockford*
Madeline Raviolo, *Fox River Grove*
Angie Rizzo, *Richmond*
Faith Roy, *Aurora*
Emily Sass, *Deer Park*

Serena Schnidt, *Fox River Grove*
Leanne Shrader, *Pecatonica*
Katie Slife, *Loves Park*
Serafina Stepien, *Yorkville*
Lindsay Strauss, *Streamwood*
Samantha Tallman, *Plainfield*
Olivia Taylor, *Somonauk*
Emily Teeters, *Machesney Park*
Sophia Tegel, *Crystal Lake*
Corinna Tureson, *Roscoe*
Zoe Ulaszek, *St. Charles*
Lauren Viebrock, *Elgin*
Meegan Waddell, *Winnebago*
Fantasia Ward, *Rock Falls*
Emily Watters, *Oregon*
Julia Wilk, *Cary*
Gabriella Williams, *Rockford*
Loretta Woodard, *Poplar Grove*
Zoie Wyatt, *Polo*
Rachel Zarko, *Paw Paw*

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Honor Troop

The Honor Troop guidelines provide troops—Girl Scouts and leaders—with a roadmap for the Girl Scout year. Following this roadmap leads to an exceptional experience and sets troops up for success!

- Troop 6, *Rockford*
- Troop 33, *Sycamore*
- Troop 73, *Lake in the Hills*
- Troop 143, *Cary*
- Troop 144, *Geneva*
- Troop 160, *Geneva*
- Troop 190, *South Beloit*
- Troop 191, *Belvidere*
- Troop 222, *Marengo*
- Troop 241, *Loves Park*
- Troop 257, *Mt. Morris*
- Troop 283, *Fox River Grove*
- Troop 294, *Lake Zurich*
- Troop 334, *South Elgin*
- Troop 337, *Hampshire*
- Troop 353, *Sycamore*
- Troop 387, *Crystal Lake*
- Troop 407, *South Elgin*
- Troop 409, *Rochelle*
- Troop 431, *Batavia*
- Troop 445, *Lake Zurich*
- Troop 447, *Crystal Lake*
- Troop 466, *DeKalb*
- Troop 475, *Loves Park*
- Troop 518, *Wauconda*
- Troop 526, *Geneva*
- Troop 532, *Bartlett*
- Troop 646, *Sycamore*
- Troop 745, *Lake Zurich*
- Troop 748, *Algonquin*
- Troop 755, *Crystal Lake*
- Troop 757, *Batavia*
- Troop 796, *Geneva*
- Troop 870, *Belvidere*
- Troop 875, *Rockford*
- Troop 890, *Batavia*
- Troop 912, *Sycamore*
- Troop 1031, *Belvidere*
- Troop 1063, *Island Lake*
- Troop 1132, *Bartlett*
- Troop 1261, *Lake in the Hills*
- Troop 1303, *Roscoe*
- Troop 1384, *Geneva*
- Troop 1489, *DeKalb*
- Troop 1504, *Morrison*
- Troop 1728, *Lake Zurich*
- Troop 1797, *Plano*
- Troop 1821, *Rockford*
- Troop 1870, *Steward*
- Troop 1893, *Lake Zurich*
- Troop 1923, *Crystal Lake*
- Troop 1930, *Lake Zurich*
- Troop 1932, *Cary*
- Troop 2006, *Aurora*
- Troop 2018, *Loves Park*
- Troop 2030, *Bartlett*
- Troop 2111, *Crystal Lake*
- Troop 2186, *Stockton*
- Troop 2219, *Roscoe*
- Troop 2244, *Marengo*
- Troop 2348, *Cary*
- Troop 2385, *South Elgin*
- Troop 2407, *South Elgin*
- Troop 3334, *Loves Park*
- Troop 4785, *Aurora*
- Troop 5047, *Rock City*
- Troop 5076, *Warren*
- Troop 5410, *Orangeville*

Counselor In Training I (CIT I)

Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors earn this award by completing a leadership course on outdoor experiences and working with younger members over the course of a camp session.

Addison Carroll, *Hoffman Estates*

Alexandria Castaneda, *Plano*

Annabelle Blevins, *Morrison*

Delaney Pitner, *Cedar Lake, IN*

Elizabeth Wigton, *Plainfield*

Gabby Williams, *Rockford*

Jane Wirtz, *Barrington Hills*

Katherine Woodard, *Popular Grove*

Samantha Guffey, *South Beloit*

Sarah Smith, *Earlville*

Counselor In Training II (CIT II)

Girl Scout Ambassadors earn this award by working with younger members over the course of at least one camp session while focused on increasing their skills in specific areas, such as the arts or outdoor skills.

Amethyst Lendi, *Sugar Grove*

Aubrey Groff, *Rockford*

Hannah Guffey, *South Beloit*

Olli Wroten, *Aurora*



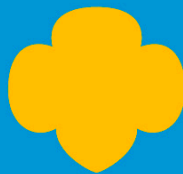
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of northern illinois



Thank You!

Congratulations to all our Girl Scout award recipients! Thank you for all you do. Thank you to those who recognized how amazing these volunteers are! Let's continue to grow in Girl Scouting.

We'd like to say a special thank you to the following volunteers who give of their valuable time to ensure the triumphs and successes of both GSNI Girl Scouts and GSNI adults are continually recognized!

Recognition Committee

Marge Blake	Patti Potempa
Brooke Cheek	Sue Reimer
Louise Glon	Lana Wroten
Annette Happ	

Gold Award Committee

Linda Christianson (Committee Chair)	
Kathleen Baylis	Sara Bourquin
Erin Berry	Kelly McCleary
Hillary Blevins	Janey Welch

Scholarship Committee

Miriam Fleig	Linda Oshita
Louise Glon	

*GSNI has made every effort to ensure correct spellings and accurate information throughout this program. Nominations have been edited for length and clarity. We deeply apologize for any errors. We will be posting portions of this program online, so please contact us with any errors at customercare@girlscoutsni.org, so we may correct them at our earliest opportunity. Thank you!

**South Elgin
Resource Center**
353 Randall Road
South Elgin, IL 60177

**Freeport
Resource Center**
1834 S West Ave., Suite 21
Freeport, IL 61032

**Lake Zurich
Resource Center**
499 Ela Road
Lake Zurich, IL 60047

**Rockford
Resource Center**
1886 Daimler Road
Rockford, IL 61112

**Oswego
Resource Center**
3425 Orchard Road
Oswego, IL 60543

