



Volunteer Essentials 2015/2016



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Quick-Start Guide

Welcome to Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan (GSHOM) and the great adventure that is Girl Scouting! Volunteers like you are our greatest asset in guiding generations of girls to become leaders in their own lives and in the world. Look around you. All of you are here because you believe that Girl Scouting really does make a difference in girls' lives and you want to be a part of that difference. In Girl Scouting, your investment in time and energy will pay back ten-fold. Little can compare to the satisfaction you'll feel as you help girls grow in self-confidence, discover their genuine selves, connect with the people and community around them and take action to make a difference in the world.

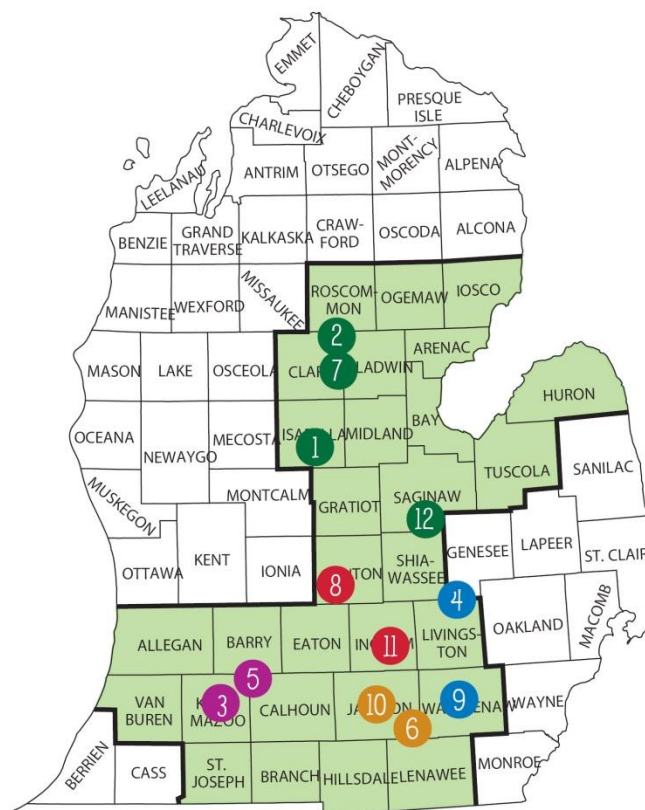
Although you may not immediately see the results of your caring and dedication, know that you have made, and are making, a huge impact in the lives of all the girls you reach. Someday, somewhere, even if it's ten years from now, a woman will look back on her Girl Scout days and remember YOU and remember where and from whom she gained her courage, confidence and character. Because you are here today, WE thank you for choosing to volunteer with Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan where all of us strive to help girls become as great as they can be!

We know you're busy and need to be efficient with your time. For that reason, this Quick-Start Guide to *Volunteer Essentials* gives you the nitty-gritty . . . what you need to know **now**, as you plan for your first meeting with girls. We encourage you to read through these tips as soon as you can, and then later, when you have a little more free time, you can pick it back up and read through the rest.

Volunteer Essentials is a reference for you to use only as needed. When you have a question, simply look up the topic in the Table of Contents, and you'll find your answer. Think of *Volunteer Essentials* as your encyclopedia to Girl Scout volunteering. It's there when you need it but, rest assured, there's no need for you to read the entire resource today.

After all, we want this to be a fun experience as well as a rewarding experience for you.

So, let's dig in!



- 1 Jane Harris Cabin**
1711 West High St, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858
800-968-1185
- 2 Camp Deer Trails, Harrison, MI**
6651 North Eberhart, Harrison, MI 48625
810-247-1717
- 3 Kalamazoo Program and Training Center, (PATC) Kalamazoo, MI**
Kalamazoo Regional Center
601 W. Maple Street,
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
800-788-4919
- 4 Camp Linden, Linden, MI**
5285 Hogan Road, Linden, MI 48451
(810) 735-5427
- 5 Camp Merrie Woode, Plainwell, MI**
12584 Burchett Road, Plainwell, MI 49080
269-664-4435
- 6 Camp O' the Hills, Brooklyn, MI**
2100 Pink Street, Brooklyn, MI 49230
517-592-6373
- 7 Camp Oak Hills, Harrison, MI**
2651 East Townline Lake Road
Harrison, MI 48625
810-247-1717
- 8 Camp Wacousta, Wacousta, MI**
13360 Wacousta Road, Wacousta, MI 48837
800-497-2688 Ext. 7261
- 9 Ypsilanti/Ann Arbor Regional Center**
444 James L. Hart, Ypsilanti, MI 48197
800-497-2688
- 10 Jackson Regional Center**
4403 Francis St, Jackson, MI 49203
800-322-1209
- 11 Lansing Regional Center**
1223 Turner St #200, Lansing, MI 48906
800-968-9421
- 12 Saginaw Regional Center**
5470 Davis Rd, Saginaw, MI 48604
800-968-1185

We Are Girl Scouts

Girl Scouts was founded in 1912 by trailblazer Juliette Gordon Low. We are the largest girl-serving organization in the United States and a member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, a sisterhood of close to 10 million girls and adults in 145 countries.

Our Mission and Vision

Girl Scouts builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. We strive to be the premier leadership organization for girls, and experts on their growth and development.

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan Key Priorities

Created during a strategic learning process by a team of volunteers, community members, Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan staff and board members, these goals tie in with the Girl Scout Leadership Experience 15 outcomes.

By focusing on these key priorities, Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan provides girls with fun and life-changing experiences in a safe environment, where they learn to lead, live courageously, and take action in their communities.

OUR KEY PRIORITIES:

- **Membership-** Be the organization of choice for girls, parents, guardians, and volunteers
- **Program-** Deliver outcomes-driven programs that support and build membership and resources
- **Funding-** Diversify and increase revenue streams for long-term sustainability
- **Culture-** Build and sustain a culture that is girl-centered, adaptive, nimble, fun, and reward taking risks in order to win for girls
- **Brand-** Communicate who we are and what we do today to build value and public trust, and to position ourselves as the premier leadership organization for girls

More than 3 Million Strong

We are urban, rural, and suburban. We are in schools, churches, temples, mosques, public housing, foster homes, and detention centers. We are in virtually every zip code and in 90 countries around the world.

- **2.3 million** girls 5 to 18 years of age
- **16,800** Girl Scouts overseas
- **888,000** adult volunteers
- **59 million** alumnae
- **112 councils** throughout the United States

At any given time, approximately 10 percent of girls are Girl Scouts, and it's interesting to know that:

- 80 percent of women business owners were Girl Scouts.
- 69 percent of female U.S. Senators were Girl Scouts.
- 67 percent of female members of the House of Representatives were Girl Scouts.
- Virtually every female astronaut who has flown in space was a Girl Scout.

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience

We have identified Three Keys to Leadership: girls Discover themselves and their values; Connect with others; and Take Action to make the world a better place. At Girl Scouts, everything centers on the girl: activities are girl-led, which gives girls the opportunity to learn by doing in a cooperative learning environment.

Connect Online

Connect with Girl Scouts of the USA at www.girlscouts.org, www.facebook.com/GirlScoutsUSA, www.twitter.com/girlscouts, and www.pinterest.com/GSUSA. Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan also shares event information, learning opportunities, tips, and advice at www.GSHOM.org, www.facebook.com/gshom, and www.pinterest.com/girlscoutshom.

I Can't Wait To

I Can't Wait To is a multi-year campaign that focuses on getting the fun of Girl Scouts into the lives of young girls (K–5), their parents and caregivers, and you, the volunteer. We are heading into the third year of I Can't Wait To, and the promotions, games, and contests keep coming.

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan will be in touch with you and other volunteers about what is happening locally with this campaign, so keep an eye out!

ToGetHerThere

At Girl Scouts, we know that when girls are given the opportunity, they change the world. Every girl has an important role to play, and every girl deserves the confidence to achieve anything she sets her sight on. But we need help to ensure that girls in every U.S. zip code develop the confidence that Girl Scouts nurtures. That's why we've launched ToGetHerThere, the largest fundraising campaign for girls in history.

ToGetHerThere is a Movement wide fundraising campaign with the goal of raising \$1 Billion for girls by 2020. Every gift to every Girl Scout Council counts toward the goal. Together, we will get her there - to help lead her troop, her family, her community, her company, her country, and her world. To learn more about joining the largest campaign for girls visit girlscouts.org/invest.

Who Can Join Girl Scouts - and How?

Girl Scouts is about sharing the fun, friendship, and power of girls and women together. Any girl—from kindergarten through 12th grade—can join Girl Scouts. Girl Scout volunteers are also a diverse group—you may be a college volunteer working on a community-action project, a parent volunteer ready for an outdoor adventure with your daughter's troop, or any responsible adult (female or male, who have passed the necessary screening process) looking to help prime girls for the day when they'll lead—however and wherever they choose.

What all members share, both girls and adults, are the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Each member also agrees to follow safety guidelines and pay the annual membership dues. The cost for girls is \$25 (\$15 goes to Girl Scouts of the USA and \$10 stays locally with Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan). The cost for adults is \$15 (all of this

fee goes to GSUSA). Adults have the option to purchase a lifetime membership for \$375. Graduating seniors have the special opportunity to become lifetime members for \$195.

Girls at Every Grade Level

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

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

Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:

To serve God* and my country,

To help people at all times,

And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

*Girl Scouts of the USA makes no attempt to define or interpret the word “God” in the Girl Scout Promise. It looks to individual members to establish for themselves the nature of their spiritual beliefs. When making the Girl Scout Promise, individuals may substitute wording appropriate to their own spiritual beliefs for the word “God.” **Note:** This disclaimer appears in the National Leadership Journey adult guides, but not in the girls’ books. It is included here as a reminder to you, as a volunteer, that it’s your responsibility to be sensitive to the spiritual beliefs of the girls in your troop and to make sure that everyone in the troop feels comfortable and included in Girl Scouting. Please feel free to share this information with girls’ families.

Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be

honest and fair,

friendly and helpful,

considerate and caring,

courageous and strong,

and responsible for what I say and do,

and to

respect myself and others,

respect authority,

use resources wisely,

make the world a better place,

and be a sister to every Girl Scout.

Flexible Ways to Participate

Across the country, the Girl Scout community is hard at work on a whole new approach to make sure that everyone can participate in Girl Scouting in the ways they want to. As a volunteer, you can choose from flexible ways to participate that offer the freedom to tailor your level of involvement to fit your schedule and lifestyle. You can also volunteer behind the scenes, at your Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan regional center, instead of volunteering directly with girls.

Girls get to choose how they want to be a Girl Scout. Girls can choose any one, all, or some of the options—camp, events, series, troop, travel, Juliette (individual membership) and virtual— within a single membership year. Note that virtual is still in development. Every participation option (pathway) has a distinct benefit to a girl’s development. And, as a volunteer, you have the option of partnering with girls throughout a membership year or committing to an opportunity for only a few weeks or months. Based on independent research and extensive surveys with thousands of council staff members from around the country, we have a good sense of which options will interest girls, based on their grade levels. These are reflected in the chart at the bottom of this page.

Definition of Girl Participation Options (Pathways)

- Classic Troops:** Every school and community has the potential to support a Girl Scout troop. In a troop, girls will meet regularly with other girls to plan and participate in exciting activities, make a difference in their community and have lots of fun!
- Programs:** Maybe you have more than one passion. Maybe you love to draw and act and dance. If so, you can attend multiple half or one-day events throughout the year in the subjects that interest you most.
- Camp:** Like to learn more about nature and the environment? Come camping with us. You can chose to camp by day or overnight, with your troop or even your family!
- Virtual:** Girl Scouting via the Internet? This program option is currently under development at Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan. We look forward to providing girls with exciting interactive activities in the future. In the meantime, check out our social media network on [facebook!](#)
- Series:** Love dance? Chess? Visiting the aquarium? Numerous other girls do, too. Why not explore many of your interests together in a way that fits your schedule?
- Travel:** Ready to go places? Girl Scouts do. And whether they're traveling across town, the state, or the world, it's always the adventure of a lifetime!



GRADES												
K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
TROOP												
			CAMP									
					SERIES							
									EVENTS			
						TRAVEL						
			VIRTUAL									

Girl Scouts' Organizational Structure

Girl Scouts is the world's largest organization of and for girls, currently encompassing 2.3 million girl members and nearly one million volunteers! Three core structures support all these members: the national headquarters, your council, and your volunteer support team.

National Organization and Worldwide Sisterhood

The national office of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA), located in New York City, employs roughly 300 employees. GSUSA is a member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS). Visit [GSUSA online](#), where you'll find a wealth of resources for both girls and volunteers.

Global Girl Scouting ensures that girls have increased awareness about the world, cross-cultural learning opportunities, and education on relevant global issues that may inspire them to take action to make the world a better place. Visit [Global Girl Scouting online](#) for additional information.

Since 1925, USA Girl Scouts Overseas (USAGSO), a division of Global Girl Scouting, has helped ease the transition for American families relocating overseas by offering the familiar traditions and exciting opportunities of Girl Scouting to girls abroad. USAGSO now serves thousands of American girls living overseas, as well as girls attending American or international schools. Through Global Girl Scouting, members participate in World Thinking Day on February 22, visit the four WAGGGS world centers (see the "For Travel Volunteers" appendix), participate in international travel, promote global friendship and understanding by supporting the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund, and take action on global issues.

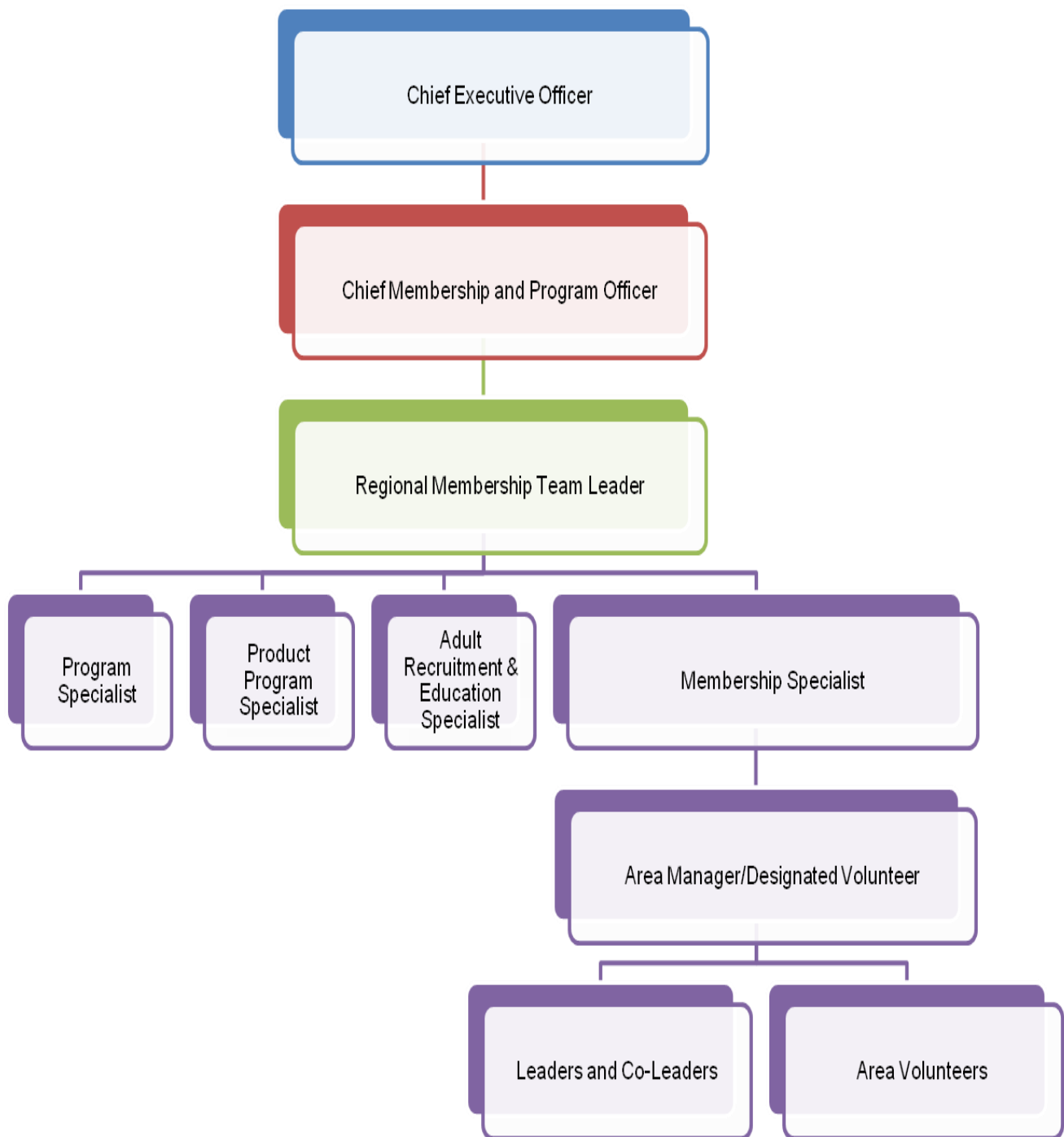
Your Council: Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan is chartered by GSUSA to establish responsibility for leadership, administration and supervision of the Girl Scout program, and to develop, manage and maintain Girl Scouting on a local level. The national office provides support materials to all councils to ensure that the Girl Scout experience is nationally consistent.

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan (GSHOM) has 5 regional centers to serve you (see page 2). We invite you to visit often, just to say hello or to take advantage of the resources available: the Girl Scout shop, materials and forms, meeting space, and Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan staff who are delighted to work with you to make your experience and the girls' exceptional!

Your Volunteer Support Team

A team of volunteers and staff provides you with local support, learning opportunities, and advice. In addition to Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan staff, your area management team of volunteers is available to answer your questions and provide guidance as you embark on your Girl Scout experience. Never hesitate to contact them, chances are, they had some of the same questions when they first started. The following is Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan volunteer and staff structure chart that illustrates the chain of command. Should an issue arise, you would begin with contacting your area manager.



Getting Started with the National Leadership Program through Journeys

The Source

The Girl Scout program is based on the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE), in which girls discover themselves, connect with others, and take action to make the world a better place—all within the safety of an all-girl environment where girls take the lead, learn by doing, and learn cooperatively. Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan produces a program guide that's full of programs that align with the GSLE called *The Source*. Be sure to take a look at *The Source* with your girls and encourage girls' families to do the same. Girls may attend *The Source* events with or without their troop and some of these events are designed especially for Girl Scout families!

At the core of the GSLE are National Leadership Journeys, fun and challenging experiences grouped around a theme and spread over a series of sessions. Each Journey has all the important components of the GSLE sewn right in. So, to guide girls on a great Journey, all you need is enthusiasm and a sense of adventure. Before you dive in, try these six simple tips:

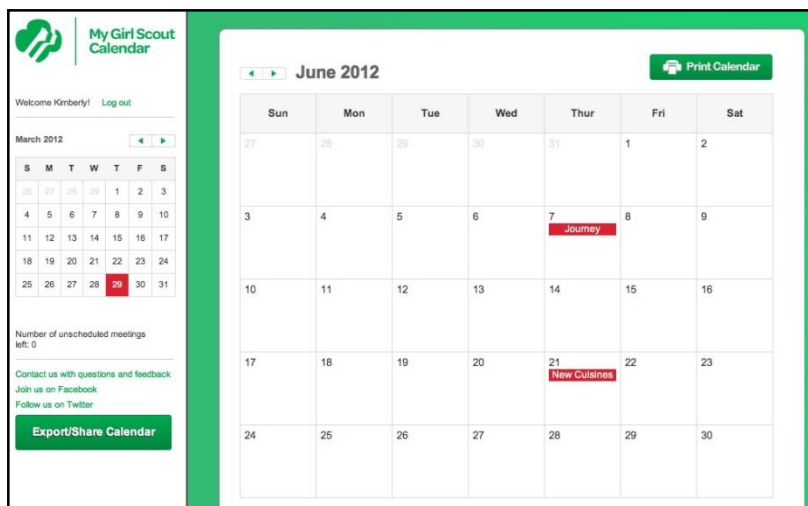
1. **Check out the Journey maps** at www.girlscouts.org/program/journeys/maps. These maps show you how all the fun and meaningful traditions of Girl Scouting fit right into any National Leadership Journey. There, you can also find information about the topics that each Journey covers, which you can share with girls. And you'll find even more fun traditions to complement your Journey in *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*, a resource for each grade level of Girl Scouting.
2. **Choose a Journey.** Because Girl Scouting is girl-led, it's important to give girls the chance to pick the Journey they want to do. Talk to them about what each Journey for their grade level is about and let them choose one.
3. **Get to know the Journey.** Pick up a girls' book and an adult guide and read them. These two resources provide an overview of the Journey's theme and content.
4. **Review the sample session plans in the adult guide.** These sample session plans give you ideas about bringing the Journey to life with girls while leaving plenty of room for creativity and customization.
5. **Invite girls (and their parents/guardians) to use their imaginations** to make the Journey come to life in ways that excite them. Remember that you and the girls don't have to do everything exactly as laid out in the sample sessions.
6. **Step back and watch** how the girls, with your knowledge, support, and guidance, have enormous fun and a rewarding experience. Celebrate with them as they earn their National Leadership Journey awards—and perhaps some Girl Scout badges, too!



Planning in a Girl-Led Environment

To start planning your time with girls, draw up a simple calendar for yourself or visit www.girlscouts.org/MyCalendar. There, you'll consider the following questions and begin to map out your Girl Scout year:

- How many times each month will you meet? When do you plan to break for holidays?
- How many weeks do you need to allocate for the Girl Scout Product Programs (Treats & Reads and Cookies)?
- Will you have time in your schedule for guest speakers and other visitors?
- If you've worked with this group before, what are their preferences: badge work? field trips? other activities? For specific ideas on how to incorporate badges, trips, and other Girl Scout traditions into a Journey, check out the online [Journey maps](#) for the grade level of the girls you're partnering with.



If your troop will be meeting for less than a year, you'll be able to adjust the calendar to suit your needs. In the same way, if you're planning a multi-year event (such as a travel excursion), add one or two more years to the framework.

After you've drafted a loose framework, ask the girls what they think. Or, create the online calendar together! Remember that you want girls to lead, but younger girls will need more guidance, while older girls will require much less. Seniors and Ambassadors may not even want you to draft a calendar in advance, so if they balk at what you've done, let them take the reins. Journeys for older girls include planning pages specifically designed to help them customize their Journey. Daisies and Brownies, on the other hand, may enjoy your calendar and just fill in a few ideas here and there, which will clue you in to their interests.

As your troop starts its Journey, get a discussion (or debate!) going on the Journey's theme and what it means to the girls. Probe to find out what they're most interested in accomplishing during their time together, and then help them connect those interests to their Journey.

Meeting with Girls for the First Time

When you first get together with girls (and this meeting may also include parents/guardians, or you may decide to hold a separate meeting for the adults), you'll want to get to know the girls, and give them a chance to get to know one another.

Girls and adults participating in troops can meet once a week, once a month, or twice a month for several months—how often is up to you and the girls. Troops can meet just about anywhere, as long as the location is safe, easily accessible to girls and adults, and within a reasonable commute ("reasonable" having different definitions in different areas: In rural areas, a two-hour drive may be acceptable; in an urban area, a 30-minute subway ride may be too long). In each meeting, girls participate in fun activities that engage them in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE).

Troops provide a flexible way for girls to meet. Some ideas include:

- Fourteen Girl Scout Brownies who meet twice a month from November through March at a local community center
- Seven girls who are homeschooled and meet weekly as a Girl Scout Cadette troop
- Girls who meet together once a week at their juvenile detention center to participate in Girl Scout activities

Ice-breaker games that let girls share simple details about themselves are a great way to start off your first gathering. Journeys often start with such an icebreaker, so if you're digging in to a journey right away, you'll be all set. You can also check Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan's resources or search the Internet for "ice-breakers for kids" to find more ideas.

If you already know which Journey the girls want to do, you'll find it useful to accomplish some of the following during this meeting. All these points are detailed in the adult guide for each Journey too. If your girls haven't chosen a Journey yet, you can spend time during the first meeting talking about the themes of the three Journeys that are available for their grade level and find out which one the troop would like to do. You can then discuss these points in the next meeting, if you run out of time.

1. **Introduce the Journey, its theme, and its ties to leadership.** Each Journey's adult guide gives you ideas for talking with girls and their parents/guardians about the Journey's theme and the Three Keys to Leadership (Discover, Connect, and Take Action).
2. **Find out what interests the troop/group (and be sure to include the other adult volunteers), so that you and the girls can begin to customize the Journey.** Do the girls want to dig deeper into a particular aspect of the Journey? Without promising anything (yet!), ask the girls to talk about what they're passionate about, what they've always wanted to do, and how they would spend their time if money and other barriers were no object. Build off the ideas shared, but be sure to include opinions from **all** the girls. Ask direct questions of those who seem to be holding back or are unsure about answering, so everyone is included.
3. **Get the girls talking about how they want to schedule their time together.** Use the planning pages from their Journey (referring to your draft calendar only as needed, so that the girls lead). Consider questions like these:
 - Can girls organize and plan a field trip or longer travel opportunity that will allow them to learn more about a particular Journey topic or theme?
 - Is there an event from *The Source* or in the community that meshes with this topic or area of interest?
 - Can the girls locate and communicate with an expert in the field via email or social media?
 - Can they invite a guest speaker to answer questions or demonstrate particular skills?
 - Which badges can the troop choose to work on that will deepen their skills in this particular area?
 - If they are Juniors or older, are they interested in pursuing their Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, or Gold Awards?
 - Do they have ideas for activities that will involve younger or older girls?

Forming a Troop Committee

You'll want to involve other adults in the troop—there's no need to go it alone or depend on too few adults! Many hands make light work, and the role is more fun when it's shared. Think about the people you know whom you admire, who can connect with girls, who are dependable and responsible, and who realistically have time to spend volunteering. Remember that these adults may need to register as Girl Scout members, fill out volunteer application packets, take online learning sessions, and review written resources. Consider business associates, neighbors, former classmates, friends, and so on. If you have trouble finding reliable, quality volunteers to assist, talk to your volunteer support team for advice and support. Use the sample welcome

letter and friends/family checklist in the Girl Scout Daisy, Brownie, and Junior Leadership Journeys to assist you in expanding your troop’s adult network.

Remember: Be sure every volunteer reviews and follows the 12 Girl Scout Safety Guidelines, available in the “Safety Guidelines” chapter of this handbook.

Your troop committee members might help by:

- Filling in for you
- Arranging meeting places
- Locating adults with expertise on a topic of special interest to girls
- Assisting with trips and chaperoning
- Managing troop records

A troop committee may be made up of general members or may include specific positions, such as:

- **Cookie Manager:** A volunteer who would manage all aspects of Girl Scout cookie activities
- **Transportation Coordinator:** The volunteer you’d look to whenever you need to transport girls for any reason; this person would have volunteers available to drive and chaperone
- **Record Keeper:** A treasurer/secretary rolled into one person—someone to keep track of the money and keep the books
- **Treasurer:** A volunteer who would manage income and expenses for the troop (partnering with girls)
- **Program Organizer:** A volunteer who helps the girls choose and budget for Source programs and other program opportunities

Set up positions that work for you, and draw on other volunteers who possess skill sets that you may lack. When you’re ready to invite parents, neighbors, friends, colleagues, and other respected adults to work with you, send them a letter and invite them to their first troop committee meeting.

Holding Troop Meetings

The sample sessions in the Leadership Journey adult guides will give you ideas about how to plan and hold successful troop meetings that allow girls to Discover, Connect, and Take Action as they have fun with a purpose. See the “Girl Scouting as a National Experience” chapter of this handbook for more on the three leadership keys. Many volunteers find it helpful to think of meetings having six parts, as outlined below, but feel free to structure the meeting in a way that makes sense for you and the girls.

As Girls Arrive	Start-up activities are planned so that when girls arrive at the meeting they have something to do until the meeting begins. For younger girls, it could be coloring pages; teen girls might jot down a journal entry or just enjoy a little time to talk.
Opening	The opening focuses the meeting and allows girls to start the meeting. Each troop decides how to open their own meeting—most begin with the Girl Scout Promise and Law, and then add a simple flag ceremony, song, game, story, or other ceremony designed by the girls. Girl Scout Brownies, for example, might create a new tradition by skipping in a circle while singing a song. Ceremonies, even when brief or humorous, make Girl Scout time special. The Journey adult guides contain ideas about openings that correspond to Journey themes.
Business	Troop business may include taking attendance, collecting dues, making announcements, and planning an upcoming event or trip. This is a good time for girls to take turns leading, especially as they grow up! Some troops may move the business portion of the meeting to an earlier or later slot.

Activities	<p>Activities will depend on what the girls want to do in their troop and how they want to spend their collective time. Outdoor time is important, so encourage the girls to do an activity in a park or forest. If girls are interested in animals, encourage the girls to plan a visit to a zoo or animal shelter. As you engage in one of the three National Leadership Journeys, review the “Sample Sessions at a Glance” in the adult guide for Journey activity ideas.</p> <p>Treats are an option some troops decide to include in their meetings and range from a bottle of soap bubbles or a jump rope to a food snack. If girls choose to include snacks, guide them to consider the health of a potential snack, as well as possible food allergies. Enlist the help of parents or guardians by asking them to sign up and bring a treat. You’ll also find plenty of snack ideas and signup forms in the adult guide of most Leadership Journeys.</p>
Clean-up	<p>Clean-up is a great habit for girls to get their meeting space back to the way it was when they arrived—maybe even cleaner! Girls can also take leadership of the cleaning themselves, deciding who does what. They might even enjoy the tradition of a Kaper chart (a chore chart that lists all the chores and assigns girls’ names to each), so that everyone takes turns at each responsibility.</p>
Closing	<p>The closing lets the girls know that the troop meeting is ending. Many girls close with the friendship circle, in which each girl stands in a circle, puts her right arm over her left, and holds the hand of the girl standing next to her. The friendship squeeze is started by one girl, and then passed around the circle until it comes back to the girl who started it. When the squeeze is finished, girls twist clockwise out of the circle lifting their arms and turning around and out of the circle. In addition, you may find some helpful, Journey-related closing ceremony ideas in the Journey’s adult guide.</p>

You help each troop member do her part to ensure the meeting and activities are enriching and fun. Based on their grade levels and abilities, girls may decide and plan opening and closing activities, bring and prepare treats, teach songs or games, and clean up. As girls grow, they can show and teach younger members about Girl Scouting. They can also assist you in preparing materials for activities. For trips, campouts, parent meetings, and multi-troop events, girls may be responsible for shopping, packing equipment, handing out programs, cleaning up, gathering wood, and so on. As long as you pay attention to grade level and maturity, what girls can do is endless!

Chapter 1: Sharing Your Unique Gifts

No matter how you volunteer with Girl Scouts, your investment of time and energy will pay back tenfold. With your help, girls will be able to identify issues they care about and work with one another to resolve them. Your interests and life experiences make you the perfect person to be a new kind of partner for girls, someone who creates a safe environment where they can collaborate and each girl feels free to work toward her highest aspirations. Have no doubt: You, and nearly one million other volunteers like you, are helping girls make a lasting impact on the world.

Understanding Your Role as a Girl Scout Volunteer

In your role as a Girl Scout volunteer, we want you to be excited about everything this opportunity affords you: a chance to partner with girls, play a critical role in their lives, and watch them blossom! You also want to be someone who enjoys the activities you'll be embarking on with the girls—whether you're a camp volunteer, working with girls who are traveling, or partnering with girls on a short-term series on a topic that interests you.

As a Girl Scout volunteer, you'll serve as a partner and role model to girls. You'll also work closely with a co-volunteer, because two adults must be present at all times when working with girls, and at least one of those volunteers must be female and *not* related to the other adult. This is an important distinction that bears repeating: Men can serve as troop volunteers, but an adult female who is not related to the other volunteer must be present at all times, and only in cases of emergency is a girl to be alone with only one volunteer. Remember to also check the adult-to-girl ratios in the Safety Guidelines chapter of this handbook.

Your Responsibilities

Your other responsibilities as a Girl Scout volunteer include:

- Accepting the Girl Scout Promise and Law
- Understanding the Three Keys to Leadership that are the basis of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience: Discover, Connect, and Take Action
- Sharing your knowledge, experience, and skills with a positive and flexible approach
- Working in a partnership with girls so that their activities are girl-led, allow them to learn by doing, and allow for cooperative (group) learning; you'll also partner with other volunteers and Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan staff for support and guidance
- Organizing fun, interactive, girl-led activities that address relevant issues and match girls' interests and needs
- Providing guidance and information regarding Girl Scout troop meetings with girls' parents or guardians on a regular and ongoing basis through a variety of tools, including email, phone calls, newsletters, blogs, other forms of social media, and any other method you choose
- Processing and completing registration forms and other paperwork, such as permission slips
- Communicating effectively and delivering clear, organized, and vibrant presentations or information to an individual or the group
- Overseeing with honesty, integrity, and careful record-keeping the funds that girls raise
- Maintaining a close connection to your volunteer support team
- Facilitating a safe experience for every girl

In *More than 'S'mores: Success and Surprises in Girl Scouts Outdoor Experiences*, the Girl Scout Research Institute (GSRI) has described the role of Adult Volunteers:

“Because everything girls do outdoors in Girl Scouts must be supported by an adult, these results speak indirectly to adult volunteers and their preparation. To get girls outdoors more regularly, Girl Scouts need adult volunteers who encourage and promote outdoor experiences. Communicating to volunteers and parents that casual outdoor experiences are effective ways of giving girls opportunities to build competencies and try new things may be the key to opening the gateway for all Girl Scouts to participate in the outdoors on a more regular basis.” (2014, p.27)

Teamwork Gets the Job Done

In your role as a Girl Scout volunteer, you'll team up with co-volunteers, parents/guardians, members of the community, your membership specialist, additional Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan staff, and others who have expressed interest in working alongside you. The adult guide of each Journey gives you tips and guidance for creating a friends-and-family network to support you all along the way.

The other volunteers on your support team may help by:

- Filling in for you
- Arranging meeting places
- Being responsible for communicating with girls and parents/guardians
- Locating adults with special skills to facilitate a specialized meeting
- Assisting with trips and chaperoning
- Building girls' outdoor skills and experiences
- Managing troop records

If you have a large support team, the first thing you'll want to do is meet with this group and discuss what brought each of you to Girl Scouts, review your strengths and skills, and talk about how you would like to work together as a team. You might also discuss:

- When important milestones will happen (Girl Scout cookie/Treats & Reads activities, field trips, travel plans, events, dates for other opportunities) and how long the planning process will take
- When and where to meet as a group of volunteers, if necessary
- Whether, when, where, and how often to hold parent/guardian meetings
- Whether an advance trip to a destination, event site, or camp needs to happen

Remember to call on your volunteer support team. This team can help you observe a meeting, assign you a buddy, help with registration forms, assist you with opening a bank account, plan your first meeting, and so on. Also plan to attend area volunteer meetings—usually held once a month throughout the year—that provide excellent opportunities to learn from other volunteers.

Taking Advantage of Learning Opportunities

Girl Scouts strives to provide you with information to successfully work with a group of girls, and to let you know how and where you can get additional information resources. Adult Education is offered in a variety of ways to best meet your unique learning styles: written resources, face-to-face learning, interactive online learning—and additional methods are being developed and tested all the time.

Adult Learning Opportunities	How to find them
Girl Scouting 101 is a 45-minute, self-paced online orientation to Girl Scouting.	Go to www.gshom.org and click on “Register Online” at the top of the page. Type “Girl Scouting 101” in the search box on the top right. Find course by scrolling down the list.
Council Essentials is a 15 minute, self-paced online orientation to Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan, including policies and procedures.	Go to www.gshom.org and click on “Register Online” at the top of the page. Type “Council Essentials” in the search box on the top right to find the course. Click on the link to the video in the description.
Troop Management is a 2 hour, in-person training containing detailed information about how troops are run and organized. Leaders can start meeting with girls after this class.	Completed in-person with Girl Scout staff, administrative volunteer, or facilitator. Go to www.gshom.org and click on “Register Online” at the top of the page. Sign into your account and type “Troop Management” in the search box on the top right to find the class and add it to your cart.
Grade-level Education is a 3 hour in-person course specific information on how to create a girl-led environment and getting acquainted with the Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting and Journey books. Choose: Daisy, Brownie, Junior, Cadette/ Senior/Ambassador	Completed in-person with Girl Scout staff or facilitator. Go to www.gshom.org and click on “Register Online” at the top of the page. Sign into your account and type “Daisy Grade Level” (or the appropriate grade level for you) to find your options and add it to your cart.
Trip Planning is a 30 minute home study course where participants will learn everything they need to know about girl-led planning and girl/adult participation in any Girl Scout trip beyond the meeting place.	The Trip Planning Module is the whole module PLUS the home study test; the Trip Planning Test is ONLY the test. This allows participants to fill out the test only and email it back. These documents can be found on gshom.org under forms and documents in the Travel and Field Trips section.
First Aid and Adult/Child CPR This course will teach you how to recognize and respond appropriately to cardiac, breathing and first aid emergencies. Those who successfully complete this course will receive certificates for Standard First Aid with CPR - Adult and Child, which are valid for two years.	Go to www.gshom.org and click on “Register Online” at the top of the page. Sign into your account and type “First Aid” to find your options and add it to your cart.
Outdoor Skills 1 helps participants gain confidence in their ability to work with girls to plan, implement, and evaluate a trip to a Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan lodge or cabin.	Go to www.gshom.org and click on “Register Online” at the top of the page. Sign into your account and type “Outdoor Skills 1” to find your options and add it to your cart.
Outdoor Skills 2. Camping with girls in a Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan lodge or cabin is highly recommended before taking this class. Some of the topics that will be covered are: advanced cooking methods (over various heat sources), outdoor etiquette, and safety.	Go to www.gshom.org and click on “Register Online” at the top of the page. Sign into your account and type “Outdoor Skills 2” to find your options and add it to your cart.
Troop Camp Plus is camping for a weekend with your girls and get outdoor skills certified, Adults who complete Troop Camp Plus are considered Outdoor Skills certified.	Go to www.gshom.org and click on “Register Online” at the top of the page. Sign into your account and type “Troop Camp Plus” to find your options and add it to your cart.

All Aboard Weekend Retreats are an opportunity for adult volunteers to get all your training done, network with other volunteers, and make new friends!

Go to www.gshom.org and click on “Register Online” at the top of the page. Sign into your account and type “All Aboard” to find your options and add it to your cart.

Please note: The deadline for training registrations is **5 (five) business days** before the training takes place (unless otherwise noted). Registrations received during the late registration period are required to pay the late registration fee. Walk-ins on the day that training is taking place are considered late registrations.

Receiving training registrations on time allows us to provide you with the best training experience, to be fully prepared, and to have all the resources/materials necessary for all participants.

Volunteer Appreciation Week

Volunteer Appreciation Week—the third week in April—is set aside especially for you. Girl Scouts pay tribute to the volunteers who help girls make the world a better place. The week centers on the long-standing National Girl Scout Leaders’ Day (April 22), but expands the definition of volunteers beyond troop leaders to include all the volunteers who work on behalf of girls in Girl Scouting.

In addition, Girl Scouts also celebrates Volunteers Make a Difference Week, in conjunction with Make a Difference Day, which takes place during the weekend in autumn that we set our clocks back.

Knowing How Much You’re Appreciated

Whatever your volunteer position, your hard work means the world to girls, to Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan staff, and to Girl Scouts of the USA. We’re calling on all members of society to help girls reach their full potential, and you’ve answered that call. So thank you, from the bottom of our hearts.

Volunteer Awards are for registered adults who go above and beyond, exceed expectations, make significant contributions, or model excellence. Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan presents national awards annually to volunteers demonstrating exemplary performance in the delivery of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. These awards are based on nominations received by the community (including parents), sister Girl Scouts, and/or Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan staff. Nominations are accepted yearlong with a December 1st deadline. To view a current list of adult awards and the award nomination packet visit www.GSHOM.org.

Just as you’ll receive support throughout your volunteering experience, when you reach the end of the term you signed up for, you’ll talk with your support team about the positive parts of your experience, as well as the challenges you faced, and discuss whether you want to return to this position or try something new.

The end of your troop year, camp season, overseas trip, or series/event session is just the beginning of your next adventure with Girl Scouting!

If you’re ready for more opportunities to work with girls, be sure to let Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan support team know how you’d like to be a part of girls’ lives in the future—whether in the same position or in other, flexible ways. Are you ready to organize a series or event? Take a trip? Work with girls at camp? Work with a troop of girls as a year-long volunteer? Share your skills at a Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan regional center, working behind the scenes? The possibilities are endless, and can be tailored to fit your skills and interests.

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan Volunteer Policies

An operational volunteer performs specific functions over a period of time, on a regular schedule, such as but not limited to a troop Leader, a member of the area management team, a day camp volunteer, an adult learning facilitator, etc. She/he works with the staff to reach the Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan's goals and objectives and to forward the Girl Scout Movement.

These policies apply to all adults serving in appointed operational volunteer positions in Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan. These policies are ongoing and subject to review and revision by the Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan Board of Trustees (last updated August 2015). Volunteers found to be violating Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan policies will be dismissed.

Affirmative Action for Volunteers

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan does not discriminate {or "condone discrimination", "condone harassment", etc.} of an otherwise qualified adult on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, creed, gender, national origin, age, disability, height, weight, marital status, citizenship, sexual orientation, sexual expression or any other classification protected by federal, state or local law." In addition, to ensure full equality of opportunity in all operations and activities of the organization, affirmative action policies and procedures shall be utilized in the recruitment, selection, training, placement, and recognition of volunteers. Special emphasis shall be placed upon securing representation of underrepresented population groups.

Membership Registration

All girls and adults participating in the Girl Scout Movement shall be registered as members with Girl Scouts of the United States of America and individually pay the annual membership dues, or other applicable membership dues, except those adults who are lifetime members or who are working in a temporary advisory or consultative capacity. —*Blue Book of Basic Documents 2015*

Recruitment

The recruitment process consists of a number of methods to attract qualified volunteers who will be matched to appropriate open or newly created positions. Written position descriptions that define specific responsibilities and clarify expectations will be completed prior to recruitment and used in the search.

Each prospective volunteer will be required to:

- complete a Volunteer Application Packet;
- provide references;
- undergo a criminal background check; and
- participate in a formal interview; prior to selection.

Selection

Each volunteer is selected on the basis of ability to perform the volunteer position, volunteer and council need, ability and willingness to attend training, and qualifications for membership in the Girl Scout movement.

Criminal Background Screening

Criminal background investigations which could include ICHAT and Sex Offenders Registry check will be conducted prior to selecting volunteers. Such investigations will be conducted regardless of the position sought and without regard to race, ethnicity, color, creed, gender, national origin, age, disability, height, weight, marital status, citizenship or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local law. Each staff member/volunteer, as a condition of continued service, consents to future criminal background investigations every three years of service. No prospective staff member/volunteer will be permitted to work with a minor until the criminal background investigation is complete.

For the purposes of this policy, the term “volunteer” will be defined as any person applying for or currently serving in the following capacities:

- Leaders and Co-Leaders
- Troop Committee Members, anyone who routinely attends troop/group meetings and activities
- Troop Treasurer and anyone who handles finances
- Product program volunteers
- Drivers of children who are not their own
- Any adult who volunteers at camp with girls present
- Adults chaperoning an overnight or camping trip
- Adult Learning Facilitators
- Day Camp Adult Volunteers
- Mackinac Island Governor's Honor Guard Volunteer Director and Volunteers
- Area Managers and Area Management Team Members
- Board Members
- Volunteers on the Members Advisory Committee
- Nominating Committee Members
- National Council Delegates/Alternates (girls excepted)

Automatic disqualification or termination of any persons covered under this policy will occur whenever it is found that she/he has committed a crime against a child or dependent adult, has been convicted of driving while intoxicated or under the influence in the past ten years, has committed any violent crime in the past ten years or has been convicted of a felony in the last ten years.

The Chief Executive Officer shall have the absolute and exclusive discretion to make decisions for any other questionable behavior or criminal offenses, regardless of whether the crime is classified as a felony or as a misdemeanor.

Volunteers are required to report to Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan any convictions that occur while serving as an appointed operational volunteer for Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan.

Membership

All volunteers participating in the Girl Scout movement shall meet Girl Scouts of the USA membership standards, be registered through Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan as members of the Girl Scout Movement, and shall agree to abide by the policies and principles of Girl Scouts of the USA and the Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan.

An appointed operational volunteer should not serve concurrently as a member of the Board of Trustees for Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan.

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest exists when the interests or concerns of any operational volunteer member or any member of their family or any party, group, or organization in which the operational volunteer is actively involved may be seen as competing with the interests or concerns of Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan.

Operational volunteer members or any member of their family, acting individually, or on behalf of any group, organization or business to which they have allegiance or obligation should not utilize their position at Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan for personal, professional, political, or monetary gain.

Operational volunteers should not use for personal advantage or for the advantage of any private business or other business organizations confidential information or material acquired in the discharge of their duties (such as rosters, mailing lists, telephone directories, database information volunteers may have access to and the like).

Neither operational volunteers nor any member of their family should accept any gift, entertainment, services, loans, or promises of future benefits from any person who personally or whose employer might benefit or appear to benefit because of the operational volunteer's connection to Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan.

Placement

Every attempt will be made to place volunteers in positions that meet both their needs and the needs of Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan. In instances where this is not possible, the needs of Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan will take precedence over the needs of the individual. Individuals not placed in a position for which they applied may be recommended for other positions, and they may request reassignment. Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan may reassign volunteers at any time.

Appointment

Operational volunteers shall be appointed for a term not to exceed one membership year (see "Reappointment" for additional information). All operational volunteers shall abide by the ethics expressed in the Girl Scout Promise and Law and sign an agreement for the position(s) that they are fulfilling each membership year of appointment. Either party may terminate the agreement at any time during the term of appointment. Being appointed as a volunteer in any capacity with Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan is an honor and privilege. Therefore, Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan retains the right to appoint volunteers at its sole discretion.

Training

Training will ensure that each appointed volunteer has the knowledge and skill needed to be successful in her or his work. Failure to complete required training may result in removal from the position or not being reappointed. All volunteers will receive basic training for their position and some positions have required training(s). Each appointed volunteer is provided with an overview of the Girl Scout purpose and organization, Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan information, and the support systems available to help them with their service.

Supervision and Performance Appraisal

Supervision should include periodic verbal and written performance evaluation based upon position expectations outlined in the Volunteer Agreement and Position Description. Each operational volunteer will have an annual review and appraisal of their performance. The performance appraisal should include a review of the volunteer's position responsibilities. It should also include a discussion of any suggestions that the volunteer may have concerning the position or project. The performance appraisal session should also be utilized as an opportunity to ascertain the mutual interest of Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan and volunteer in the volunteer's continued service in her or his position. It shall be the responsibility of the supervisor to schedule and conduct the performance appraisal.

The volunteer position description forms the basis of the performance appraisal. These standards should list the responsibilities of the position, measurable indicators of whether responsibilities were accomplished, and may include timelines for accomplishment of responsibilities. A copy of the position description should be provided to the volunteer at the beginning of her or his assignment. Following a satisfactory annual performance evaluation the operational volunteer will be considered for reappointment to the same position and/or rotation to another position.

Reappointment

Prior to the completion of her/his one membership year term, each volunteer shall receive notice of reappointment to, non-reappointment to, or reassignment from, their current position. Reappointment is based on past performance, adherence to Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan and Girl Scouts of the USA policies and standards, support of the Girl Scout purpose and values, Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan goals, as well as positive relationships with the community, parents, other volunteers, and employed staff. There will be mutual acceptance of position accountabilities, expectations, and time commitments.

Uniforms

A uniform is an outward expression of your commitment to the Girl Scout organization. Uniform pieces and other Girl Scout wear can be purchased at your nearest Girl Scout Heart of Michigan regional center. Volunteers are encouraged to wear the Girl Scout Membership Pin(s) when they are acting in a Girl Scout capacity. A uniform is not required.

Conflict Resolution

A conflict resolution process may be initiated by an appointed operational volunteer without fear of jeopardizing her or his appointment status.

Procedure

Any conflict should be resolved at the lowest level of supervision as possible. A volunteer should contact her/his immediate supervisor for help in resolving conflicts between herself/himself and girls, other volunteers or parents. If an irresolvable conflict exists between the volunteer and their immediate supervisor, the volunteer should contact the immediate supervisor's supervisor.

The following steps will be incorporated during Formal Conflict Resolution:

1. Identify the point(s) of conflict between the parties. This may include fact-finding sessions with both parties involved in the dispute, witnesses to the alleged event, and reference to policies, procedures, and guidelines of the Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan and the Girl Scouts of the USA.
2. Investigate the facts of the conflict until the real problem leading to the conflict has been identified. Keep all information gathered confidential. The actual source of the conflict may be disguised by other factors. Investigate until the "real" source of the conflict is identified.
3. Identify as many solutions as possible for resolving the conflict. These solutions should come from the conflicting parties as well as the mediator.
4. Select a solution that all parties in the conflict can agree upon. Selection of a solution should involve all parties in the conflict and the mediator.
5. Implement the solution and monitor the results. Once the solution has been selected and implemented, the immediate supervisor should monitor the results to ensure satisfactory resolution of the conflict.

The Chief Executive Officer of Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan is last in the chain of command and has the final word on the resolution of any problem situation.

Recognition

Recognition for volunteer service ranges from informal expressions of gratitude to formal acknowledgment at the council level and is consistent with the Girl Scouts of the USA's recommendation for Adult Awards in Girl Scouting.

Release

Either Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan or the volunteer may initiate a release from a position. A volunteer is requested to give as much notice as possible when resigning. A minimum of two weeks is requested. Situations may arise that make it necessary to release an individual from a position. Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan may release an individual because of, among other things, restructuring of positions, elimination of the volunteer position in which the individual serves, the volunteer's inability or failure to complete the requirements of the position, or the refusal to comply with Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan or Girl Scouts of the USA policies. Release from the position does not cancel membership with Girl Scouts of the USA unless it is determined that she or he is unable to meet the membership requirement.

- A volunteer who leaves in good standing may be considered for reappointment at a future date.
- An up-to-date record of released volunteers will be kept by Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan.

Proper Conduct and Behavior

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan is committed to an environment in which relationships are characterized by dignity, respect, courtesy, equitable treatment, and free from all forms of unlawful or unwelcome harassment. Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan does not discriminate {or "condone discrimination", "condone harassment", etc.} on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, creed, gender, national origin, age, disability, height, weight, marital status, citizenship, sexual orientation, sexual expression and any other classification protected by federal, state or local law."

Safety Activity Checkpoints are a collection of in-depth safety information and tips that adult volunteers use for Girl Scout sports and activities; girls can also use these checkpoints to ready their troop for a girl-led activity. They are published by Girl Scouts of the USA and set the standards for the safe operation of all Girl Scout activities. These safety standards are Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan's minimum policy and all activity checkpoints must be observed by all Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan Girl Scout troops/groups and programs at all times.

- **Hostility**

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan considers physical violence as well as harassment, intimidation, stalking, coercion, display of weapons, threats, and talking or joking about hostility whether in person or through some other means of communications such as writing, telephone, voice mail, or electronic mail to be improper. Girls Scouts Heart of Michigan strictly prohibits hostility in any form against not only another operational volunteer but also girl members, staff, visitors, and anyone else having involvement with Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan. This policy applies to all volunteers at all facilities occupied by Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan or off premises if involved in activities for Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan.

• **Sexual Harassment/Misconduct**

The policy of Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan is any form of sexual harassment is unacceptable conduct that will not be tolerated. Sexual harassment occurs when a person is subjected to severe or pervasive conduct and/or comments because of that person's gender. Such conduct or comments need not be sexual in nature. It may include one or more of the following: sexual advances or propositions; requests for sexual favors; verbal abuse of a sexual nature, including sexually explicit or degrading references to another person or similar language; unnecessary touching; the display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; sexually explicit or offensive jokes or physical assault.

No volunteer will engage in unwelcome sexual conduct. No volunteer will threaten or insinuate, either explicitly or implicitly, that another volunteer's refusal to submit to sexual advances will adversely affect that person's volunteer status, evaluation, advancement, assigned duties, or any other condition of volunteer development. No volunteer will, by unwelcome sexual conduct, create a hostile environment for any volunteer.

• **Substance Abuse**

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan is committed to establishing and maintaining safe, healthful, and efficient working conditions. This includes establishing and maintaining an environment free of substance use and abuse. Participation in any activity with girl members at a location whose primary business is the sale or distribution of alcohol is not permitted. Volunteers who engage in any of the following activities at any time in any facility occupied or vehicle in use for Girl Scouts including personally owned vehicles that are parked in any Girl Scout area will be subject to discipline up to and including discharge:

- Use, possession, manufacture, distribution, dispensation, or sale of illegal drugs or alcohol, on Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan premises or during the performance of a volunteer's duties. Also prohibited is the illegal use, possession, manufacture, distribution, dispensation, or sale of legal prescription drugs or the use of legal prescription drugs that impairs judgment or otherwise endangers other volunteers or program participants;
- Being under the influence of an illegal drug or alcohol on council premises or during the performance of Girl Scout program. "Being under the influence" of alcohol is defined as having a blood alcohol content of .04; "being under the influence" of an illegal drug is testing positive at a specified level;
- Being under the influence of legal prescription drugs that impair judgment or otherwise endanger other volunteers or program participants;
- Refusing consent to testing or refusing to submit urine, blood, breath, or other samples when requested by Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan;
- Refusing to submit to a search of one's personal property or the property of Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan in use by the volunteer upon reasonable suspicion of possession of alcohol, illegal drugs or prescription drugs used illegally or that impair judgment or otherwise endanger other volunteers or program participants;
- Failing to adhere to the requirements of any drug or alcohol treatment or counseling program in which the volunteer is enrolled;
- Conviction under any criminal drug law;
- Failure to report any conviction of a criminal drug law; or
- Conviction of any operating under the influence of alcohol law.

All volunteers are encouraged to report suspected violations of this policy to Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan. Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan will handle the matter in a timely and discreet manner, although it is understood that an investigation will normally require the involvement of third parties. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process. Further, Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan will not permit any retaliatory conduct against any volunteer who reports a violation of this substance abuse policy.

• **Anti-Child Abuse**

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan supports and maintains environments that are free of child abuse and neglect. The Michigan Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Act ("CANPA") defines "child abuse" as "harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare by a person responsible for the child's health or welfare, which harm occurs or is threatened through non-accidental physical or mental injury; [or] sexual abuse." It defines "neglect" as "harm to a child's health or welfare by a person responsible for the child's health or welfare which occurs through negligent treatment, including the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical care."

Further, the Michigan Child Protection Act ("CPA") includes sexual abuse and sexual exploitation in its definition of child abuse. "Sexual abuse" is defined by the CPA as "engaging in sexual contact or sexual penetration as those terms are defined in section 520a of the Michigan penal code, with a child." "Sexual exploitation" is defined as "allowing, permitting or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution, or allowing, permitting, encouraging, or engaging in the photographing, filming, or depicting of a child engaged in a listed sexual act as defined in section 145c of the Michigan penal code."

Child abuse and neglect are unlawful acts. It is against Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan's policy for any volunteer, male or female, to physically, sexually, or mentally abuse or neglect any girl member.

All states require certain professionals and institutions to report suspected child abuse. Failure to report suspected child abuse can result in criminal and civil liability. All states require the report to be made to some type of law enforcement authority or child protection agency. Reporting to a parent or relative will not satisfy the reporter's legal duty under the statutes.

In accordance with this policy, Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan will neither condone nor tolerate:

- Infliction of physically abusive behavior or bodily injury upon girl members;
- Physical neglect of girl members, including failure to provide adequate safety measures, care and supervision in relation to Girl Scout activities;
- Emotional maltreatment of girl members, including verbal abuse and/or verbal attacks; or
- Excessive restraint.

Any volunteer who suspects that any of the above named situations exist or who suspects that a member has been subjected to abusive conduct or neglect, either within or outside the council, should make a report to his or her immediate supervisor, the Chief Executive Officer or the Chief Executive Officer's designee. A telephone report will be made to the Department of Health and Human Services/Child Protective Services and a follow-up written report will be filed if requested by that agency.

Following a timely and thorough investigation of any allegations of child abuse, the offending volunteer may be subject to disciplinary action that can include dismissal. Local laws that are more stringent than Girl Scout policies always supersede these policies.

• **Child Discipline**

In the Girl Scout environment, some behavior problems are bound to occur in any troop. Discipline in Girl Scouting must always be constructive and/or educational in nature and appropriate to the age of the child and circumstances. Children will not be subjected to physical harm, fear or humiliation.

All operational volunteers have an obligation to see that such an environment is maintained at all times. In accordance with this policy, Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan will neither condone nor tolerate that any child, including the child of the volunteer, engaged in a Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan program, troop meeting, or activity be:

- Deprived of food or sleep
- Left alone without adult supervision, observation, and interaction,
- Subjected to ridicule, threat, corporal punishment,
- Subjected to excessive physical exercise or excessive restraint.

• **Weapons/Explosives in the Girl Scout Environment**

Handguns, shotguns, rifles, pellet guns, airsoft guns, paint guns, sling shots, bows and arrows, fireworks and knives with blades over three (3) inches long are not permitted at any Girl Scout activity or on any property owned or leased by Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan. Exceptions to this policy are made for knives used only for kitchen duties, weapons for presentation of a certified skill program or for carrying out official Girl Scout business or weapons stored in the private residence on Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan properties, and those weapons in the possession of law enforcement personnel who are required to carry such weapons while on or off duty.

Under the policy, prohibited weapons include any form of weapon or explosive that is restricted by local, state or federal law. This includes all firearms, even if licensed, illegal knives, or other weapons covered by the law.

Violation of Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan's policy regarding weapons in the Girl Scout environment may result in immediate disciplinary action up to and including release from appointment without notice.

• **Smoke Free Environment**

- In the interest of the health, safety, and welfare of girls, no smoking is allowed in the presence of girls.
- In compliance with Michigan State Law, there will be no smoking by anyone under the age of 18 years.
- No smoking is permitted during Troop/Group meetings or program activities.
- No smoking will be permitted during adult meetings. The person in charge of the meeting will schedule breaks to accommodate personal needs. Smoking regulations at each site will be followed.
- No smoking is permitted in a vehicle while transporting girls.
- No smoking is allowed on council-owned properties including the regional centers, lodges or camps, and grounds except in outdoor areas designated by Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan.
- No smoking is permitted in tents or at campfires
- Designated smoking areas must be out-of-doors where girls are not present. The presence of non-smoking adults should be considered.
- When planning field and extended trips, a volunteer will, in advance, take into consideration site regulations, safety, and health concerns, and will determine designated smoking areas and breaks.
- All evidence of smoking must be removed from the activity site.

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan will consider violation of any of the above policy stipulations as grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal or separation from Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan.

Access to Records

Current operational volunteers have access to their volunteer record file. They also have the right of prior consent regarding information released to external sources, except for the release of information required by law.

Chapter 2: Girl Scouting as a National Experience

Now that you're a Girl Scout volunteer, you belong to a network of more than 1 million adults who share an important commitment: preparing girls to lead successful lives. During your time as a volunteer, you'll have fun, meet new people, and learn by doing alongside girls at every step.

The Girl Scout program—what girls do in Girl Scouting—is based on the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE), a national model that helps girls become leaders in their own lives and as they grow. No matter where girls live or what their age or background, as Girl Scouts they are part of a powerful, national experience. As they build leadership skills, they also develop lifelong friendships and earn meaningful awards, two of many treasured traditions in the sisterhood of Girl Scouting.

What Girl Scouting Does for Girls

Girl Scouting guides girls to become leaders in their daily lives, their communities, and the world—helping them become the kind of person exemplified by the Girl Scout Law. When girls—as the Girl Scout Law states—are “honest and fair,” when they “use resources wisely,” and know how to be “courageous and strong,” they can be more successful in everything they do. It may start in school and on sports teams, but research shows that the courage, confidence, and character they develop as Girl Scouts follows them throughout their lives. Girl Scouting has a practical approach to helping girls become leaders:

- When girls lead in their own lives, they **Discover** their values and the confidence to do what's right. This helps girls act in ways that make us proud, no matter where they are.
- When girls lead in their communities, they **Connect** as they learn how to work with other people. This helps them get along better with others, resolve conflicts, and do better on group projects at school.
- When girls lead in the world, they **Take Action** to change the world for the better. Starting as young Girl Scouts, girls learn how to see problems—such as a food pantry in need of donations or an elderly neighbor who could use a hand—and come up with a solution.

In other words: **Discover + Connect + Take Action = Leadership**. Everything you do with girls in Girl Scouting is aimed at giving them the benefits of these Three Keys to Leadership.

More details about the benefits (or outcomes) Girl Scouts offers girls can be found in *Transforming Leadership and Transforming Leadership Continued*, available online at

http://www.girlscouts.org/research/publications/girlleadership/transforming_leadership.asp
www.girlscouts.org/research/publications/gsoutcomes/transforming_leadership_continued.asp.

Fun with Purpose

Girl Scouting isn't just about what we do; it's also about how we do it. Over time, we've noticed that girls will give almost any activity a try, as long as the adults guiding them take the right approach. Girl Scout activities ask adult volunteers to engage girls in three ways that make Girl Scouting unique from school and other extracurricular activities:

- **Girl-led:** Girls of every grade level take an active role in determining what, where, when, why, and how they'll structure activities. Of course, you'll provide guidance appropriate to the age of the girls. Plus, you'll encourage them to bring their ideas and imaginations into the experiences, make choices, and lead the way as much as they can.

- **Learning by doing:** This means that girls have active, hands-on experiences. It also means they have a chance to think and talk about what they are learning as a result of the activities. This kind of reflection is what helps girls gain self-awareness and confidence to dive into new challenges. So make sure girls always have a chance to talk with each other—and you—after an activity. It doesn't have to be formal, just get them talking and see what happens.
- **Cooperative learning:** Girls learn so much about themselves and each other when they team up on common goals. Plus, great teamwork helps girls in school now and on the job later. Look for ways to help each girl contribute her unique talents and ideas to the team, help all girls see how their differences are valuable to the team, and coach girls to resolve their conflicts productively.

We call these three methods “processes.” You might be wondering how to put these processes into action with the girls in your troop. These steps should help you get started:

1. After you help girls choose a National Leadership Journey (there's more information about those [later in this chapter](#)), make sure you get the adult guide that accompanies the Journey. As you read through that guide, look at how the activities, conversations, and choice-making options are set up using the three processes. Once you start practicing the processes, you'll probably find that they become second nature when you're with girls.
2. If you haven't already, watch [Girl Scouting 101](#), Girl Scouts of the USA's online introduction to volunteering with Girl Scouts. If you've already watched Girl Scouting 101, you may want to review its “What Girl Scouts Do” section to brush up on the processes.
3. Want more detail about the processes? Take a look at the examples in *Transforming Leadership and Transforming Leadership Continued*, available online at http://www.girlscouts.org/research/publications/girlleadership/transforming_leadership.asp www.girlscouts.org/research/publications/gscoutcomes/transforming_leadership_continued.asp.

One last tip about using the processes: The girls' time in Girl Scouting isn't a to-do list, so please don't ever feel that checking activities off a list is more important than tuning in to what interests and excites girls and sparks their imaginations. Projects don't have to come out perfectly, and girls don't have to fill their vests and sashes with badges: what matters most is the fun and learning that happens as girls make experiences their own.

The National Program Portfolio

You'll use several books, awards, and online resources to bring the Girl Scout Leadership Experience to life with girls. We strongly recommend that each girl has her own books from the National Program Portfolio. These books (the Journeys and *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*) and national program awards (like badges and pins) are an important part of how Girl Scouting helps girls experience the power of millions of girls changing the world together.

As you use the National Program Portfolio with girls, keep in mind that Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) creates materials to serve our vast and diverse community of girls. To help bring topics off the page and into life, we sometimes provide girls and volunteers with suggestions about what people across the country and around the world are doing. We also sometimes make suggestions about movies, books, music, websites, and more that might spark girls' interests.

We know that not every example or suggestion we provide will work for every girl, family, volunteer, or community. In partnership with those who assist you with your Girl Scout troop—including parents, faith groups, schools, and community organizations—we trust you to choose real-life topic experts from your community as well as movies, books, music, websites, and other opportunities that are most appropriate for the girls in your area to enrich their Girl Scout activities.

We are proud to be the premier leadership organization for girls. While girls and their families may have questions or interest in programming relevant to other aspects of girls' lives, we are not always the organization best suited to offer such information. Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan can recommend local organizations or resources that are best suited to do so.

Also note that GSUSA continuously reviews national program content to guarantee that all our resources are relevant and age appropriate, and that their content doesn't include violence, sex, inappropriate language, or risky behavior. We value your input and hope that you will notify Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan of any content that concerns you.

National Leadership Journeys

National Leadership Journeys help Girl Scouts learn and practice the Three Keys, aid their communities, and earn leadership awards, progressing up Girl Scouting's [Ladder of Leadership](#) as they do so. There are three series of Leadership Journeys, each about a different theme; the girls in your troop can choose the theme that interests them most.

After the girls choose a Journey, spend an hour or two reading the companion adult guide. It'll give you a feel for how to bring the Journey to life, and you'll get ideas for the steps girls will take (with your support) to earn their leadership awards. Don't worry, you don't have to be any kind of expert to do a Leadership Journey with girls. You just need to be willing to dive in and enjoy the learning-by-doing experience with them.

Each Journey adult guide contains sample plans that you can customize to fit the needs of your troop, whether you guide a troop, volunteer at a Girl Scout camp, mentor girls on a travel adventure, or engage with girls in a series or at an event. Each Journey also offers opportunities to enjoy the longstanding traditions of Girl Scouting, from ceremonies and songs to earning awards and skill badges.

The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting and National Proficiency Badges

In addition to the Leadership Journeys, girls at each Girl Scout grade level have their own edition of *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*—a binder full of information about being a Girl Scout and how to earn certain badges, including ones about financial literacy and the Girl Scout Cookie Program. Girls who want to earn more badges can add a Skill Building Badge Set tied to the theme of the Journey they've chosen.

When a Girl Scout earns a badge, it shows that she's learned a new skill, such as how to make a healthy snack or take great digital photos. It may even spark an interest at school or plant the seed for a future career. Please remember that we don't expect you to be an expert in the badge topics, just have fun learning by doing with the girls!

While you're having fun, keep in mind: Badges are for educating girls, not for decorating their sashes and vests. The quality of a girl's experience—and the skills and pride she gains from earning leadership awards and skill-building badges—far outweigh the quantity of badges she earns. If you're working with Girl Scout Daisies, please note that they earn Petals and Leaves (which form a flower) instead of badges.

There are several ways to supplement the National Program Portfolio and enhance girls' time as Girl Scouts—and have fun while you're doing it! A few of them are outlined below.

Digital programming

The [For Girls section](#) of girlscouts.org features a variety of videos, games, blogs, and other fun ways to enrich the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Girls will find opportunities to post their ideas for public service announcements on topics that matter to them and get inspired by watching short videos that tell the stories of women from all walks of life. If you work with Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies, you might like the site's print-and-play coloring and game pages—great for having on hand when energetic girls get together! Both girls and volunteers will have fun with Badge Explorer, an overview of all of the badges girls can earn. For Girls is updated frequently, so check back often—and invite girls to do the same!

Make Your Own Badge

Girls are welcome to develop and complete activities to make their own badge—a great way to explore a topic of personal interest. In addition, girls who make their own badge will learn *how* to learn, which is an important skill to have in school, on the job, and in life! Once girls check the Awards Log in *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* to make sure there's not already a badge on the topic they want to explore, they'll follow steps outlined in that handbook to complete the requirements for their very own badge. Even better, they can go online to design and purchase a badge that later arrives in the mail! For more information, check out the [Make Your Own Badge website](#).

My Promise, My Faith Pin

The Girl Scout Law includes many of the principles and values common to most faiths. Even though Girl Scouts is a secular organization, we've always encouraged girls to explore spirituality via their own faiths. Girls of all grade levels can earn the My Promise, My Faith pin. By carefully examining the Girl Scout Law and directly tying it to tenets of her faith, a girl can earn the pin once each year she participates in Girl Scouting. You can find more about the requirements for this pin in *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*.

Girl Scout Cookies and Treats & Reads Program

In addition to giving girls an opportunity to earn money to fund their Girl Scouting goals, taking part in the Girl Scout Cookie and the Treats & Reads Program teaches girls five important skills that serve them throughout their lives: goal setting, money management, people skills, decision making, and business ethics. For more on everything involved in the Girl Scout Cookie Program and the Treats & Reads Program, flip to the [“Managing Troop Finances”](#) chapter of this handbook.

Outdoor Adventures

Being outside is a great way for girls to explore leadership, build skills, and develop a deep appreciation for nature. Whether they spend an afternoon exploring a local hiking trail or a week at camp, being outside gives girls an opportunity to grow, explore, and have fun in a whole new environment. For more information, visit www.gshom.org where you will find information about Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan's camp facilities and opportunities or www.girlscouts.org/program/basics/camping.

Spanish-language resources

Two of the Journey series—*It's Your World—Change It!* and *It's Your Planet—Love It!*—are available in Spanish, as are two new supporting books for Spanish-speaking volunteers to use with Spanish-speaking and bilingual Girl Scout Brownies and Juniors :*¡Las Girl Scouts Brownies Cambian El Mundo!* (*Girl Scout Brownies Change the World!*) and *¡Las Girl Scouts Juniors Apuntan a las Estrellas!* (*Girl Scout Juniors Reach for the Stars!*). The books, which introduce the Girl Scout movement to these girls and their families, provide everything you need for a fun-filled year in Girl Scouting. For more information on these resources, contact Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan.

Putting It All Together

All of this may seem overwhelming, but don't worry. The next few pages give you an idea of what's involved when you use the National Program Portfolio with girls at each Girl Scout grade level.

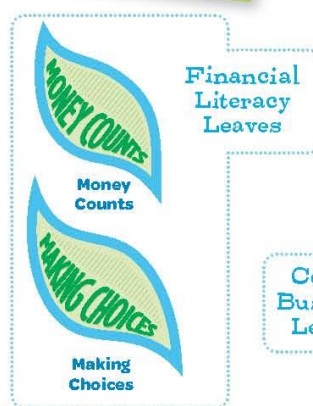
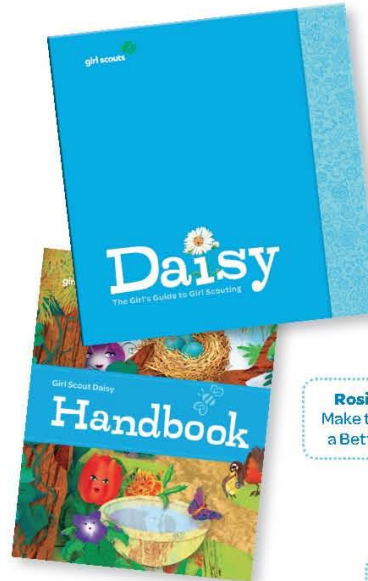
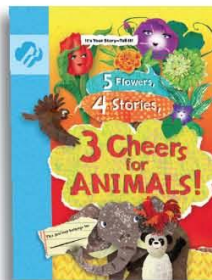
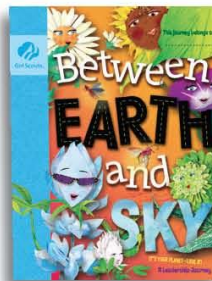
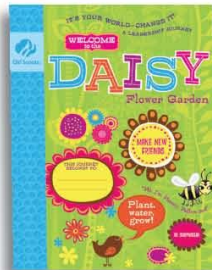
NATIONAL PROGRAM

What Daisies Do*

KINDERGARTEN - 1ST GRADE

Choose a Journey

Use The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting

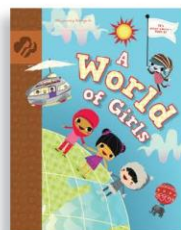
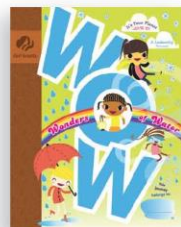
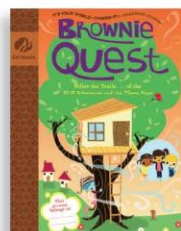


*Remember to add in trips, outdoor adventures, the cookie sale and more! See ideas in all the girl's books.

What Brownies Do*

2ND - 3RD GRADE

Choose a Journey
and earn the awards



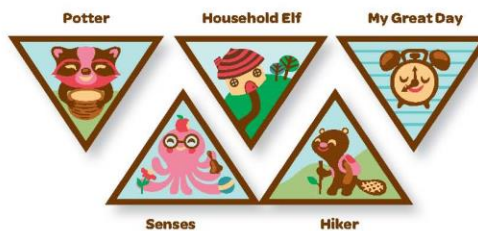
* Remember to add in trips, outdoor adventures, the cookie sale and more! See ideas in all the girl's books.

Want to earn
more Badges? Add
the Badge sets

Brownie Quest



WOW! Wonders of Water



A World of Girls



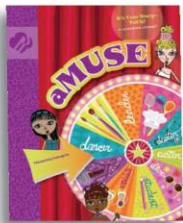
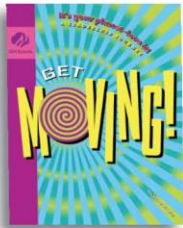
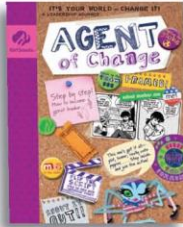
Use them all with
The Girl's Guide to
Girl Scouting



What Juniors Do*

4TH - 5TH GRADE

**Choose a Journey
and earn the awards**



* Remember to add in trips, outdoor adventures, the cookie sale and more! See ideas in all the girl's books.

**Want to earn
more Badges? Add
the Badge sets**

Agent of Change

Digital Photographer

Staying Fit



Musician

Entertainment Technology

Scribe

GET MOVING!

Jeweler

Gardener



Detective

Camper

Independence

aMUSE

Geocacher

Animal Habitats



Playing the Past

Product Designer

Social Butterfly

**Use them all with
The Girl's Guide to
Girl Scouting**



Drawing



Practice with Purpose



Inside Government



Simple Meals



Junior First Aid



Junior Girl Scout Way



Flowers

Financial Literacy



Business Owner



Savvy Shopper

Cookie Business



Cookie CEO

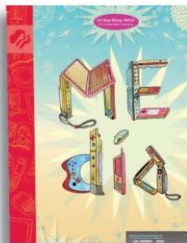
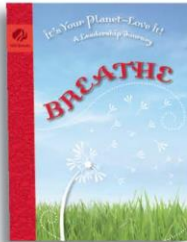
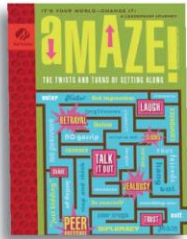


Customer Insights

What Cadettes Do*

6TH - 8TH GRADE

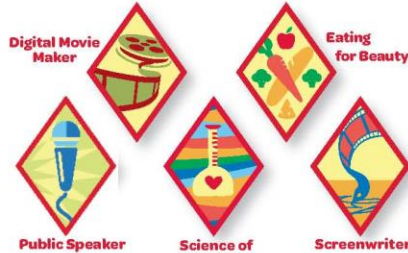
Choose a Journey
and earn the awards



* Remember to add in trips, outdoor adventures, the cookie sale and more! See ideas in all the girl's books.

Want to earn
more Badges? Add
the Badge sets

aMAZE!



Breathe



MEdia



Use them all with
The Girl's Guide to
Girl Scouting



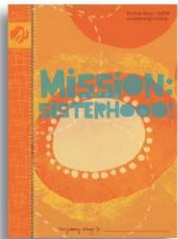
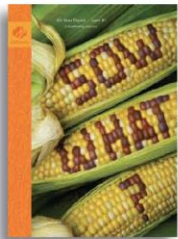
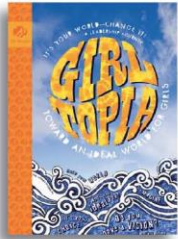
Comic Artist



What Seniors Do*

9TH - 10TH GRADE

Choose a Journey
and earn the awards



* Remember to add in trips, outdoor adventures, the cookie sale and more! See ideas in all the girl's books.

Want to earn
more Badges? Add
the Badge sets

GIRLtopia



Website Designer



Women's Health



Troupe Performer



Science of Style



Novelist

Sow What?



Textile Artist



Room Makeover



Truth Seeker



Adventurer



Car Care

MISSION: SISTERHOOD!



Traveler



Voice for Animals



Game Visionary

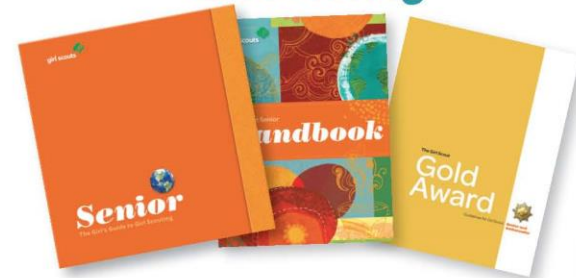


Social Innovator



Business Etiquette

Use them all with
The Girl's Guide to
Girl Scouting



Collage



Cross-Training



Behind the Ballot



Locavore



Senior First Aid



Senior Girl Scout Way



Sky

Financial Literacy

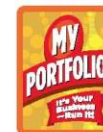


Financing My Future



Buying Power

Cookie Business



My Portfolio



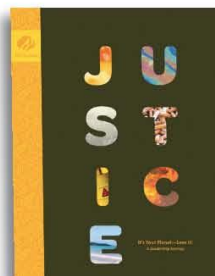
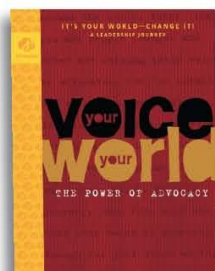
Customer Loyalty

What Ambassadors Do*

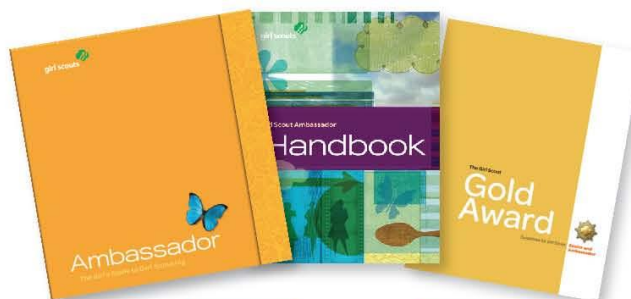
11TH - 12TH GRADE

Choose a Journey

Use The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting



* Remember to add in trips, outdoor adventures, the cookie sale and more! See ideas in all the girl's books.



Photographer



Coaching



Public Policy



Dinner Party



Ambassador First Aid



Ambassador Girl Scout Way



Water

Financial Literacy



On My Own



Good Credit

Cookie Business



Research & Development



P&L

Emblems and Patches

In addition to the leadership awards tied to the Journeys and the National Proficiency badges, girls can show they belong by adding emblems to the front of their vests or sashes and participation patches on the back.

- **Emblems** show membership in Girl Scouts, a particular council, a particular troop, or in some other Girl Scout troop. Examples include: the American Flag patch or the Troop Crest. These should be worn on the front of a sash or vest (see the diagram in the handbook section of *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* to see where these are placed).
- **Participation patches** represent activities girls have tried and are fun ways for girls to remember special events they've attended. Examples include: ice skating patches, parade patches, troop trips, etc. Since these patches and pins aren't tied to skill-building activities, they are worn on the back of a girl's sash or vest.

You can purchase emblems and patches—along with badges and leadership awards—at Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan's Girl Scout shop or by visiting <http://shop.gshom.org/> and clicking on *Uniforms* in the menu on the left. There, you'll find a cool list of the earned awards for each grade level and a link that shows you exactly **where** girls can place their emblems, awards, badges, pins, and patches on their vests and sashes.

Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards

The Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards are Girl Scouting's highest awards. These awards offer girls relevant, grade-level-appropriate challenges related to teamwork, goal setting, and community networking and leadership. They also engage girls in building networks that not only support them in their award projects, but in new educational and career opportunities.

Like everything girls do in Girl Scouting, the steps to earning these awards are rooted in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. This is why, to earn each of these awards, girls first complete a grade-level Journey (for the Bronze Award, girls need to complete one Junior Journey; for the Silver Award, girls need to complete a Cadette Journey; and for the Gold Award, girls need to complete two Journeys – either Senior or Ambassador – or one Journey and the Silver Award). With Journeys, girls experience the keys to leadership and learn to identify community needs, work in partnership with their communities, and carry out Take Action projects that make a lasting difference. They can then use the skills they developed during a Journey to develop and execute projects for their Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards. All this, of course, starts with you—a Girl Scout volunteer! Encourage girls to go after Girl Scouting's highest awards—information is available at www.GSHOM.org. Girl Scouts has just introduced a web app that takes girls step-by-step through the Gold Award requirements. Visit www.girlscouts.org/MyGoldAward to take a peek.

As a Girl Scout volunteer, encourage girls to go for it by earning these awards at the Junior through Ambassador Levels. Check out some of the award projects girls have done in Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan by looking through our Gold Award Yearbooks and/or talk to a few past recipients of the Girl Scout Gold Award. You'll be inspired when you see and hear what girls can accomplish as leaders—and by the confidence, values, and team-building expertise they gain while doing so. Imagine the impact girls have on their communities, country, and even the world as they identify problems they care about, team with others, and act to make change happen!

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

A Tradition of Honoring Girls

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

Uniforms

Official Dress Code

The GSUSA National Board updated the Girl Scout uniform policy as of October 2008 to reflect the changing needs of our members and transformation of the Girl Scout Movement.

Girl Scouts at each level have one required element (tunic, sash, or vest), for the display of official pins and awards, that will be required when girls participate in ceremonies or officially represent Girl Scouting.

For girls ages 5 to 14, the unifying look includes wearing a choice of a tunic, vest, or sash for displaying official pins and awards, combined with their own solid white shirts and khaki pants or skirts. Girl Scouts at the Daisy and Brownie levels have a full uniform ensemble available. Girl Scouts in high school can also wear a scarf that ties their look to the sisterhood of Girl Scouts around the world.

For adult members, the unifying look of the uniform is a Girl Scout official scarf, or tie for men, worn with official membership pins, combined with their own navy blue business attire.

Other Initiatives and Opportunities

Other exciting initiatives and opportunities exist to support the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. In the past, these have covered topics like the environment, robotics, and space exploration. You can find out how to engage your troop in opportunities like these by contacting Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan or by visiting www.girlscouts.org/program/basics and clicking on “Program Basics” on the left side of the screen. Note that councils may offer different experiences, based on availability of resources and partners in your area.

- **Outreach:** From homeless shelters to juvenile halls, from migrant facilities to schools with high levels of students who receive free or reduced lunches, Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan is working to ensure that all girls have the opportunity to become Girl Scouts. After-school enrichment programs are financially out of reach for these families, whose daughters often spend critical after-school hours without supervision. Girl Scout outreach addresses these challenges. Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan spends approximately \$250,000 each year to help bring the benefits of Girl Scouting to those girls who need us most.

- **Forever Green:** A Girl Scout initiative to get all girls in Girl Scouting to think about and make a difference in the environment. All troops and individual girls in grades K-12 are encouraged to participate in this program, by creating a take-action project that will help the environment in local schools or communities. This is the girls' chance to make a real difference and share what they've done with other Girl Scouts all over the world!
- **The Source:** It is the Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan resource guide filled with over 300 different opportunities that appeal to every girl's interest: science, the arts, culture, sports, the outdoors and many more.
- **Camp:** If you've ever been to Girl Scout camp, you know that it's an amazing place where girls build courage, confidence and character. Girl Scout camp offers a variety of wondrous experiences where girls find fun and friendship in beautiful natural surroundings. It is a place where girls can explore, laugh, create and lead. Best of all, girls love it!
- **Jamboree:** This council-wide gathering is a time for celebration as we come together as one. Girls enjoy activities like horseback riding, wall climbing, tie-dying and copper enameling. Look for this event in The Source.

Girl Scout Traditions and Celebrations

Throughout the long history of Girl Scouts, certain traditions remain meaningful and important and are still practiced today. This section gives you an overview of annual celebrations in the Girl Scout year, as well as other revered Girl Scout traditions. Be sure to look in *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* and Leadership Journeys for more information on songs, historical anecdotes, traditions, and ceremonies.

Girl Scout Holidays

Girl Scouts celebrate several special days each year, which you're encouraged to include in your troop planning.

- **World Thinking Day: February 22** - The birthday of both Lord Baden-Powell and Lady Olave Baden-Powell, the originators of Boy Scouts and the Scouting Movement worldwide.
- **Girl Scout Birthday: March 12** - The birthday of Girl Scouting in the USA. The first troop meeting was held in Savannah, Georgia, on this date in 1912.
- **Girl Scout Week: Begins the Sunday before March 12**, a day known as "Girl Scout Sunday" and extends through the Saturday following March 12, a day known as "Girl Scout Sabbath".
- **Volunteer Appreciation Week: Third week in April** - Centers on the long-standing National Girl Scout Leaders' Day (April 22), but expands the definition of volunteers beyond troop leaders to include all the volunteers who work in so many ways on behalf of girls in Girl Scouting.
- **Founder's Day: October 31** - Juliette Gordon Low's birthday.

World Thinking Day: February 22



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

Today, girls honor World Thinking Day by earning the [World Thinking Day award](#), which focuses on an annual theme selected by the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. They also show their appreciation and friendship on World Thinking Day not only by extending warm wishes but also by contributing to the [Juliette Low World Friendship Fund](#), which helps offer Girl Guiding/Girl Scouting to more girls and young women worldwide.

Time-Honored Ceremonies

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

Girls use ceremonies for all sorts of reasons. Here’s a brief list of some examples:

- **Bridging** ceremonies mark a girl’s move from one grade level of Girl Scouting to another, such as from Junior to Cadette. **Fly-Up** is a special bridging ceremony for Girl Scout Brownies who are moving up to Juniors.
- **Closing** ceremonies finalize the meeting, with expectations for the next. A closing ceremony may be as simple as a hand squeeze while standing in a circle.
- **Court of Awards** is a time to recognize girls’ accomplishments.
- **Flag** ceremonies can be part of any activity that honors the American flag.
- **Girl Scout Bronze (or Silver or Gold) Award** ceremonies honor Girl Scout Juniors who have earned the Girl Scout Bronze Award (Cadettes who have earned the Silver Award; Seniors or Ambassadors who have earned the Gold Award), and are usually held in the spring.
- **Girl Scouts’ Own** is a girl-led program that allows girls to explore their feelings and beliefs around a topic (such as the importance of friendship or the personal meaning they get from the Girl Scout Promise and Law) using the spoken word, favorite songs, poetry, or other methods of expression. It is never a religious ceremony.
- **Investiture** welcomes new members, girls or adults, into the Girl Scout family for the first time. Girls receive their Girl Scout, Girl Scout Brownie, or Girl Scout Daisy pin at this time.
- **Opening** ceremonies start troop meetings and can also begin other troop meetings.
- **Pinning** ceremonies help celebrate when girls receive grade-level Girl Scout pins.
- **Rededication** ceremonies are opportunities for girls and adults to renew their commitment to the Girl Scout Promise and Law. This can be done in tandem with the Investiture Ceremony.

For more about ceremonies, visit www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_central/ceremonies. Or, for local events and ceremonies visit www.GSHOM.org.

Hosting a Girl-Led Event

If you're working with girls who want to host an event—large or small—be sure girls are leading the event-planning, instead of sitting by passively while you or another adult plans the event. To get girls started, ask them to think about the following questions:

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

Ideas for girl-led events with family, friends, and community experts are also available in the Leadership Journey adult guides!

Signs, Songs, Handshake, and More!

Over time, any organization is going to develop a few common signals that everyone understands. Such is the case with Girl Scouts, which has developed a few unique ways to greet, acknowledge, and communicate, some of which are listed here.

Girl Scout Sign



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

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

Girl Scout Handshake



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

Quiet Sign



The quiet sign can be extremely useful to you as a volunteer, so teach it to girls during your first meeting. Raise your right hand high with an open palm. As girls in the troop see the sign, they stop talking and also raise their hands. Once everyone is silent, the meeting can begin.

Girl Scout Slogan and Motto

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

Songs

Whether singing around a campfire or joining a chorus of voices on the Mall in Washington, D.C., Girl Scouts have always enjoyed the fun and fellowship of music. In fact, the first *Girl Scout Song Book*, a collection of songs put together by girl members, was published in 1925.

Songs can be used to open or close meetings, enhance ceremonies, lighten a load while hiking, or share a special moment with other Girl Scouts. A variety of songbooks are also available for purchase. Check out

<http://shop.gshom.org/>.

Chapter 3: Engaging Girls at All Grade Levels

As a Girl Scout volunteer, you'll have the opportunity to guide girls of all backgrounds, behaviors, skills, and abilities. You'll help her develop leadership skills she can use now and as she grows—all in a safe and accepting environment. This chapter gives you tips for doing just that.

Arranging a Time and Place for Girl-Led Meetings

When and how often to meet is up to you, your co-volunteers, parents, and girls. What day and time work best for the girls, for you, for your co-volunteers, and for other adults who will be presenting or mentoring? Once per week, twice a month, once a month? Is after-school best? Can your co-volunteers meet at that time, or will meetings work better in the evenings or on the weekends?

Where to meet can be a bit trickier: a meeting place needs to provide a safe, clean, and secure environment that allows for the participation of all girls. You might consider using meeting rooms at schools, libraries, houses or worship, community buildings, childcare facilities, and local businesses. For teens, you can also rotate meetings at coffee shops, bookstores, and other places girls enjoy spending time.

Here are a few points to keep in mind as you consider meeting locations:

- **Cost:** The space should be free to use.
- **Size:** Make sure the space is large enough accommodate the whole troop and all planned activities.
- **Availability:** Be sure the space is available for the day and the entire length of time you want to meet.
- **Resources:** Determine what types of furnishings (table? chairs?) come with the room and ensure that the lighting is adequate. A bonus would be a cubby of some sort, where you can store supplies.
- **Safety:** Ensure that the space is safe, secure, clean, properly ventilated, heated (or cooled, depending on your location), free from hazards, and has at least two exits that are well-marked and fully functional. Also be sure a first-aid equipment is on hand.
- **Facilities:** Sanitary and accessible toilets are critical.
- **Communication-friendly:** Be sure your cell phone works in the meeting space.
- **Allergen-free:** Ensure that pet dander and other common allergens won't bother susceptible girls during meetings.
- **Accessibility:** Be sure the space can accommodate girls with disabilities, as well as parents with disabilities who may come to meetings.


If this is your first time asking for a Girl Scout meeting place, here are a few speaking points to get you started:

"I'm a Girl Scout volunteer, with a group of _____ girls. We're doing lots of great things for girls and for the community, like _____ and _____. We're all about leadership—the kind that girls use in their daily lives and the kind that makes our community better. We'd love to hold our meetings here because _____."

Understanding Healthy Development in Girls

Just being attentive to what girls are experiencing as they mature is a big help to girls. So take some time to understand the likes, needs, and abilities of girls at different ages. As you listen and learn along with girls, you may find it useful to review the highlights of their development. What follows are the developmental abilities and needs of girls at various grade levels. You'll also find these listed in the adult guide of each Leadership Journey. Plus, the activities in the Journeys are set up with the following guidelines in mind! Of course, each girl is an individual, so these are only guidelines that help you get to know the girls.

GSRI reports in *More than 'S'mores* that participating in casual outdoor activities in Girl Scouts, like playing, walking, or taking field trips in the outdoors made girls stronger problem solvers and challenge seekers. These outdoor experiences often place girls in new physical, psychological, and social situations that motivate curiosity and foster a sense of discovery. These challenges "require girls to become more self-aware and to cooperate, communicate, and solve problems." (2014, page. 5)

<div> <div>Girl Scout Daisies</div>  </div>	
At the Girl Scout Daisy level (kindergarten and first grade), girls . . .	This means . . .
Have loads of energy and need to run, walk, and play outside.	<i>They'll enjoy going on nature walks and outdoor scavenger hunts.</i>
Are great builders and budding artists, though they are still developing their fine motor skills.	<i>Encouraging them to express themselves and their creativity by making things with their hands. Girls may need assistance holding scissors, cutting in a straight line, and so on.</i>
Love to move and dance.	<i>They might especially enjoy marching like a penguin, dancing like a dolphin, or acting out how they might care for animals in the jungle.</i>
Are concrete thinkers and focused on the here and now.	<i>Showing instead of telling, for example, about how animals are cared for. Plan visits to animal shelters, farms, or zoos; meet care providers; or make a creative bird feeder.</i>
Are only beginning to learn about basic number concepts, time, and money.	<i>You'll want to take opportunities to count out supplies together—and, perhaps, the legs on a caterpillar!</i>
Are just beginning to write and spell, and they don't always have the words for what they're thinking or feeling.	<i>That having girls draw a picture of something they are trying to communicate is easier and more meaningful for them.</i>
Know how to follow simple directions and respond well to recognition for doing so.	<i>Being specific and offering only one direction at a time. Acknowledge when girls have followed directions well to increase their motivation to listen and follow again.</i>

Girl Scout Brownies



At the Girl Scout Brownie level (second and third grade), girls . . .	This means . . .
Have lots of energy and need to run, walk, and play outside.	<i>Taking your session activities outside whenever possible.</i>
Are social and enjoy working in groups.	<i>Allowing girls to team up in small or large groups for art projects and performances.</i>
Want to help others and appreciate being given individual responsibilities for a task.	<i>Letting girls lead, direct, and help out in activities whenever possible. Allow girls as a troop to make decisions about individual roles and responsibilities.</i>
Are concrete thinkers and focused on the here and now.	<i>Doing more than just reading to girls about the Brownie Elf's adventures. Ask girls questions to gauge their understanding and allow them to role play their own pretend visit to a new country.</i>
Need clear directions and structure, and like knowing what to expect.	<i>Offering only one direction at a time. Also, have girls create the schedule and flow of your get-togethers and share it at the start.</i>
Are becoming comfortable with basic number concepts, time, money, and distance.	<i>Offering support only when needed. Allow girls to set schedules for meetings or performances, count out money for a trip, and so on.</i>
Are continuing to develop their fine motor skills and can tie shoes, use basic tools, begin to sew, etc.	<i>Encouraging girls to express themselves and their creativity by making things with their hands. Girls may need some assistance, however, holding scissors, threading needles, and so on.</i>
Love to act in plays, create music, and dance.	<i>Girls might like to create a play about welcoming a new girl to their school, or tell a story through dance or creative movement.</i>
Know how to follow rules, listen well, and appreciate recognition of a job done well.	<i>Acknowledging when the girls have listened or followed the directions well, which will increase their motivation to listen and follow again!</i>

Girl Scout Juniors



At the Girl Scout Junior level (fourth and fifth grades), girls . . .	This means . . .
Want to make decisions and express their opinions.	<i>Whenever possible, allowing girls to make decisions and express their opinions through guided discussion and active reflection activities. Also, have girls set rules for listening to others' opinions and offering assistance in decision making.</i>
Are social and enjoy doing things in groups.	<i>Allowing girls to team-up in small or large groups for art projects, performances, and written activities.</i>
Are aware of expectations and sensitive to the judgments of others.	<i>Although it's okay to have expectations, the expectation is not perfection! Share your own mistakes and what you learned from them, and be sure to create an environment where girls can be comfortable sharing theirs.</i>
Are concerned about equity and fairness.	<i>Not shying away from discussing why rules are in place and having girls develop their own rules for their troop.</i>
Are beginning to think abstractly and critically, and are capable of flexible thought. Juniors can consider more than one perspective, as well as the feelings and attitudes of another.	<i>Asking girls to explain why they made a decision, share their visions of their roles in the future, and challenge their own and others' perspectives.</i>
Have strong fine and gross motor skills and coordination.	<i>Engaging girls in moving their minds and their bodies. Allow girls to express themselves through written word, choreography, and so on.</i>
Love to act in plays, create music, and dance.	<i>Girls might like to tell a story through playwriting, playing an instrument, or choreographing a dance.</i>
May be starting puberty, which means beginning breast development, skin changes, and weight changes. Some may be getting their periods.	<i>Being sensitive to girls' changing bodies, possible discomfort over these changes, and their desire for more information. Create an environment that acknowledges and celebrates this transition as healthy and normal for girls.</i>

Girl Scout Cadettes



At the Girl Scout Cadette level (sixth, seventh, and eighth grades), girls . . .	This means . . .
Are going through puberty, including changes in their skin, body-shape, and weight. They're also starting their menstrual cycles and have occasional shifts in mood.	<i>Being sensitive to the many changes Cadettes are undergoing and acknowledging that these changes are as normal as growing taller! Girls need time to adapt to their changing bodies, and their feelings about their bodies may not keep up. Reinforce that, as with everything else, people go through puberty in different ways and at different times.</i>
Are starting to spend more time in peer groups than with their families and are very concerned about friends and relationships with others their age.	<i>That girls will enjoy teaming-up in small or large groups for art projects, performances, and written activities, as well as tackling relationship issues through both artistic endeavors and Take Action projects.</i>
Can be very self-conscious—wanting to be like everyone else, but fearing they are unique in their thoughts and feelings.	<i>Encouraging girls to share, but only when they are comfortable. At this age, they may be more comfortable sharing a piece of artwork or a fictional story than their own words. Throughout the activities, highlight and discuss differences as positive, interesting, and beautiful.</i>
Are beginning to navigate their increasing independence and expectations from adults—at school and at home.	<i>Trusting girls to plan and make key decisions, allowing them to experience what's known as "fun failure:" girls learn from trying something new and making mistakes.</i>

Girl Scout Seniors



At the Girl Scout Senior level (ninth and tenth grades), girls . . .	This means . . .
Are beginning to clarify their own values, consider alternative points of view on controversial issues, and see multiple aspects of a situation.	<i>Asking girls to explain the reasoning behind their decisions. Engage girls in role-play and performances, where others can watch and offer alternative solutions.</i>
Have strong problem-solving and critical thinking skills, and are able to plan and reflect on their own learning experiences.	<i>Girls are more than able to go beyond community service to develop projects that will create sustainable solutions in their communities. Be sure to have girls plan and follow up on these experiences through written and discussion-based reflective activities.</i>
Spend more time in peer groups than with their families and are very concerned about friends and relationships with others their age.	<i>That girls will enjoy teaming up in small or large groups for art projects, performances, and written activities. They'll also want to tackle relationship issues through both artistic endeavors and Take Action projects. Alter the makeup of groups with each activity so that girls interact with those they might not usually pair up with.</i>
Frequently enjoy expressing their individuality.	<i>Encouraging girls to express their individuality in their dress, creative expression, and thinking. Remind girls frequently that there isn't just one way to look, feel, think, or act. Assist girls in coming up with new ways of expressing their individuality.</i>
Feel they have lots of responsibilities and pressures—from home, school, peers, work, and so on.	<i>Acknowledging girls' pressures and sharing how stress can limit health, creativity, and productivity. Help girls release stress through creative expression, movement, and more traditional stress-reduction techniques.</i>
Are continuing to navigate their increasing independence and expectations from adults—at school and at home.	<i>Trusting girls to plan and make key decisions, allowing them to experience what's known as "fun failure:" girls learn from trying something new and making mistakes.</i>

Girl Scout Ambassadors



At the Girl Scout Ambassador level (eleventh and twelfth grades), girls . . .	This means . . .
Can see the complexity of situations and controversial issues—they understand that problems often have no clear solution and that varying points of view may each have merit.	<i>Inviting girls to develop stories as a group, and then individually create endings that they later discuss and share.</i>
Have strong problem-solving and critical-thinking skills, and can adapt logical thinking to real-life situations. Ambassadors recognize and incorporate practical limitations to solutions.	<i>Girls are more than able to go beyond community service to develop projects that will create sustainable solutions in their communities. Be sure to have girls plan and follow up on these experiences through written and discussion-based reflective activities.</i>
Spend more time with peers than with their families and are very concerned about friends and relationships with others their age.	<i>Girls will enjoy teaming up in small or large groups for art projects, performances, and written activities. They'll also want to tackle relationship issues through artistic endeavors and Take Action projects. Alter the makeup of groups with each activity so that girls interact with those they might not usually pair up with.</i>
Frequently enjoy expressing their individuality.	<i>Encouraging girls to express their individuality in their dress, creative expression, and thinking. Remind girls frequently that there isn't just one way to look, feel, think, or act. Assist girls in coming up with new ways of expressing their individuality.</i>
Feel they have lots of responsibilities and pressures—from home, school, peers, work, etc.	<i>Acknowledging girls' pressures and sharing how stress can limit health, creativity, and productivity. Help girls release stress through creative expression, movement, and more traditional stress-reduction techniques.</i>
Are continuing to navigate their increasing independence and expectations from adults—at school and at home—and are looking to their futures.	<i>Trusting girls to plan and make key decisions, allowing them to experience what's known as "fun failure." Girls learn from trying something new and making mistakes.</i>

Creating a Safe Space for Girls

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

The environment you create is as important—maybe more—than the activities girls do; it's the key to developing the sort of troop that girls want to be part of. The following sections share some tips on creating a warm, safe environment for girls.

Girl-Adult Partnership

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

The three Girl Scout processes (girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning) are integral to the girl-adult partnership. Take time to read about processes and think about how to incorporate them into your group's experiences. (See the [“Girl Scouting as a National Experience” chapter](#) of this handbook for more about using the Journey adult guides.)

Recognizing and Supporting Each Girl

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

Promoting Fairness

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

Building Trust

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

Managing Conflict

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

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

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

Inspiring Open Communication

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

Communicating Effectively with Girls of Any Age

When communicating with girls, consider the following tips:

- **Listen:** Listening to girls, as opposed to telling them what to think, feel, or do (no “you should”) is the first step in helping them take ownership of their program.
- **Be honest:** If you're not comfortable with a topic or activity, say so. No one expects you to be an expert on every topic. Ask for alternatives or seek out volunteers with the required expertise. (Owning up to mistakes—and apologizing for them—goes a long way with girls.)
- **Be open to real issues:** For girls, important topics are things like relationships, peer pressure, school, money, drugs, and other serious issues. (You'll also have plenty of time to discuss less weighty subjects.) When you don't know, listen. Seek help from Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan if you need assistance or more information.
- **Show respect:** Girls often say that their best experiences were the ones where adults treated them as equal partners. Being spoken to as a young adult helps them grow.
- **Offer options:** Providing flexibility in changing needs and interests shows that you respect the girls and their busy lives. Whatever option is chosen, girls at every grade level also want guidance and parameters.
- **Stay current:** Be aware of the TV shows girls watch, movies they like, books and magazines they read, and music they listen to—not to pretend you have the same interests, but to show you're interested in their world.

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

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

Addressing the Needs of Older Girls

Consider the following tips when working with teenage girls:

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

Girl Scout Research Institute

It’s amazing what you can learn when you listen to girls.

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

In addition to research staff, the GSRI draws on experts in child development, education, business, government, and the not-for-profit sector. We provide the youth development field with definitive research reviews that consolidate existing studies. And, by most measures, we are now the leading source of original research on the issues that girl’s face and the social trends that affect their lives. Visit

www.girlscouts.org/research.

When Sensitive Topics Come Up

According to *Feeling Safe: What Girls Say*, a 2003 Girl Scout Research Institute study, girls are looking for groups that allow connection and a sense of close friendship. They want volunteers who are teen savvy and can help them with issues they face, such as bullying, peer pressure, dating, athletic and academic performance, and more. Some of these issues may be considered “sensitive” by parents, and they may have opinions or input about how, and whether, Girl Scouts should cover these topics should be covered with their daughters.

Girl Scouts welcomes and serves girls and families from a wide spectrum of faiths and cultures. When girls wish to participate in discussions or activities that could be considered sensitive—even for some—put the topic on hold until you have spoken with parents and received guidance from Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan. When Girl Scout activities involve sensitive issues, your role is that of a caring adult who can help girls acquire skills and knowledge in supportive atmosphere, not someone who advocates a particular position.

You should know, GSUSA does not take a position or develop materials on issues relating to human sexuality, birth control, or abortion. Our role is to help girls develop self-confidence and good decision-making skills that will help them make wise choices in all areas of their lives. We believe parents and guardians, along with schools and faith communities, are the primary sources of information on these topics.

We at Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan have the following policy on sensitive issues:

Parents/guardians make all decisions regarding their girl’s participation in Girl Scout program that may be of a sensitive nature. As a volunteer leader, you must get written parental permission for any locally planned program offering that could be considered sensitive. Visit www.GSHOM.org and click on *for adults* and then *Volunteer Resources* to download a Sensitive Issues Permission Form.

Included on the permission form should be the topic of the activity, any specific content that might create controversy, and any action steps the girls will take when the activity is complete. Be sure to have a form for each girl, and keep the forms on hand in case a problem arises. For activities not sponsored by Girl Scouts, find out in advance (from organizers or other volunteers who may be familiar with the content) what will be presented, and follow Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan’s guidelines for obtaining written permission.

Report concerns: There may be times when you worry about the health and well-being of girls in your troop. Alcohol, drugs, sex, bullying, abuse, depression, and eating disorders are some of the issues girls may encounter. You are on the frontlines of girls’ lives, and you are in a unique position to identify a situation in which a girl may need help. If you believe a girl is at risk of hurting herself or others, your role is to promptly bring that information to her parent/guardian or Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan so she can get the expert assistance she needs. Your concern about a girl’s well-being and safety is taken seriously, and Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan will guide you in addressing these concerns.

- Contact your Membership Specialist and find out how to refer the girl and her parent/guardian to experts at school or in the community.
- Share your concern with the girl’s family, if this is feasible.

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

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

Advocating for Girls

The Girl Scouts Public Policy and Advocacy Office in Washington, D.C., builds relationships with members of Congress, White House officials, and other federal departments and agencies, continuously informing and educating them about issues important to girls and Girl Scouting. The office also supports Girl Scout councils, at the state and local levels, as they build capacity to be the voice for girls. These advocacy efforts help demonstrate to lawmakers that Girl Scouts is a resource and an authority on issues affecting girls. Visit the Advocacy office at www.girlscouts.org/who_we_are/advocacy.

Working with Parents and Guardians

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

Using “I” Statements

Perhaps the most important tip for communicating with parents/guardians is for you to use “I” statements instead of “you” statements. “I” statements, which are detailed in the *aMAZE* Journey for Girl Scout Cadettes, tell someone what you need from her or him, while “you” statements may make the person feel defensive.

Here are some examples of “you” statements:

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

Now look at “I” statements:

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

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

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

Arranging Meetings with Parents/Guardians or a Friends-and-Family Network

A parent/guardian meeting, or a meeting of your friends-and-family network (as encouraged in many of the leadership Journeys), is a chance for you to get to know the families of the girls in your troop. You’re free to structure the meeting in whatever way works for you, but the following structure works for many new volunteers.

Before the meeting, be sure you and/or your co-volunteers have done the following:

- Arranged for a parent, another volunteer, or a group of older girls to do activities with the younger girls in your troop while you talk with their parents/guardians (if girls will attend the meeting, too)
- Practiced a discussion on the following: Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law; benefits of Girl Scouting for their daughters, including how the Girl Scout Leadership Experience is a world-class system for developing girl leaders; all the fun the girls are going to have; expectations for girls and their parents/guardians; and ideas of how parents and other guardians can participate in and enrich their daughters’ Girl Scout experiences.
- Identified when product program activities, including Girl Scout cookie activities and Treats & Reads activities, will happen in your Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan region because parents/guardians will absolutely want to know.
- Determined what information parents should bring to the meeting.
- Used the Friends and Family pages provided in the adults guides for many of the Journeys, or created your own one-page information sheet (contact information for you and co-volunteers and helpers, the day and time of each meeting, location of and directions to the meeting place, what to

bring with them, and information on how to get Journey resources—books, awards, and keepsakes—and other merchandise like sashes, vests, T-shirts, and so on).

- Gathered or created supplies, including a sign-in sheet, an information sheet, permission forms for parents/guardians (also available from Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan), health history forms (as required by Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan), and membership registration forms.
- Prepared yourself to ask parents and guardians for help, being as specific as you can about the kind of help you will need (the Journey's Friends and Family pages will come in handy here).

Sample Meeting:

- As the girls and adults arrive, ask them to sign in. If the girls' parents/guardians haven't already registered them online, you'll want to email or hand out information so they can do so. Pass out registration forms and health history forms. You may also want to email or hand out a brief information sheet before or at this meeting.
- Open the meeting by welcoming the girls and adults. Introduce yourself and other co-volunteers or helpers. Have adults and girls introduce themselves, discuss whether anyone in their families has been a Girl Scout, and talk about what Girl Scouting means to them. Welcome everyone, regardless of experience, and let them know they will be learning about Girl Scouts today. (If you're new to Girl Scouting, don't worry—just let everyone know you'll be learning about Girl Scouting together!)
- Ask the girls to go with the adult or teen in charge of their activity and begin the discussion.
- Discuss the information you prepared for this meeting:
 - All the fun girls are going to have!
 - When and where the troop will meet and some examples of activities the girls might choose to do
 - That a parent/guardian permission form is used for activities outside the troop's normal meeting time and place and the importance of completing and returning it
 - How you plan to keep in touch with parents/guardians (a Facebook page or troop, Twitter, email, text messaging, a phone tree, or fliers the girls take home are just some ideas)
 - The Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law
 - The Girl Scout program, especially what the Girl Scout Leadership Experience is and what the program does for their daughters
 - When the Girl Scout Product Program begins and how participation in the Product Program teaches life skills and helps fund troop activities
 - The cost of membership, which includes annual Girl Scouts of the USA dues, any troop payments, optional uniforms, and any resources parents/guardians will need to buy (such as a girl's book for a Journey)
 - Review program opportunities in *The Source* and camp guides
 - The availability of financial assistance and how the Girl Scout Product Program generates funds for the troop treasury
 - Discuss Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan's Family Partnership opportunity
 - Review the Troop and Family Survey and discuss the parent involvement. Be as specific as possible!
- If you've distributed paper registration forms, collect them. You may also direct parents to Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan's website and the option for online registration.

- Remind the group of the next meeting and thank everyone for attending. Hold the next meeting when it makes sense for you and your co-volunteers—that may be in two months if face-to-face meetings are best, or not at all if you’re diligent about keeping in touch with parents/guardians via Facebook, Twitter, text messages, email, phone calls, or some other form of communication.
- After the meeting, follow up with any parents/guardians who did not attend, to connect them with the troop, inform them of decisions, and discuss how they can best help the girls.

Registering Girls in Girl Scouting

Every participant (girl or adult) in Girl Scouting must register and become a member of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) and Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan (GSHOM). Girl Scout membership dues are valid for one year. Membership dues (currently \$25 for girls and \$15.00 for adults) may not be transferred to another member and are non-refundable.

Pre-registration for the upcoming membership year occurs in the spring. *Girls are encouraged to register early to avoid the fall rush and obtain early registration incentives!* Early registration helps ensure uninterrupted receipt of forms and materials from your regional center, helps girls, volunteers and staff plan ahead, and gets girls excited about all the great stuff they want to do as Girl Scouts next year. Girl Scout program level is determined by the grade level a girl will be in school during the current membership year beginning October 1st.

Lifetime membership is available at a reduced rate for graduating Girl Scout Ambassadors. A lifetime member must be at least 18 years old (or a 17-year-old high-school graduate) and agree to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

Creating an Atmosphere of Acceptance and Inclusion

Girl Scouts embraces girls of all abilities, backgrounds, and heritage, with a specific and positive philosophy of inclusion that benefits everyone. Each girl—without regard to socioeconomic status, race, physical or cognitive ability, ethnicity, primary language, or religion—is an equal and valued member of the troop, and troops reflect the diversity of the community.

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

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

A Variety of Formats for Publications

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

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

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

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

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

Here are some examples of ways to modify activities:

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

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

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

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

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

Registering Girls with Cognitive Disabilities



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

Chapter 4: Safety Guidelines

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

Approaching Activities

How can you, as a Girl Scout volunteer, determine whether an activity is safe and appropriate? Good judgment and common sense often dictate the answer. What's safe in one circumstance may not be safe in another. An incoming storm, for example, might force you to assess or discontinue an activity. If you are uncertain about the safety of an activity, call Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan staff with full details and don't proceed without approval. Err on the side of caution and make the safety of girls your most important consideration. Prior to any activity, read the specific Safety Activity Checkpoints (available on Girl Scout Heart of Michigan's website, on the Volunteer Resources page or from your support team in some other format) related to any activity you plan to do with girls.

When planning activities with girls, note the abilities of each girl and carefully consider the progression of skills from the easiest part to the most difficult. Make sure the complexity of the activity does not exceed girls' individual skills—bear in mind that skill levels decline when people are tired, hungry, or under stress. Also use activities as opportunities for building teamwork, which is one of the outcomes for the Connect key in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

Knowing Your Responsibilities

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

Every adult in Girl Scouting is responsible for the physical and emotional safety of girls, and we all demonstrate that by agreeing to follow these guidelines at all times.

1. **Follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints.** Instructions for staying safe while participating in activities are detailed in the Safety Activity Checkpoints, available from Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan. Read the checkpoints, follow them, and share them with other volunteers, parents, and girls before engaging in activities with girls.
2. **Get parent/guardian permission.** When an activity takes place that is outside the normal time and place, advise each parent/guardian of the details of the activity and obtain permission for girls to participate (www.gshom.org).
3. **Arrange for proper adult supervision of girls.** Your troop must have at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers present at all times, plus additional adult volunteers as necessary, depending on the size of the troop and the ages and abilities of girls. Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old and must be screened by Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan before volunteering. One lead volunteer in every troop must be female. Review Safety Activity Checkpoints to see if you need an additional adult "Expert."
4. **Travel safely.** When transporting girls to planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities that are outside the normal time and place, every driver must complete the *background check authorization form*, the *Driver's Guidelines* and *Driver and Privately Owned Vehicle Statement* (more information can be found on www.gshom.org). Insist that everyone is in a legal seat and wears her seat belt at all times, and adhere to state laws regarding booster seats and requirements for children in rear seats.

5. **Ensure safe overnight outings.** Prepare girls to be away from home by involving them in planning, so they know what to expect. Men should not sleep in the same space as girls and women. During family or parent-daughter overnights, one family unit may sleep in the same sleeping quarters in program areas. When parents are staffing events, daughters should remain in quarters with other girls rather than in staff areas.
6. **Be prepared for emergencies.** Work with girls and other adults to establish and practice procedures for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost girls/adults, and site security. Always keep handy a well-stocked first-aid kit, girl health histories, and contact information for girls' families.
7. **Promote online safety.** Instruct girls never to put their full names or contact information online, engage in virtual conversation with strangers, or arrange in-person meetings with online contacts. On troop websites, publish girls' first names only and never divulge their contact information. Teach girls the [Girl Scout Online Safety Pledge](#) and have them commit to it (for more information, refer to Social Media Policy pg 74).
8. **Keep girls safe during approved money-earning activities.** Girl Scout cookies and Treats & Reads are an integral part of Girl Scouts. During Girl Scout product programs, you are responsible for the safety of girls, money, and products. For more information on approved money-earning activities, please refer to Chapter 5.
9. **Report abuse.** Sexual advances, improper touching, and sexual activity of any kind with girl members are forbidden. Physical, verbal, and emotional abuse of girls is also forbidden. Follow Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan's guidelines, found in Volunteer Policies (Chapter 1), for reporting concerns about abuse or neglect that may be occurring inside or outside of Girl Scouting.
10. **Role-model the right behavior.** Never use illegal drugs. Don't consume alcohol, smoke, or use foul language in the presence of girls. Do not carry ammunition or firearms in the presence of girls unless given special permission by Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan for troop marksmanship activities.
11. **Create an emotionally safe space.** Adults are responsible for making Girl Scouting a place where girls are as safe emotionally as they are physically. Protect the emotional safety of girls by creating a team agreement and coaching girls to honor it. Agreements typically encourage behaviors like respecting a diversity of feelings and opinions; resolving conflicts constructively; and avoiding physical and verbal bullying, clique behavior, and discrimination.
12. **Ensure that no girl is treated differently.** Girl Scouts welcomes all members, regardless of race, ethnicity, background, disability, family structure, religious beliefs, and socioeconomic status. When scheduling, helping plan, and carrying out activities, carefully consider the needs of all girls involved, including school schedules, family needs, financial constraints, religious holidays, and the accessibility of appropriate transportation and meeting places.

Responsibilities of Parents and Guardians

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

- Provide permission for their daughters to participate in Girl Scouting as well as provide additional consent for activities that take place outside the scheduled meeting place. This can include such activities as: product program, overnight travel, the use of special equipment, or sensitive issues.
- Make provisions for their daughters to get to and from meeting places or other designated sites in a safe and timely manner, and inform you if someone other than a parent or guardian will drop off or pick up their child.
- Provide their daughters with appropriate clothing and equipment for activities, or contact you before the activity to find sources for the necessary clothing and equipment.
- Follow Girl Scout safety guidelines and encourage their children to do the same.
- Assist you in planning and carrying out program activities as safely as possible.
- Participate in parent/guardian meetings.

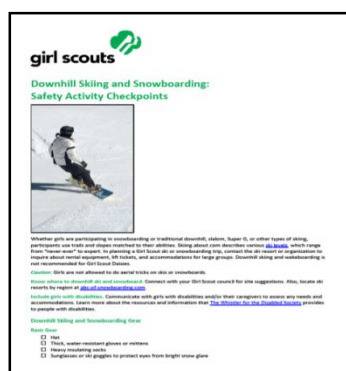
- Understand what appropriate behavior is for their daughters, as determined by Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan and you.
- Assist volunteers if their daughters have special needs or abilities and their help is solicited.

Responsibilities of Girls

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

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

Using Safety Activity Checkpoints



Points common to all Safety Activity Checkpoints include:

Girls plan the activity. Keeping their grade-level abilities in mind, encourage girls to take proactive leadership roles in organizing details of the activity.

Arrange for proper adult supervision of girls. Your group must have at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers present at all times, plus additional adult volunteers as necessary (this is dependent upon the size of the group and the ages and abilities of girls). Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old (or the age of majority defined by your state, if it is older than 18), and must be screened

by your council before volunteering. One lead volunteer in every group must be female.

Get parent/guardian permission. When an activity takes place that is outside the normal time and place, advise each parent/guardian of the details of the activity and obtain permission for girls to participate.

Communicate with Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan staff and parents. Follow Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan procedures for activity approval, certificates of insurance, and Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan guidelines about girls' general health examinations. Make arrangements in advance for all transportation and confirm plans before departure.

Be prepared for emergencies and compile key contacts. Work with girls and other adults to establish and practice procedures for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost girls/adults and site security. Give an itinerary to a contact person at home; call the contact person upon departure and return. Create a list of girls' parents/guardian contact information, telephone numbers for emergency services and police, and Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan contacts—keep on hand or post in an easily accessible location. Always keep handy a well-stocked first-aid kit, girl health histories and contact information for girls' families. Check Safety Activity Checkpoints to determine the type of first aider needed.

Get a weather report. On the morning of the activity, check weather.com or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, and/or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away

from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.

Use the buddy system. Using the buddy system, girls are divided into teams of two. Each girl is responsible for staying with her buddy at all times, warning her buddy of danger, giving her buddy immediate assistance if safe to do so, and seeking help when the situation warrants it. Girls are encouraged to stay near the group or buddy with another team of two, so in the event someone is injured, one person cares for the patient while two others seek help.

In keeping with the three processes of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, be sure that:

- **All activities are girl-led.** Take into account the age and abilities of the girls. Older girls can take the bulk of the responsibility for carefully planning and executing activities, while younger girls will require more of your guidance but should still be deeply involved in making decisions about their activities.
- **Girls have the chance to learn cooperatively.** Have girls teach each other new skills they may need for the activities, rather than hearing all that from you.
- **Girls learn by doing.** If research or special equipment is needed, they'll learn better by doing that research themselves than by having you do the legwork and report back to them. Even Daisies can do basic research and give reports or do show-and-tell for each other. Ambassadors may need you only for moral support as they research, teach each other, and plan every detail of their excursions.

If Safety Activity Checkpoints do not exist for an activity you and the girls are interested in, check with Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan **before** making any definite plans with the girls. A few activities are allowed only with written Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan pre-approval and only for girls 12 and over, while some are off-limits completely:

- **Caution:** You must get written pre-approval from Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan for girls ages 12 and older who will operate motorized vehicles, such as go-carts and personal watercraft; use firearms; take trips on waterways that are highly changeable or uncontrollable; experience simulated skydiving, zero-gravity rooms and participating in an indoor trampoline park; or fly in noncommercial aircraft, such as small private planes, helicopters, sailplanes, untethered hot air balloons, and blimps.
- **Warning:** The following activities are never allowed for any girl: potentially uncontrolled free-falling (bungee jumping, hang gliding, parachuting, parasailing); creating extreme variations of approved activities (such as high-altitude climbing and aerial tricks on bicycles, skis, snowboards, skateboards, water-skis, and wakeboards); hunting; shooting a projectile at another person; riding all-terrain vehicles and motor bikes; and taking watercraft trips in Class V white water rapids or higher.

An additional note: Girl Scouts welcomes and serves girls and families from a wide spectrum of faiths and cultures. When girls wish to participate in discussions or activities that could be considered sensitive—(health or education in human sexuality, advocacy projects, work with religious groups, or anything that could yield a political/social debate), put the topic on hold until you've obtained written parental permission (visit the forms section at www.gshom.org).

When Girl Scout activities involve sensitive issues, your role is that of a caring adult who can help girls acquire skills and knowledge in a supportive atmosphere, not someone who advocates a particular position. You are required to obtain permission slips signed by the girls' parents/guardians; included on the permission form should be the topic of the activity, any specific content that might create controversy, and any action steps the girls are to do when the activity is complete. Be sure to have a form for each girl, and keep them on hand in case a problem arises. For non-Girl Scout activities, find out in advance (from organizers or other volunteers who may be familiar with the content) what will be presented, and follow Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan's guidelines for obtaining written permission.

Understanding How Many Volunteers You Need

Girl Scout groups are large enough to provide a cooperative learning environment and small enough to allow for development of individual girls. It is recommended that group sizes, when possible, are as follows:

- Girl Scout Daisies: 5–12 girls
- Girl Scout Brownies: 10–20 girls
- Girl Scout Juniors: 10–25 girls
- Girl Scout Cadettes: 5–25 girls
- Girl Scout Seniors: 5–30 girls
- Girl Scout Ambassadors: 5–30 girls

Girl Scouts' adult-to-girl ratios show the **minimum** number of adults needed to supervise a specific number of girls. These supervision ratios were devised to ensure the safety and health of girls—for example, if one adult has to respond to an emergency, a second adult is always on hand for the rest of the girls. It may take you a minute to get used to the layout of this chart, but once you start to use it, you'll find the chart extremely helpful.

	Group Meetings		Events, Travel, and Camping	
	Two unrelated adults (at least one of whom is female) for every:	additional adult to each additional:	Two unrelated adults (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	additional adult to each additional:
Girl Scout Daisies (grades K–1)	12	1-6	6	1-4
Girl Scout Brownies (grades 2–3)	20	1-8	12	1-6
Girl Scout Juniors (grades 4–5)	25	1-10	16	1-8
Girl Scout Cadettes (grades 6–8)	25	1-12	20	1-10
Girl Scout Seniors (grades 9–10)	30	1-15	24	1-12
Girl Scout Ambassadors (grades 11–12)	30	1-15	24	1-12

Here are some examples: If you're meeting with 17 Daisies, you'll need three adults, at least two of whom are unrelated (in other words, not your sister, spouse, parent, or child), and at least one of whom is female. Follow the chart: you need two adults for 12 Daisies and one more adult for up to six more girls. You have 17, so you need three adults. If, however, you have 17 Cadettes attending a troop meeting, you need only two unrelated adults, at least one of which is female (because, on the chart, two adults can manage up to 25 Cadettes).

In addition to the adult-to-girl ratios, please remember that adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old.

Adult supervision for all girls also extends to any online activity. For additional information on online safety, please consult:

- The “Computer/Online Use” Safety Activity Checkpoints
- Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge

Experts

The Safety Activity Checkpoints for most activities require having an expert on hand to help girls learn an activity. Please remember that **all experts must be approved by Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan**. To make it a bit easier, many councils keep lists of local experts (such as sailing instructors) and facilities (such as roller skating rinks) they’ve already approved. If Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan doesn’t keep these lists, you’ll have to present an expert for the council’s consideration. Some things to keep in mind:

- **Does the person have documented training and experience?** She or he should have documented experience for the activity in question, such as course completion certificates or cards, records of previous training to instruct the activity, and letters of reference.
- **What does she or he need to be able to do?** This person should have the knowledge and experience to make appropriate judgments concerning participants, equipment, facilities, safety considerations, supervision, and procedures for the activity. At the very least, she or he should be able to give clear instructions to girls and adults, troubleshoot unexpected scenarios, and respond appropriately in an emergency.

Traveling with Girls

How parents decide to transport girls between their homes and Girl Scout meeting places is each parent’s individual decision and responsibility.

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan provides a Troop Trip and Activity Application and a Troop Trip & Activity Requirements/Guideline chart to help girls and volunteers plan activities beyond the regular meeting place and time. For planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities in which a troop will be transported in private vehicles:

- Every driver must be an adult (at least 21 years of age) and needs to complete the *background check authorization form*, the *Driver’s Guidelines* and the *Driver and Privately Owned Vehicle Statement*.
- Girls never drive other girls.
- If a troop is traveling in one vehicle, there must be at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers in the vehicle, one of whom is female, and the girl-volunteer ratios in *Volunteer Essentials* must be followed.
- If a troop is traveling in more than one vehicle, the entire troop must consist of at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers, one of whom is female, and the girl-volunteer ratios in *Volunteer Essentials* must be followed. Care should be taken so that a single car (with a single adult driver) is not separated from the troop for an extended length of time.

Private transportation includes private passenger vehicles, rental cars, privately owned or rented recreational vehicles and campers, chartered buses, chartered boats, and chartered flights. Each driver of motorized private transportation must be at least 21 years old and hold a valid operator’s license appropriate to the vehicle—state laws must be followed, even if they are more stringent than the guidelines here. Anyone who is driving a

vehicle with more than 12 passengers must also be a professional driver who possesses a commercial driver's license (CDL)—check with Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan to determine specific rules about renting large vehicles.

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

- Even though written agreements are always required when renting or chartering, you are *not* authorized to sign an agreement or contract—even if there is no cost associated with the rental. Such an agreement must instead be signed by the person designated by Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan.
- Check with Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan to make sure you are following accepted practices when using private transportation; this ensures that both you and Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan are protected by liability insurance in the event of an accident.
- If Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan has given permission to use a rented car, read all rental agreements to be sure you comply with their terms and avoid surprises. Note the minimum age of drivers (often 25), as well as the maximum age (often under 70). Be sure the car is adequately insured, knowing who is responsible for damage to or the loss of the vehicle itself. Also, ensure you have a good paper trail, with evidence that the vehicle rental is Girl Scout-related.
- Obtain parent/guardian permission for any use of transportation outside of the meeting place.

Checklist for Drivers

When driving a car, RV, or camper, take the following precautions and ask any other drivers to do the same:

Before the trip:

- The leader is ultimately responsible for the safety of the girls.
- Arrive at the departure point early enough to allow plenty of time for loading girls and baggage.
- Drivers are encouraged to be registered adult Girl Scout members. Ensure all drivers are adults (21 years or older)—girls should not be transporting other girls.
- A driver needs to be prepared to show proof of insurance, car registration and driver's license.
- Never transport girls in flatbed or panel trucks, in the bed of a pickup, or in a camper-trailer.
- Be sure your car is in safe condition with good brakes and tires (including the spare) and that you have enough gasoline. Check your lights, signals, windshield wipers, horns, and fluid levels before each trip and check them periodically on long trips.
- Vans used to carry Girl Scouts should be designed to carry 12 passengers or less.
- The leader will provide drivers with:
 - Appropriate health history record and Parent Permission Form for all passengers (girls/adults). In case of an accident, these are necessary to ensure prompt treatment.
 - The phone number of the troop's emergency contact person. If you are delayed, call that person, who will notify parents.
 - Directions/map to destination. Be sure you know exactly where you are going. For long trips, there should be prearranged meeting places along the route. Caravanning (convoy-type travel) is to be avoided.
- Before leaving, review or explain safety rules to all passengers:
 - Seat belts on at all times.
 - Hands and arms inside.
 - Girls under 12 must ride in the back seat.
 - Noise must be kept at a level acceptable to the driver.
 - Special rules for your car.

During the Trip:

- Follow all the established rules of the road (following the speed limit, keeping a two-car-length between you and the car ahead of you, driving with your headlights on, not using a personal electronic device [no talking or texting], not using ear buds or headphones, and so on).
- Children from 4-7 years old AND under 4'9" in height must be properly restrained in a child safety seat or booster seat in the vehicle.
- The vehicle should also carry a first aid kit and emergency equipment such as a fire extinguisher, reflectors and a flashlight.
- No volunteer may undertake a role as a Girl Scout member while under the influence of or impaired by any illegal drug or alcohol, nor use or possess it while on Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan business.
 - A volunteer, using a legally prescribed or over-the-counter drug, must not accept volunteer responsibilities if her/his abilities to perform safely are compromised by the use of the prescribed or over-the-counter drug.
- The use of tobacco products will not be permitted at any Girl Scout function or in any vehicle transporting children. Adults can only smoke in designated areas away from children.
- If an injury requiring treatment occurs, a health history record and Parent Permission Form should accompany a child or an adult to the doctor or hospital.
- Drivers must rest after two hours of driving.
 - Limit driving to six hours per day.
 - Drive with extra caution during hours of darkness and any other time visibility is reduced or road conditions worsened.
 - Avoid driving for extended periods at night, when tired, or taking medication that makes you drowsy.

After the Trip:

- When the trip is over, return the health history records and Parent Permission Forms to the leader.

Health Histories (Including Examinations and Immunizations)

You will be asked to obtain and store girls' health histories on forms that can be found on www.GSHOM.org. Keep in mind that information from a health history record is confidential and may be shared only with people who must know this information (such as the first aider for your troop, the girl herself, her parent/guardian, and a health practitioner).

For various reasons, some parents/guardians may object to immunizations or medical examinations. As a way to accommodate these concerns, Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan has two forms (Release and Application for Exemption of Physical Examination and Immunization Requirements for Religious Reasons and Immunization Waiver Form) that make provisions for these girls to attend Girl Scout functions.

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

- Medication, including over-the-counter products, must never be dispensed without prior written permission from a girl's custodial parent or guardian. (You can find this form at gshom.org, Volunteer Resources.) Some girls may need to carry and administer their own medications, such as bronchial inhalers, an EpiPen, or diabetes medication.
- Common food allergies include dairy products, eggs, soy, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts, and seafood. This means that, before serving any food (such as peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, cookies, or chips), *ask* whether anyone is allergic to peanuts, dairy products, or wheat! Even Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies should be aware of their allergies, but double-checking with their parents/guardians is always a good idea.

Girl Scout Activity Insurance

Every registered Girl Scout and registered adult member in the Girl Scout movement is automatically covered under the basic plan upon registration. The entire premium cost for this protection is borne by Girl Scouts of the USA. The basic plan is effective during the regular fiscal year (October 1st to September 30th). Up to 14 months of insurance coverage is provided for new members who register in the month of August. This insurance provides up to a specified maximum for medical expenses incurred as a result of an accident while a member is participating in an approved, supervised Girl Scout activity, after the individual's primary insurance pays out. This is one reason that all adults and girls should be registered members. Non-registered parents, tagalongs (brothers, sisters, friends), and other persons are not covered by basic coverage.

This insurance coverage is **not** intended to diminish the need for or replace family health insurance. When \$130 in benefits has been paid for covered accident medical or dental expense, any subsequent benefits will be payable only for expenses incurred that aren't compensable under another insurance policy. If there is no family insurance or healthcare program, a specified maximum of medical benefits is available.

An optional plan of activity insurance is available for Girl Scouts taking extended trips and for non-members who participate in Girl Scout activities. These plans are secondary insurance that a council may offer to cover participants taking part in any council-approved, supervised Girl Scout activity. Optional insurance coverage is available for any Girl Scout activity that involves non-Girl Scouts or lasts longer than three days and two nights. Contact Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan to find out how to apply. Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan may make this mandatory, in some cases, particularly for overseas travel.

To apply for additional activity insurance:

1. Go to the Mutual of Omaha Web site as indicated below or obtain a form from your regional office, or print the enrollment form from the GSHOM.org Web site.
2. Requests must be received in your regional Girl Scout office at least **four weeks** prior to your event. The enrollment form and premium must be received by Mutual of Omaha prior to 12:01 a.m. of the first day of the Girl Scout event.
3. Follow directions on the [Mutual of Omaha Enrollment Form](#):
 - a. Submit the completed enrollment form and payment through your Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan membership specialist.
 - b. Following your membership specialist's approval, Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan will send the completed enrollment form and premium (made payable to Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan). The minimum premium is \$5.00; several enrollment forms included in one submission may be combined to meet the minimum.

Review the [Girl Scouts insurance plan](#) description here.

Providing Emergency Care

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

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

First-Aid/CPR

Emergencies require prompt action and quick judgment. For many activities, Girl Scouts recommends that at least one adult volunteer be first-aid/CPR-certified. For that reason, if you have the opportunity to get trained in council-approved first-aid/CPR, do it! You can take advantage of first-aid/CPR training offered by chapters of the American Red Cross, National Safety Council, EMP America, American Heart Association, or other sponsoring organizations approved by Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan. Try to take age-specific CPR training, too—that is, take child CPR if you’re working with younger girls and adult CPR when working with older girls and adults.

Caution: First-aid/CPR training that is available entirely online does not satisfy Girl Scouts’ requirements. Such courses do not offer enough opportunities to practice and receive feedback on your technique. If you’re taking a course not offered by one of the organizations listed in the previous paragraph, or any course that has online components, get approval from your support team or council.

First-Aider

A first-aider is an adult volunteer who has taken Girl Scout-approved first-aid and CPR training that includes specific instructions for child CPR. If, through the American Red Cross, National Safety Council, EMP America, or American Heart Association, you have a chance to be fully trained in first-aid and CPR, doing so may make your activity-planning go a little more smoothly. The Safety Activity Checkpoints always tell you when a first-aider needs to be present.

Activities can take place in a variety of locations, which is why first-aid requirements are based on the remoteness of the activity—as noted in the Safety Activity Checkpoints for that activity. For example, it’s possible to do a two-mile hike that has cell phone reception and service along the entire route and EMS (Emergency Medical System) is, at maximum, 30 minutes away at all times. It is also possible to hike more remotely with no cell phone service at a place where EMS would take more than 30 minutes to arrive. It’s important that you or another volunteer with your troop has the necessary medical experience (including knowledge of evacuation techniques) to ensure troop safety.

The levels of first aid required for any activity take into account both how much danger is involved and how remote the area is from emergency medical services.

Access to EMS	Minimum Level of First Aid Required
Less than 30 minutes	First Aid and Adult/Child CPR
More than 30 minutes	Wilderness First Aid (WFA) or Wilderness First Responder (WFR)*

**Although a WFR is not required, it is strongly recommended when traveling with troops in areas that are greater than 30 minutes from EMS.*

It is important to understand the differences between a first-aid course and a wilderness-rated course. Although standard first-aid training provides basic incident response, wilderness-rated courses include training on remote-assessment skills, as well as the emergency first-aid response, including evacuation techniques, to use when EMS is not readily available.

Note: The presence of a first-aider is required at resident camp. For large events 200 people or more, there should be one first-aider for every 200 participants. The following healthcare providers may also serve as first-aiders : physician, physician’s assistant, nurse practitioner, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, paramedic, military medic, and emergency medical technician.

First-Aid Kit

Make sure a general first-aid kit is available at your troop meeting place and accompanies girls on any activity (including transportation to and from the activity). Please be aware that you may need to provide this kit if one is not available at your meeting place. You can purchase a Girl Scout first-aid kit, you can buy a commercial kit, or you and the girls can assemble a kit yourselves. The Red Cross offers a list of potential items in its [Anatomy of a First Aid Kit](#). (Note that the Red Cross’s suggested list includes aspirin, which you will not be at liberty to give to girls without direct parent/guardian permission.) You can also customize a kit to cover your specific needs, including flares, treatments for frostbite or snake bites, and the like.

In addition to standard materials, all kits should contain Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan and emergency telephone numbers (which you can get from Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan staff). Girl Scout activity insurance forms, parent consent forms, and health histories may be included, as well.

Procedures for Accidents

Although you hope the worst never happens, you must observe Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan procedures for handling accidents and fatalities. At the scene of an accident, first provide all possible care for the sick or injured person. Follow established Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan procedures for obtaining medical assistance and immediately reporting the emergency. **The emergency contact phone number during business hours is 800-497-2688; after hours the phone number is 989-399-7299.**

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

In the event of a fatality or other serious accident, notify the police. A responsible adult must remain at the scene at all times. In the case of a fatality, do not disturb the victim or surroundings. Follow police instructions. **Do not share information about the accident with anyone (including the media and the family of the victim) but the police and Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan,** and, if applicable, insurance representatives or legal counsel.

Computer/Online Safety Social Media Policy

GIRL SCOUTS HEART OF MICHIGAN SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR GIRLS AND VOLUNTEERS

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan (GSHOM) recognizes that the Internet provides unique opportunities to participate in interactive discussions and share information using a wide variety of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter and blogs. However, use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. To assist our girls and volunteers in making responsible decisions about their use of social media, we have established these guidelines for appropriate use of social media.

Generally, the same laws, professional expectations and guidelines for interacting with Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan staff, volunteers and girl members apply online as in other communications and face-to-face situations. Ultimately girls and volunteers are responsible for what they post on any social media format.

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan's guidelines are as follows:

- Do not post statements, photographs, video, or audio that could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening; intimidating; disparaging of other girls or volunteers or Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan; or that could be considered harassing or bullying. Examples of inappropriate postings include, but are not limited to: offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation; posts that could contribute to the creation of a hostile girl/volunteer environment; posts that contain threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct; or include characteristics protected by law or Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan policy.
- Girls and volunteers are prohibited from acting as official representatives of Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan and making public statements on behalf of Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan unless they have received prior permission. If girls and volunteers identify themselves as being a part of Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan they should make clear that the views they express are their own and do not necessarily reflect the views of Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan.
- Girls and volunteers are prohibited from misappropriating the Girl Scout trademark or any Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan logos, letterhead, or written information. Committing any other acts in violation of any local, state or federal law is prohibited.

Girls and volunteers with Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan do not retain privacy or ownership with regard to the use of social media owned and operated by Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan.

Understand the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge

In order to make sure that girls are aware of how to safely use the Internet, you should discuss online safety issues with the girls and distribute copies of the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge (the pledge is available at the end of this document and at www.girlscouts.org). The girls should also take a copy of the pledge home and go over it with their parents. Both the girl and her parent should sign the pledge.

Safeguard Information

Girls must understand that the Internet is an open means of communication that anyone can access. As such, websites will often attract people other than their intended users. It is therefore imperative that any information that could jeopardize the safety and security of girls and adults not be disclosed on a website. The following measures will help to ensure girls' online safety:

- Girl Scouts should only use their first names
- A Girl Scout's last name, address, phone number, or e-mail address should never be posted.
- Always have a parent's or guardian's permission when using pictures of girls on a website. This is especially important if the girl is under 13 years old
- Do not post addresses of group meeting places, dates and times of meetings, events or trips on a website. Instead, an adult who wishes to communicate upcoming events with families of Girl Scouts should send an e-mail to the families
- Do not allow automatic posting of messages to a website. All postings to message boards, social media and guest books should have adult oversight, and be screened prior to posting live.
- Ensure that websites do not show personal e-mail addresses of girls, but use a troop, group or adult's e-mail.

Setting Up a Troop Website

Please adhere to guidelines found at gshom.org, to ensure the girls' safety. These guidelines are written for adult volunteers, older girls, and others considering developing a Web page or "home page" for a troop or group in Girl Scouts. Although there is some "how to do it" information, the guidelines are not meant to lead you through the construction process. We leave that to the experts. We suggest that you find someone who knows the technical and legal aspects of Web construction, and someone who is capable of making it a learning experience for girls.

Information posted to the Internet on a Web page can be read by people all over the world. Therefore, safety and how you represent yourselves as Girl Scouts should be the guiding principal of any Web-based endeavor, even if your information is password protected. This includes issues of privacy, language use, sponsorship, links, and use of any kind of copyrighted material (writing, music, brand images, and pictures).

Is a Web Page Right for Your Troop or Group?

Before you and the girls design a website, remember that the web is an open forum for anyone, including potential predators. Documented instances of cyber stalkers make it imperative that any information that could jeopardize the safety and security of girls and adults is not disclosed on a website.

Daisies: Stay Especially Safe!

Girl Scout Daisies are too young to be marketing online through their troop, parent or guardian websites, or social media sites. For this reason, Girl Scout Daisies are allowed to send out emails only when working directly with an adult. Daisies and their adult volunteers must use only blind emails or the online marketing tools provided by GSUSA product vendors on their websites.

Product Program Safety

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan Product Program, which includes Treats & Reads as well as cookies, give girls proven opportunities to earn money and/or credits for their Girl Scout program activities. These programs also contribute significantly to the girls' local councils and communities through take-action projects. In order to ensure the emotional and physical safety and well-being of girls, which is always a top priority in any activity, you need to read and understand the following guidelines.

Prepare Early

Communicate with Parents

Ensure that the parents/guardians of all girls participating in product programs are fully informed about the activity including the:

- Safety precautions in place
- Need for appropriate clothing and/or supplies
- Need for advance arrangements for all transportation and confirmation of these plans
- Need for written permission from them in order for their daughter to participate
- Location of designated sale areas, which are also communicated to Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan

Communicate with Your Local Police Department

Establish a relationship with your local Police Department to determine any support they may be able to provide during product programs, especially those related to cookie booths, and any safety precautions they might suggest. While Police Departments vary from state to state and city to city, many of them have resources such as:

- School Resource Officers who have specific training for communicating with young people
- Community Volunteers who may be able to assist by being present during Nut Huts and Cookie Booths

Police departments can also provide information on areas and addresses to avoid, as well as access to known sex offender registries.

Prepare for Emergencies

Regardless of the type of activity, you need to be prepared for emergencies involving girls or other adults. This should include having a first aid kit always available and making sure that if someone is injured and needs help, that one adult cares for the injured person while another adult seeks help.

Arrange for Adult Supervision

Adults provide supervision and guidance for all grade levels, and must accompany Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors when they are selling, taking orders for or delivering products. Adults must be present at booth activities, regardless of the age of the girls (see also the section "Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need").

Adults who oversee Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors must:

- Be aware of how, when and where the girls are selling products
- Be on call when girls are participating in product programs
- Be readily available to them should they need assistance
- Help girls understand how to be safe in their surroundings, and always enforce the use of the buddy system

Adult supervision for all Girl Scouts extends to any online activity. Consult the “Computer/Online Use” Safety Activity Checkpoints for specific information about safe online practices for all activities, and to obtain a copy of the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge. For more information about marketing the Product Program online, please see Chapter 5: Managing Troop Finances.

Plan for Safeguarding Money

Girls should always have a plan for safeguarding money, which includes such things as:

- Not walking around with large amounts of money
- Keeping the cash box against a wall or behind a barrier of cookie boxes
- Not keeping money at home or school
- Giving cookie money to supervising adults, who will deposit the money as soon as possible

Use the Buddy System

Using the buddy system, girls are divided into teams of two. Each girl is responsible for staying with her buddy at all times, warning her buddy of danger, giving her buddy immediate assistance if safe to do so, and seeking help when the situation warrants it. Girls are encouraged to stay near the group or buddy with another team of two, so in the event someone is injured, one person cares for the patient while two others seek help.

Be Streetwise and Follow Your Instincts

In order to ensure the safety of girls while selling door-to-door, you and the girls should become familiar with the areas and neighborhoods in which girls would like to sell. In addition, girls should:

- Participate in door-to-door sales only during daylight hours
- Wear a membership pin, uniform, or Girl Scout clothing (e.g., Girl Scout T-shirt) to clearly identify themselves as Girl Scouts.
- Avoid a house or person that makes them uncomfortable. They should walk away and find the next person/place that does not make them uncomfortable
- Call 9-1-1 if they see someone that seems to be acting in a way that makes them feel unsafe. This could include, but is not limited to, any person who is staring at them for long periods, seems to be following them for no apparent reason or takes pictures of the them
- Use safe pedestrian practices, such as crossing at corners and obeying walk signals
- Not enter the home or vehicle of a stranger, and to avoid selling to people in vehicles (except at drive-thru cookie booths) or going into alleys
- Not carry large amounts of money (see “Plan for Safeguarding Money” above)

Nut Huts and Cookie Booths

Nut huts/cookie booths are a traditional and fun way of selling our products. Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan approves and facilitates nut huts/cookie booth locations. You must follow all of Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan’s guidelines with regard to setting up, manning, and taking down a booth.

Once you’ve gotten council approval, check out the booth site before the day of the sale. Talk to business owners in the area so they’ll know what to expect. Find out what security measures are in place—these may include lights for evening sales and whether a security camera watches the booth area—and where the nearest bathrooms are located. In addition, review the Girl Scout Product Program Safety Activity Checkpoints to make sure you and the girls are as prepared as possible.

When setting up nut huts/cookie booths, it's important that:

- Adults are present at all times
- Girls make **all** sales, except in cases where adults are helping Daisies handle money.
- There is adequate space at the booth for table, products and girls and to allow safe passage by pedestrians, bikes and cars.
- Girls are a safe distance from cars. If possible, set up a safety barrier between cars and the booth—perhaps a few volunteers could park their cars in spaces near the booth location
- The booth is not blocking a store entrance or exit
- Attract customers with colorful signs. Remind girls to be polite and to have their sales pitch ready for interested shoppers.
- Report any suspicious people in the area to local security
- Girls and adults do not confront or engage an irate customer, but call local authorities for assistance

If someone takes money or product from your booth, **do not** attempt to physically recover the stolen items and **do not** allow the girls to do so. Instead, get a good description of the offender(s), call 911, and alert local security (if applicable). Make sure girls know what to do in case of theft. Report any incidents to Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan.

For additional information about setting up a booth and safety and security suggestions, consult Girl Scout Heart of Michigan guidelines.

Safety in Technology Based Sales

Girl Scouts use the Internet for a variety of reasons including the online marketing and sale of approved Girl Scout related products. Below are some key points to keep in mind for all online sales and marketing:

- Girls must read, understand and accept the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge, prior to conducting any online sales or marketing activities, which is available at the end of the [Computer/Online Use: Safety Activity Checkpoints](#)
- Girls may send e-mail messages to alert friends and relatives about product sales and accept customer commitments via email
- Social media sites may be used to market product, however, all applicable GSUSA and council guidelines must be followed
- Girls writing product e-mails or announcements online should sign with their first names only, their troop/group number or name and their council name.
- Personal e-mails or street addresses of girls should never be used. Instead, use one of the following:
 - A blind return address account where the girls' name or personal e-mail is not revealed to the customer and is instead hosted on a secure site
 - A group account, monitored by an adult
 - An adult's e-mail account, which is supervised by that adult
- . Girls should never arrange in-person meetings with online contacts, other than to deliver cookies and only with the approval and accompaniment of a parent or designated adult.

You Witness or Experience Abuse

Sexual advances, improper touching, and sexual activity of any kind with girl members are forbidden. Physical, verbal and emotional abuse of girls is also forbidden. All states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands have statutes identifying persons who are **required** to report suspected child abuse to an appropriate agency. Therefore, if you witness or suspect child abuse or neglect, whether inside or outside of Girl Scouting, follow Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan's guidelines (found in Chapter 1) for reporting your concerns to the proper agency within your state.

For additional information please check the following resources:

- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Child Welfare Information Gateway:
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/can/>
- How to Report Suspected Child Maltreatment: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/responding/how.cfm>
- Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect:
https://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/manda.cfm

Chapter 5: Managing Troop Finances

Helping girls earn and manage money is an integral part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Your Girl Scout troop is responsible for planning and financing its own activities, with your guidance. This puts girls in charge, giving them the opportunity (with your oversight) to cooperatively set goals, manage a budget, spend responsibly; maintain records; earn social skills; and develop good marketing, entrepreneurial, math, and financial skills.

Girl Scout troops are funded by a share of money earned through Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan-sponsored Girl Scout cookie and Treats & Reads programs, council-approved troop money-earning activities, and any dues your troop may charge. This is in addition to the \$15 annual membership dues that go to the national organization. This chapter gives you the ins and outs of establishing a troop account, helping girls manage their troop finances, practice successful product-program techniques, review the safety requirements around product programs, and understand how to collaborate with sponsors and causes.

For information and guidance on safety related to product program, see Chapter 4: Safety Guidelines.

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan Troop and Area Finance Policies and Procedures

Ownership of Assets

"All money and other assets, including property, that are raised, earned or otherwise received in the name of and for the benefit of Girl Scouting must be held and authorized by a Girl Scout council or Girl Scouts of the USA. Such money and other assets must be used for the purposes of Girl Scouting. They are the property of and are administered by the Girl Scout council or Girl Scouts of the USA and shall not be sold, given, transferred, or conveyed to a third party for less than fair market value. Such assets are not the property of individuals, troops, geographic units, subordinate units, or communities within a Girl Scout council."

GSUSA Policy from the Blue Book of Basic Documents 2015, page 21

Who pays for Girl Scouting?

The girl's family typically pays for annual membership registration dues, troop dues, uniform and insignia, transportation, resident or day camp fees. Each family is encouraged to support Family Partnership, the cookie and Treats & Reads product programs. These programs help to fund the troop.

The troop treasury may pay for: materials for troop programs, supplies and equipment for basic troop operation, all required trainings for troop adults, pins, patches and recognitions awarded by the troop, expenses related to outings, campouts, and trips. The troop is encouraged to vote to set aside funds to pay for a portion or all of the annual membership registration dues.

Troop Dues and Activity Fees

Policy

Girls must never be excluded from Girl Scouting because they have not paid troop dues. Girls cannot be discriminated against based on their family's ability to pay or their level of participation in product programs.

The girls, with adult troop leaders' guidance, decide if the troop will collect troop dues, and if so, how much they will be. Girls bring the troop dues to the meeting. This helps them learn responsibility, and helps them to see where the money comes from for their activities. If troop dues do not cover all the costs involved in troop activities, troops may collect program fees from families for girls to participate.

Troop dues should be kept as low as possible so girls are able to pay their share. Dues are determined based on the troop's estimated annual budget. If the amount turns out to be too high or too low, the girls should be allowed to decide to change the amount of weekly dues.

Girls should receive the best program that the troop can afford each year. Be careful about saving money for activities several years away. In today's mobile society, troop membership changes continuously. If the current troop program is hindered in order to save money for the future, the girls do not receive the full benefit of Girl Scouting now. It is entirely appropriate to save some money to be used to re-register the troop members for the next year, and to carry the troop through the fall.

Parents/guardians have a right to know what happens to troop money. Troop treasury records should be available to parents at any time. They must be kept up to date and accurate. Parents also need to know that once money is received by the troop treasury, it no longer belongs to individual girls.

Budgeting

Policy

It is recommended and appropriate to budget some troop funds to be used to re-register the troop members for the next year.

Learning about responsible decision making begins with girls deciding what they will do, where they will go, and how they will pay for it. Through planning and budgeting, girls will set goals and plan how their level of participation in the cookie program and the Treats and Reads program will help them reach their goals.

The Girl Scout program should not be expensive for girls or a financial burden for families. As girls participate in Girl Scouting, they learn to manage money wisely. One of the unique components of Girl Scouting is the importance placed on girl/adult planning and decision-making. Girl Scout Troop Leaders guide girls in deciding, carrying-out and evaluating program activities. The troop budget, built on dues and proceeds from the annual Girl Scout product programs, should cover normal troop expenses.

Each troop supports its activities through several means: troop dues, activity fees, troop sponsors, **approved** money earning projects, the Treats & Reads product program, and the cookie program. All troop activities should be planned for, budgeted for and paid for with troop funds.

Policy

The income from troop money-earning activities never becomes the property of individual members—girls or adults.

Troop funds belong to the troop as a whole and not to individual members of the troop and should not be prorated by girl. However, Cadette, Senior and Ambassador Girl Scouts may designate money earned by individuals for special activities such as a trip or service project. At the end of the program year, or upon completion of the activity, this record-keeping system must be dissolved into the troop treasury from which it was generated.

Disbanded Troops

When a troop disbands, a Disbanded Troop Report must be completed by the troop leader and turned in to the Girl Scout Area Manager and Membership Specialist. Prior to disbanding, the troop may decide to donate any unused funds to a worthwhile organization, to another troop, to the Area or Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan. If girls from the disbanded troop are joining other troops, the funds can be divided proportionately and given to the appropriate troops the girls are joining. Remaining funds of the disbanded troop shall be turned in to the Area Treasurer. Such funds may be returned to the troop if it is reorganized within one year. After one year, the unclaimed troop funds shall be entered into the Area Treasury and the Area can determine the most appropriate use of the funds. The troop bank account must be closed by the troop leader after all checks and other debits have cleared the account.

Troop Bank Accounts

Policy

All troops are required to have a troop checking account. All monies received in the name of the troop must be deposited in the troop checking account. Troops/Groups and Areas must use the council Federal Tax ID number for opening all bank accounts.

In conjunction with the troop treasurer, the troop leader is responsible for the safekeeping of funds and accurate financial records. Signers on the troop checking accounts are liable in case of fraudulent use of the account. Therefore, record all transactions, channel all funds through the troop checking account, and keep all receipts in case questions arise.

The troop leader or troop treasurer completes an Annual Troop Financial Report and submits it with the most recent bank statement to the area manager or membership specialist by June 1 each year. The forms needed to complete the Annual Troop Financial Report can be found on gshom.org. Begin utilizing the check book register as soon as the troop starts having financial activity.

Opening an Account

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan utilizes Chemical Bank for its corporate banking needs. It is recommended that troops use the bank designated by their Girl Scout Area Management Team and/or Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan. The Area Management Team will work with Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan staff to designate banks. Girl Scout troop accounts **must** be opened under Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan's name and tax identification number/EIN.

- All accounts must be named "GSHOM Troop # ____."
- Accounts remain the property of Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan; therefore individual names or addresses cannot be printed on the checks
- Troop accounts require the names and signatures of at least two and up to three registered and unrelated adults, one of which must be a member of the Area Management Team.
- Any adult that handles funds for a Girl Scout troop must submit to a background check.
- Any adult that handles funds for a Girl Scout troop must register as a member of Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan including troop leader, co-leader, treasurer, product program manager and any troop committee member who will handle funds (the registration fee can be paid for with troop funds).
- The Authorization to Open and Hold a Troop/Unit Bank Account form is available from the membership specialist for your Girl Scout Area. Once completed, one copy must be sent to the address listed on the bottom of the form.
- Troop accounts are not to have credit cards but debit cards are acceptable.

Leader Financial Responsibilities

As a troop leader/co-leader, you are responsible for all of the financial activities of the troop. You are **required** to keep accurate records, submit reports on time and maintain the troop checking account. Here are some tips to help you in this important role:

- Each troop must turn in an Authorization to Open and Hold a Troop/Unit Bank Account form at the time of opening the account and any time there are changes in the signees.
- All adults who handle troop monies **must** be registered Girl Scouts who have passed the background check. This includes troop product program managers and any adults who take in or spend money on behalf of the troop.
- Save receipts for all purchases. We suggest keeping them in a large manila envelope labeled with the current membership year so they are available when it comes time to submit the Annual Troop Financial Report.
- Save all bank statements, deposit slips and cancelled checks or the duplicate copies.
- Annual Troop Financial Reports **must** be submitted by June 1 each year.
- Troop financial records are randomly selected by Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan for auditing three times a year. Troop leaders will be notified by mail if their troop records have been selected for audit and are required to submit the requested information within the timeframe specified in the letter.

Do's and Don'ts for Your Troop Checkbook

- **DO** record every transaction in the checkbook register **as soon as it occurs**, and calculate the balance so that you always have an accurate record.
- **DO** use the electronic checkbook register form provided with the Annual Troop Finance Report, as it will calculate the register balance and update the Annual Troop Finance Report as entries are made.
- **DO** reconcile the checkbook upon receiving the monthly bank statement. Keep **all** bank statements for three years.
- **DO** keep every receipt for every purchase. We suggest writing the check number on every receipt for easy tracking.
- **DO** make sure your deposits for the product programs equal the amount of product sold.
- **DO** keep the girls informed of the account balance and the income and expenses. When the girls are mature enough, involve them with balancing the checkbook. This teaches them valuable lessons in money management.
- **DON'T** write checks out for "Cash" or endorse checks to yourself. This is a big "red flag" when the accounts are monitored.
- **DON'T** round-up your check, or write a check for more than the amount of the purchase. This is also a "red flag."
- **DON'T** allow parents to be late with payments for the product programs.
- **DON'T** pay for parent's outstanding monies for product program from troop funds.
- **DO** complete and return the Outstanding Money Report along with the signed Permission and Responsibility Forms, as well as, any receipts signed by the parent/guardian who has not fulfilled their agreement for participation in the product program.
- **DON'T** ever use your own personal money to pay for troop activities and **NEVER** use troop funds for personal expenses. All troop activities must be paid for out of troop funds.

Collections

Policy

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan Council will pursue collection of all delinquent accounts and non-collectible checks received for goods and services rendered to Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan and/or its sub-units to the fullest extent of the law.

Any Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan operational volunteer who has outstanding debts to Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan and/or its' sub-units for products or services rendered, non-collectible checks, or has embezzled or misappropriated Girl Scout funds which require external collection procedures will be permanently released of all volunteer responsibilities.

Any Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan operational volunteer who writes a check from their troop/group or Area account that is returned for any reason is personally responsible for all fees and charges associated with that check. This includes debit card transactions. Troop/group or Area funds cannot be used to satisfy the fees or charges. An operational volunteer may be removed from the troop/group or Area account for writing insufficient funds checks. Other action may also be taken in regards to the volunteer's appointed position.

Money-Earning

Policy

Girl Scout Troops/Groups are able to earn money in two ways:

- 1. Council-sponsored product programs - Sales of Girl Scout authorized products such as Girl Scout cookies, Treats and Reads.*
- 2. Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan approved troop/group money-earning projects - Activities organized by the troop/group that are planned and carried out by girls (in partnership with adults). Participation in both council sponsored product programs is required for approval of additional money earning projects. Girl Scout Daisy troops may only participate in council sponsored product programs.*

Girls' participation in both Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan-sponsored product program activities and group money-earning projects is based upon the following:

- Voluntary participation
- Written permission of each girl's parent or guardian
- An understanding of (and ability to explain clearly to others) why the money is needed
- An understanding that money-earning should not exceed what the group needs to support its activities
- Observance of local ordinances related to involvement of children in money-earning activities, as well as health and safety laws
- Vigilance in protecting the personal safety of each girl (see Chapter 4 for guidance)
- Arrangements for safeguarding the money

There are a few specific guidelines—some required by the Internal Revenue Service—that ensure that sales are conducted with legal and financial integrity. To that end, consider the following reminders and cautions:

- All rewards earned by girls through the product program activities must support Girl Scout program experiences (such as camp, travel, and program events, but not scholarships or financial credits toward outside organizations).

- Rewards are based on sales ranges set by councils and may not be based on a dollar-per-dollar calculation.
- Troops and Groups are encouraged to participate in council product program as their primary money-earning activity; any group money-earning shouldn't compete with the Girl Scout Cookie Program or Treats and Reads.
- Obtain written approval from Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan before a group money-earning event. This means to complete and submit a money-earning application to your membership specialist one month prior to the event.
- Girls can collect partial payment towards the purchase of a package of Girl Scout Cookies and Treats and Reads products through participation in Girl Scout Heart of Michigan approved product program donation programs.
- Group money-earning activities need to be suited to the age and abilities of the girls and consistent with the principles of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.
- Money earned is for Girl Scout activities and is not to be retained by individuals. Funds acquired through group money-earning projects must be reported and accounted for by the group, while following Girl Scout Heart of Michigan procedures.

Other money earning activities may include:

Collections/Drives:

- Cell phones for refurbishment
- Used ink cartridges turned in for money
- Christmas tree recycling

Food/M meal Events:

- Lunch box auction (prepared lunch or meal auctioned off)
- Themed meals, like high tea, Indian meal, Mexican dinner (if girls are earning money for travel, tie the meal to their destination)

Service(s):

- Service-a-thon (people sponsor a girl doing service; funds go to support trip)
- Babysitting for holiday (New Year's Eve) or area events
- Raking leaves, weeding, cutting grass, shoveling snow, walking pets
- Cooking class or other specialty class

Policy

Girl Scout troops/groups may NOT earn money with product demonstration parties, raffles, drawings, games of chance, the direct solicitation of cash, the sale or endorsement of commercial products or participating in the sale of alcohol in any manner.

Other ideas can be submitted for consideration. You should call your area manager or membership specialist while you are in the planning stages for the money-earning project.

As ideas begin to gel, use the tips in the "Helping Girls Reach Their Financial Goals" section of Volunteer Essentials to facilitate an age-appropriate, girl-led planning session. The girls **must** be involved in planning all the details of the money-earning project. Be sure to review the safety guidelines with the girls for any event or money-earning project in which they participate.

Policy

Girl Scouts (girls or adults) are not allowed, when identifying themselves as Girl Scouts (such as wearing a uniform, a sash or vest, official pins, and so on) or as part of a Girl Scout activity to solicit money on behalf of another organization or individuals.

Avoid fundraising for other organizations. This includes raising funds in events like Relay for Life, Hunger Walks, or bell ringing for Salvation Army. You and your troop/group can, however, support another organization through take-action projects or by making a donation from your troop/group's account.

Policy

Girl Scout troops and areas may not solicit funds from foundations, United Ways, or other entities, including businesses or organizations, that require 501(c)(3) documentation.

Girl Scout Areas may conduct money-earning projects. The same policies and procedures apply for these money-earning projects as for a troop. Money-earning applications must be submitted in advance to your membership specialist, using this same form and instructions.

After the troop/group has made a decision regarding their money-earning project, complete the Troop/Group money earning application and submit it to your membership specialist at least one month prior to the planned money-earning activity.

Sponsorship of Girl Scout Troops

Troop sponsorship is a voluntary agreement between a Girl Scout troop and a local entity such as a local business, school, place of worship, community group or person. Sponsorship is open to supporters whose aims and objectives are compatible with the Girl Scout Promise and Law. The primary purpose of securing a sponsor is to gain support for the Girl Scout program within the community.

What a Girl Scout Troop May Do for the Sponsor

- Keep the sponsor informed of Girl Scout activities and needs
- Perform one or more service projects for the sponsor
- Recognize and publicize the sponsor's contributions to the troop
- A certificate is available for the troop to customize and present to the sponsor in appreciation of their support
- Nominate the sponsor for a Friend of Girl Scouting award

What the Sponsor May Do for the Troop

- Provide appropriate meeting space
- Consult and/or assist troops with program activities
- Help troops find necessary adult leadership
- Provide resources for troop activities and events
- Provide or suggest service project opportunities for the troop
- Offer other means of support including supplies, equipment, membership fees, dues, or in-kind materials

The Troop Sponsorship Agreement

The Troop Sponsorship Agreement form must be completed and signed by both the sponsor and the troop leader (follow the Troop Sponsorship Agreement Instructions). Completed copies of the form must be provided to the troop, the sponsor and to the your membership specialist. Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan is a nonprofit 501(c) (3) tax-exempt organization. Troops, groups or other entities are not included under this nonprofit status and direct donations of any amount directly to troops/groups/areas are not tax-deductible.

Project Sponsorship

A project can be any experience, activity, opportunity, or event that is **planned by girls** in partnership with adults that furthers the Girl Scout Leadership Experience of the girls involved. The primary purpose of project sponsorship is to secure the commitment and involvement of a community entity in a joint venture that will provide greater opportunities for girls to develop skills in their area of interest. Projects may include: the “take action” segment of an age-level Journey; a Bronze, Silver or Gold Award planned by a troop or individual; high adventure experiences requiring special instruction and equipment; trips; environmental impact projects; etc. Project sponsorship offers positive visibility and identity in the community. It gives the sponsor the chance to interact with and benefit local youth. Projects are limited only by the energies, enthusiasm and imagination of their initiators.

Collaborating with Sponsors and Other Organizations

Sponsors help Girl Scout councils ensure that all girls in the community have an opportunity to participate in Girl Scouting. Community organizations, businesses, religious organizations, and individuals may be sponsors and may provide troop meeting places, volunteer their time, offer in-kind donations, provide activity materials, or loan equipment. The sponsor’s contribution can then be recognized by arranging for the girls to send thank-you cards, inviting the sponsor to a meeting or ceremony, or working together on a Take Action project.

For information on working with a sponsor, consult Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan; it can give you guidance on the availability of sponsors, recruiting responsibility, and any council policies or practices that must be followed. Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan may already have relationships with certain organizations, or may know of some reasons **not** to collaborate with certain organizations. When collaborating with any other organization, keep these additional guidelines in mind:

- **Steering clear of political fundraisers:** When in an official Girl Scout capacity or in any way identifying yourselves as Girl Scouts, your group may not participate (directly or indirectly) in any political campaign or work on behalf of or in opposition to a candidate for public office. Letter-writing campaigns are not allowed, nor is participating in a political rally, circulating a petition, or carrying a political banner.
- **Being respectful when collaborating with religious organizations:** Girl Scout groups must respect the opinions and practices of religious partners, but no girl should be required to take part in any religious observance or practice of the sponsoring group.

Fundraising

Solicitation of Gifts

“Adult members in their Girl Scout capacities may not solicit financial contributions for purposes other than Girl Scouting. Adults may engage in combined fundraising efforts authorized by the Girl Scout council and in which the local council is a beneficiary. Girl members may not engage in any direct solicitation for money”.

GSUSA Policy from the Blue Book of Basic Documents 2015, Solicitation of Contributions, page 21.

Fundraising – Supports Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan

Fundraising is the responsibility of adults. Fundraising involves appealing to the public to contribute funds to support the overall program and activities of the organization. We look to the community for contributions through individuals, foundations, local businesses, program income through product program, and United Ways. The goal of Fund Development in Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan is to diversify and increase income generated with a broad-based adult effort, which will support current and long-term fiscal stability. Methods used for adult-generated fund development include but are not limited to: Annual Giving Campaign, Family Partnership, Financial Assistance/Campership Funding, Foundations and Grants, Honor and Memorial Gifts, Planned Giving, Gifts-In-Kind, United Way, and Special Events.

Donations to Troops/Groups/Areas

Policy

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan is the only authorized entity to receive contributions, regardless of value, form or designated use that requires a 501(c)(3) number. Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan is a tax-exempt entity, incorporated in the state and designated as a 501(c)(3) organization and operates in compliance with the State of Michigan's License to Solicit Charitable Contributions. Troops/groups and Areas are sub-units of Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan and do not have 501(c)(3) status. Gifts made directly to troops/groups or Areas are not tax deductible.

Donations and Contributions

Funds received may be designated for a specific purpose at the council level or for use by a specific area.

Policy

Products, services, or gift items may not be solicited for the purpose of generating income for a troop/group or Area. Donations to support troop or area activities should be requested from small, local and independently owned community businesses. Large, multi-unit companies, groups and organizations or their local branches may not be solicited. Mass solicitation is not allowed. Acceptance of contributions is not allowed where the council tax ID number, IRS determination letter or letterhead request is required. Girls may not engage in the direct solicitation of goods or services.

Grants

Policy

Grants and United Way requests for funds are not allowed by troops, groups, Areas, adult volunteers and girls.

Opportunities for grant funding are to be referred to the Fund Development Department.

Corporate Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan Volunteer Awards

Many companies provide charitable contributions to non-profit organizations where employees volunteer their time. Guidelines vary by company and most often require that the Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan CEO sign all applications for awards of this nature. Corporate volunteer rewards contributions are acknowledged, accepted, and utilized by the incorporated organization.

Store Loyalty Rewards

Retail stores sometimes encourage collecting paid receipts for items purchased at their stores and rebate a portion of the submitted receipts to groups or organizations. Troops are able to participate in this type of program if store rebate program rules do not require 501(c)(3) status for the troop. Troops need to keep a

copy of receipts for troop purchases made through the troop account. Troops or girls should not actively promote or advertise shopping at any specific store. Follow the guidelines for Money-Earning Projects.

Fundraising and Tax Exemption

Overview

Council 501(c) (3) Status as related to Tax Exemption for Michigan Sales Tax

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan is a corporation that has 501(c)(3) non-profit status as determined by the Internal Revenue Service of the United States Government. This status exempts Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan from federal income taxes. This status also requires Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan to be audited and complete file an IRS form 990 on an annual basis.

Policy

Troops/Groups and Areas do not have 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation status

Troops/Groups and Areas are subordinate units of the Girl Scout Council and are the property of the Girl Scout Council. All assets (both cash and physical) held by Girl Scout Troops/Groups and Units are owned by the Girl Scout Council. Troops are subject to sales and use taxes at the state level. Girl Scout Troops/Groups and Areas of Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan Council will pay sales tax on all purchases including those made in any Council Shop.

There are two distinct taxing authorities in this situation. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is the taxing authority of the Federal government, and the Michigan Department of Treasury is the taxing authority of the State government. The IRS allows council and troop level exemption of federal income taxes. As a result, troops are allowed to use Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan's 501(c)(3) number when opening bank accounts for their troops. The Michigan Department of Treasury allows exemption of income taxes at the council and troop level. Troops are once again in compliance when opening a bank account. The Sales and Use division of the Michigan Department of Treasury does not allow exemption at the troop level. Some cities and counties have taxing authorities, and the council is often subject to those taxes as well.

Troops/Groups and Areas must use the council Federal Tax ID number for opening all bank accounts. This allows the bank to report interest income earned by Troops/ Groups and Areas to the IRS. Troop/Group and Area Bank accounts are exempt from paying Federal income tax on interest income when they use the council tax ID number to identify the Troop/Group or Area bank account as owned by the council.

Michigan Sales Tax

Girl Scout Troops/Groups or Areas may not use the Council Federal Tax Identification number to obtain exemption from State of Michigan Sales Tax. State of Michigan Law grants sales tax exemption only to 501(c)(3) organizations. ***Troops/Groups and Areas do not have 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation status.*** Troop leaders and other volunteers must not ask for or use a sales tax exemption for purchases made for the Troop/ Group or Area.

Federal Tax ID or EIN Numbers

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan Council Troop/ Groups and Areas do not need and should not apply for a tax ID or Employer Identification Number (EIN). Having an EIN or tax ID number does not grant or imply tax exempt status. If you have an EIN send a letter requesting the closing of your account to: Internal Revenue Service, Attn: EO Entity, Mail Stop 6273, Ogden, Utah 84201 or fax it to 801620-3249. State the reason you wish to close the account. If you have a copy of the EIN assignment notice that was issued include that when you write. Include legal name of entity, the EIN and the mailing address.

* Areas must adhere to the same guidelines and policies as troops do for their treasury/events/accounts/money earning projects.

Understanding the Girl Scout Cookie Program

Did you know that the Girl Scout Cookie Program is the largest girl-led business in the country, with sales of more than \$700 million per year for girls and their communities nationwide?

That's right. The Girl Scout Cookie program is the leading entrepreneurial program for girls: no university has produced as many female business owners as the Girl Scout Cookie Program has.

If you have a moment, watch the latest Girl Scout [What Can a Cookie Do?](#) video for an inspiring look into just how powerful those treats—and the girls who sell them—can be.

Council-sponsored product programs are really the best way for girls to earn money to pursue their goals: the sales are beloved by the community and come with program, sales, and marketing materials and support that help girls run a great business. And they're an integral part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. With every season of cookies, another generation of girls learns five important skills:

- Goal setting
- Decision making
- Money management
- People skills
- Business ethics

And most of all, girls gain a tremendous amount of confidence. It's not easy to ask people to buy something—you have to speak up, look them in the eye, and believe in what you're doing—all skills that help a girl succeed now and throughout the rest of her life.

Before beginning any cookies or other product sales with your group, refer to the cookies section of [Girl Scout Central](#) and www.girlscoutcookies.org.

A Sweet Tradition

It has been more than 90 years since Girl Scouts began selling home-baked cookies to raise money. The idea was so popular that, in 1936, Girl Scouts enlisted bakers to handle the growing demand. For more on Girl Scout Cookie History, visit http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_cookies/history.asp.

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

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan's Role

Each year, Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan provides learning opportunities on the procedures to follow during each sale. Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan also establishes guidelines and procedures for conducting the program and determines how the proceeds and recognition system will be managed.

Knowing Where Proceeds Go

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan will provide a breakdown of “how the cookie crumbles” in Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan during the Cookie Program season in each region. Share this information with girls and their parents/guardians. Proceeds resulting from product program support program activities—in fact, council-sponsored product programs are a primary way in which Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan funds itself. The percentage of money to be allocated to participating troops (like yours) is determined by Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan and explained to girls and adults as part of the product program activity orientation.

The income from product program does not become the property of individual girl members. Girls, however, may be eligible for rewards and credits that they put toward Girl Scout activities, such as camp, travel, Take Action projects, and Girl Scout membership dues for the next year.

Girls may earn official Girl Scout grade-appropriate rewards and recognitions related to product program activities, and each council may choose to provide items such as participation patches, rewards, and council credit for event fees, camp fees, grants for travel and Take Action projects, as well as materials and supplies for program activities. Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan’s plan for recognition applies equally to all girls participating in the product program activity. Whenever possible, Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan involves girls in the selection of awards and administration of money given to girls from product program.

One critical task for each troop is to keep excellent records and establish a clear accounting system for all money earned and spent. As the troop’s volunteer, you’re in charge of making sure money is spent wisely, excellent records are kept (keeping copies of all receipts in a binder or folder), and all income is tracked, too. For older girls, your job is to oversee their work, as **they** learn to keep impeccable records.

Please also keep in mind:

- Volunteers and Girl Scout council staff do not sell cookies and other products; girls sell them and they are available at our council shops after the initial sale period.
- Girl Scout Daisies (in kindergarten and first grade) may be involved in the cookie and treats and reads program activities, but they cannot collect or earn money in any other way except through troop dues or parental contributions.
- Money due for sold cookies is collected when the cookies are delivered to the customer (Treats and Reads money is collected upfront). Girls will need to know whether they can accept checks and to whom customers should write checks—find out from Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan staff.
- Personal customer information should remain private. Customer credit card information should not be collected by girls and should not be asked for on any form collected by girls.

Before beginning any cookies or other product programs with your troop, refer to www.girlscoutcookies.org.

Using Online Resources to Market Cookies and Other Products

Girls are texting, calling, emailing, Tweeting, and Facebooking—and those are all effective ways that girls 13 and older can promote cookie and treats and reads. The following sections detail how girls can use electronic marketing, social media, and troop websites to gather sale commitments from family, friends, and previous customers. Product-related email is not intended to be spam (unwanted texts or emails), so remind girls to be sure that their messages will be welcomed by the receiver.

When girls are marketing cookies online, remind them to always use a troop email address (such as troop457@yahoo.com), an adult’s personal email address, or a blind address (one that does not reveal the address to the recipient). In addition, be sure to discuss with girls the need to treat customer e-mail addresses from current and past years—as well as phone numbers, IM addresses, Facebook accounts, Twitter handles, and mail addresses—with respect; they are private and must be kept so. But first, please keep in mind that girls:

- **Can market to and collect indications of interest from customers within Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan's zip codes.** Refer prospects that come from outside council jurisdiction to Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan finder at www.girlscoutcookies.org. Family members are the exception to this rule.
- **Cannot have customers pay online** (such as through a shopping cart function on a website the girls create). Girl Scout magazine sales are the exception to this rule.
- **Must sign the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge** (available at http://www.girlscouts.org/help/internet_safety_pledge.asp) before doing any online activities, and all online activities must be under the supervision of adults.
- **Cannot expose their own or any other girl's email address, physical address, or phone number to the public.** When writing e-mail messages or online announcements, girls should sign with their first name only, along with their troop number or name and their council name.

For girls in fifth grade and above, have your troop visit [Let Me Know](http://www.girlscouts.org/help/internet_safety_pledge.asp), a site addressing Internet safety for teens and tweens. Girls can even earn an online award for completing activities on this site.

A girl (or group of girls) over the age of 13 may work in partnership with an adult to market cookies and other products online, using the social media account (such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, or LinkedIn) of the adult. Social media is a fun, fast way to get out an urgent message, such as, "It's Girl Scout cookie time!" Posting, tweeting, or pinning such a message will get the attention of friends and family.

Before girls use social media as a marketing tool, keep the following in mind:

- Girls must have parental permission to use social media.
- Girls must meet age limits set by the provider, which is 13 and above in most cases, as per the United States Child Online Privacy and Protection Act and the Child Online Protection Act.
- Any use of photos requires a photo-release form signed by parents/guardians of the girls pictured and the signature of any adults pictured.
- Any use of online video sharing sites (such as YouTube), where the video is representing Girl Scouts or Girl Scout products, must follow specific requirements for that site, as well as council guidelines. Girl Scout photo release forms must also be signed by parents/guardians and any adults pictured. (In other words, this is not an easy venture, but if you and the girls are willing, it's worth the investment.)

Helping Girls Reach Their Financial Goals

The Girl Scout Cookie Program is so well known in communities, it's likely that your girls will already know a bit about it and want to get out there to start selling as soon as possible. But it's important that the girls have a clear plan and purpose for their cookie and treats and reads activities. One of your opportunities as a volunteer is to facilitate girl-led financial planning, which may include the following steps for the girls:

1. **Set goals for money-earning activities.** What do girls hope to accomplish through this activity? In addition to earning money, what skills do they hope to build? What leadership opportunities present themselves?
2. **Create a budget.** Use a budget worksheet that includes both expenses (the cost of supplies, admission to events, travel, and so on) and available income (the troop's account balance, projected cookie proceeds, and so on).
3. **Determine how much the troop needs to earn.** Subtract expenses from available income to determine how much money your troop needs to earn.
4. **Make a plan.** The troop can brainstorm and make decisions about its financial plans. Will cookie and treats and reads—if approached proactively and energetically—earn enough money to meet the troop's goals? If not, which troop money-earning activities might offset the difference in anticipated

expense and anticipated income? Will more than one troop money-earning activity be necessary to achieve the troop's financial goals? In this planning stage, engage the girls through the Girl Scout processes (girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning) and consider the value of any potential activity. Have them weigh feasibility, implementation, and safety factors.

5. **Write it out.** Once the troop has decided on its financial plan, describe it in writing. If the plan involves a troop money-earning activity, fill out the money-earning application and submit it along with the budget worksheet the girls created to your membership specialist.

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

Reviewing Financial and Sales Abilities by Grade Level

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

Girl Scout Daisies



The troop volunteer handles money, keeps financial records, and does all troop budgeting.

Parents/guardians may decide they will contribute to the cost of activities.

Girls can participate in Girl Scout cookie activities and other council-sponsored product programs.

Daisies are always paired with an adult when selling anything. Girls do the asking and deliver the product, but adults handle the money and keep the girls secure.

Girl Scout Brownies



The troop volunteer handles money, keeps financial records, and shares some of the troop-budgeting responsibilities.

Girls discuss the cost of activities (supplies, fees, transportation, rentals, and so on).

Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product programs.

Girls may decide to pay dues.

Girl Scout Juniors



The troop volunteer retains overall responsibility for long-term budgeting and record-keeping, but shares or delegates all other financial responsibilities.

Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product programs.

Girls decide on troop dues, if any. Dues are collected by girls and recorded by a troop treasurer (selected by the girls).

Girls budget for the short-term needs of the troop, on the basis of plans and income from the troop dues.

Girls budget for more long-term activities, such as overnight trips, troop camping, and special events.

Girls budget for Take Action projects, including the Girl Scout Bronze Award, if they are pursuing it.

Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors



Girls determine the amount of troop dues (if any) and the scope of money-earning projects.

Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product programs.

Girls carry out budgeting, planning, and troop money-earning projects.

Girls budget for extended travel, Take Action projects, and leadership projects.

Girls may be involved in seeking donations for Take Action projects, with council approval.

Girls keep their own financial records and give reports to parents and troop volunteers.

Girls budget for Take Action projects, including the Girl Scout Silver or Gold Awards, if they are pursuing them.

Appendix: For Troop Volunteers

Troop Government

Many troops employ a democratic system of governance so that all members have the opportunity to express their interests and feelings and share in the planning and coordination of activities. Girls partner with you and other adults, and you facilitate, act as a sounding board, and ask and answer questions. Girls from Daisies through Ambassadors will gain confidence and leadership skills when given the opportunity to lead their activities, learn cooperatively as a group, and learn by doing instead of by observing.

The following are some traditions troops have used for girl-led governance, but these are just examples. National Leadership Journeys offer examples of team decision-making, too.

- **Daisy/Brownie Circle:** While sitting in a circle (sometimes called a ring), girls create a formal group decision-making body. The circle is an organized time for girls to express their ideas and talk about activities they enjoy, and you play an active role in facilitating discussion and helping them plan. Girls often vote to finalize decisions. If girls are talking over each other, consider passing an object, such as a talking stick, that entitles one girl to speak at a time.
- **Junior/Cadette/Senior/Ambassador Patrol or Team System:** In this system, large troops divide into small groups, with every member playing a role. Teams of four to six girls are recommended so that each girl gets a chance to participate and express her opinions. Patrols may be organized by interests or activities that feed into a Take Action project, with each team taking responsibility for some part of the total project; girls may even enjoy coming up with names for their teams.
- **Junior/Cadette/Senior/Ambassador Executive Board:** In the executive board system (also called a steering committee), one leadership team makes decisions for the entire troop. The board's responsibility is to plan activities and assign jobs based on interests and needs, and the rest of the troop decides how to pass their ideas and suggestions to the executive board throughout the year. The executive board usually has a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer and holds its own meetings to discuss troop matters. Limit the length of time each girl serves on the executive board so all troop members can participate during the year.
- **Junior/Cadette/Senior/Ambassador Town Meeting:** Under the town meeting system, business is discussed and decisions are made at meetings attended by all the girls in the troop. As in the patrol and executive board systems, everyone gets the chance to participate in decision-making and leadership. Your role is to act as a moderator, who makes sure everyone gets a chance to talk and that all ideas are considered.

Looking at a Sample Troop Year

Here is just one example of how you and the girls could set up your troop year:

- Hold a parent/guardian meeting
- Open a checking account, if needed
- Register all the girls in the troop
- Meet together for the first time, allowing the girls to decide how they can learn each others' names and find out more about each other
- Kick off a Leadership Journey with the opening ceremony recommended in the first sample session, or a trip or special event that fits the theme. Have the girls brainstorm and plan any trip or event.

- Enjoy the full Journey, including its Take Action project.
- Along the way, add in related badge activities that girls will enjoy and that will give them a well-rounded year
- Have the girls plan, budget for, and “earn and learn” in the Girl Scout Treats and Reads and Cookie Program
- Help girls plan to attend a Source event, a field trip or other travel opportunity
- Encourage girls to plan a culminating ceremony for the Journey, including awards presentations, using ideas in the Journey girls’ book and/or adult guide
- Pre-register girls for next year
- Camp out!
- Participate in a council-wide event (see The Source) with girls from around your region
- Have the girls plan and hold a bridging ceremony for girls continuing on to the next Girl Scout grade level

Reengaging Girls

The end of the troop year doesn’t have to be the end of a girls’ time with Girl Scouting, or the end of your time with girls. Some girls may no longer have time for a full-year commitment and will be unsure what’s next for them. Others won’t be able to imagine their lives without this same group of girls. Here’s how you can best reengage your troop:

- Some girls may want other options besides troops. That’s okay—Girl Scouts offers many ways to participate. Talk to girls about day and residence camp, travel opportunities, series offerings, and events Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan may offer. Older girls, especially, enjoy these shorter-term, flexible ways to be Girl Scouts.
- Some girls will be excited to bridge to the next grade-level in Girl Scouting, and will look to you for guidance on how to hold a bridging ceremony. Even if you’re not sure of your continued participation with Girl Scouts (and we hope you will find a lot of exciting ways to be involved, even if leading a troop no longer fits your life), be sure to capture their excitement and work with them as a plan a meaningful bridging ceremony.
- If you plan to stay with this troop, but some girls are bridging to the next grade level, talk to Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan about which troop they might enter next. And if you find that a troop isn’t available for these girls, work with Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan to find other options—for example, series, events, and travel!
- Talk to girls about earning their Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, or Gold Awards, which are opportunities for them to make a dramatic difference in their communities . . . and to have plenty to brag about with college admissions officers, too.

And what about you? If you want to stay with this troop, start working with them to plan their troop activities for next year. And if you’re a little worn out but are interested in staying with Girl Scouts in other, flexible ways, be sure to let Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan know how you’d like to be a part of girls’ lives in the future. Are you ready to volunteer at camp? Help organize a series or event? Take a trip? Become an area manager or area team member? The possibilities are endless!

Appendix: For Travel Volunteers

Not only do some of the most memorable moments in a Girl Scout's life happen while taking trips, but travel also offers a wealth of opportunities for girls to develop leadership skills. This appendix helps you prepare girls for local, regional, or international travel of any scope and duration.

Juliette Low World Friendship Fund

To honor Juliette Gordon Low's love of travel, of experiencing different cultures, and of making friends, Girl Scouts created the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund in 1927. Today, this fund supports girls' international travel, participation in adult learning, and attendance at other international events—any event that fosters global friendships that connect Girl Scouts and Girl Guides from 145 nations. Click [here](#) to find out more or to donate to the fund.

Traveling with Girls

Girls love trips and Girl Scouts is a great place for them to learn how to plan and take exciting trips. Travel is built on a progression of activities—that is, one activity leads to the next. Girl Scout Daisies, for example, can begin with a discovery walk. As girls grow in their travel skills and experience and can better manage the planning process, they progress to longer trips. Your Journey adult guide has a lot of other ideas about trips that bring the Journey to life. Here are some examples of the progression of events and trips in Girl Scouting's [Ladder of Leadership](#):

- **Short trips to points of interest in the neighborhood (Daisies and older):** A walk to the nearby garden or a short ride by car or public transportation to the firehouse or courthouse is a great first step for Daisies.
- **Day trip (Brownies and older):** An all-day visit to a point of historical or natural interest (bringing their own lunch) or a day-long trip to a nearby city (stopping at a restaurant for a meal)—younger girls can select locations and do much of the trip-planning, while never being too far from home.
- **Overnight trips (Brownies and older):** One (or possibly two) nights away to a state or national park, historic city, or nearby city for sightseeing, staying in a hotel, motel, or campground. These short trips are just long enough to whet their appetites, but not long enough to generate homesickness.
- **Extended overnight trips (Juniors and older):** Three or four nights camping or a stay in a hotel, motel, or hostel within the girls' home region (for example, New England, the Upper Midwest, the Southeast, the Pacific Northwest, and so on). Planning a trip to a large museum—and many offer unique opportunities for girls to actually spend the night on museum grounds—makes for an exciting experience for girls.
- **National trips (Cadettes and older):** Travel anywhere in the country, often lasting a week or more. Try to steer clear of trips girls might take with their families and consider those that offer some educational component—this often means no Disney and no cruises, but can incorporate some incredible cities, historic sites, and museums around the country.
- **International trips (Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors):** Travel around the world, often requiring one or two years of preparation; when girls show an interest in traveling abroad, contact Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan to get permission to plan the trip and download the [Global Travel Toolkit](#). Visiting one of the four [World Centers](#) is a great place to start, but also consider traveling with worldwide service organizations. Recently, girls have traveled to rural Costa Rica to volunteer

at an elementary school, to Mexico to volunteer with Habitat for Humanity, and to India to work with girls living in poverty in urban slums.

Although some girls who are in a group (for example, a troop of Cadettes) may decide to travel together, opportunities exist for girls who are not otherwise involved in Girl Scouts to get together specifically for the purpose of traveling locally, regionally, and even internationally. Girls can travel regardless of how else they are—or aren't—participating in Girl Scouting.

Using Journeys and *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* in Their Travels

Girl Scout travel is an ideal way to offer girls leadership opportunities. Encourage girls to choose one of the three series of National Leadership Journeys. The Journey's theme will give girls a way to explore leadership through their travels. Use the adult guide to incorporate activities and discussions that help girls explore the Three Keys to Leadership (Discover, Connect, and Take Action) as they plan their trip and eventually travel. Tying your trip to the topic of a Leadership Journey is a cinch. For example, if Cadette girls have chosen *MEdia*, before their trip they can read online newspapers from the area to which they're traveling—and evaluate when they arrive how well the media reflects the realities there. If Senior girls are using *SOW WHAT?*, they can plan to observe agricultural practices in other parts of the country or around the world. Ambassadors using *BLISS: Live It! Give It!* can build a trip around dreaming big—and empowering others in their community to dream big, too.

If girls also want to complete skill-building badge requirements as part of their trip, they can. The most obvious example is the Senior Traveler badge, which fits perfectly into planning a trip. In addition, girls can explore other badge topics, depending on the focus of their trip. For examples, Cadettes can explore the food in other regions or countries for their New Cuisines badge, Seniors can find out about international business customs as part of their Business Etiquette badge, and Ambassadors can work on their Photography badge while documenting their trip.

Be sure to visit the "Girl Scouting as a National Experience" chapter in this handbook to find out more about the three exciting series of Journeys and *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*. To ensure that any travel you do with girls infuses the Girl Scout Leadership Experience at every opportunity, limit your role to facilitating the girls' brainstorming and planning—but never doing the work for them. Allow the girls to lead, learn collaboratively, and learn by doing (and by making mistakes). All the while, however, provide ideas and insight, ask tough questions when you have to, and support all their decisions with enthusiasm and encouragement!

Destinations and Getaways

Girl Scout [destinations](#) and Getaways are travel opportunities for individual girls. These travel experiences range from two days to three weeks for Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors. Girls will have national and international travel event opportunities where they can be whisked to the far corners of the world to meet remarkable girls, develop leadership skills, gain confidence, and enjoy valuable learning opportunities.

With *destinations*, you can:

- Explore the Galápagos Islands
- Become an Aerospace Career Explorer
- Learn the ins and outs of Broadway with leading directors, composers, and producers
- Sample life at a World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts Center in London, India, Mexico, or Switzerland
- And much more...

Travel Progression Checklist



If your troop is thinking about travel, consider first whether the girls are mature enough to handle the trip. Determine a troop's readiness for travel by assessing the girls':

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

Seeking Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan Permission

Before most trips, you and the girls will need to obtain council permission, although Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan may not require this information for trips of one day with no overnight stay. Check our website at www.gshom.org. Encourage the girls to submit much of the information themselves, including the following:

- A detailed itinerary, including specific activities involved, mode of travel, and all dates and times
- Location and type of premises to be used
- Numbers of girls who will be participating (parental permissions must be obtained)
- Names and contact information for the adults participating
- Any other groups, organizations, consultants, or resource people who will be involved
- Participants' skill levels, if applicable (language skills, backpacking or camping experience, and so on)
- Any specialized equipment that will be used, if applicable
- Required agreements or contracts (for example, hiring a bus, use of premises)

From the Birth of Girl Scouting to the World Centers



[The Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace](#) in Savannah, Georgia, is a fantastic place for Girl Scout Juniors and older to visit. Reservations and council approval are required to take a group of girls to visit the birthplace, and most educational opportunities are booked at least a year in advance, so book early! Families and individuals, however, do not need to reserve a tour in advance.

In addition, four lodges are available in England, Mexico, Switzerland, and India for use by Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, each with hostel- or dormitory-style accommodations. The [world centers](#) are operated by WAGGGS (World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts) and offer low-cost accommodations and special programs. They are also a great way to meet Girl Guides and Girl Scouts from around the world.

Closer to home, Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan has five camps that can be rented out to troops, and one family camp available for our Girl Scout families exclusively to rent.

Involving Chaperones

To determine how many volunteer chaperones the girls will need with them on the trip refer to the adult-to-girl ratio chart in chapter 4 of this handbook. As you ask for chaperones, be sure to look for ones who are committed to:

- Being a positive role model
- Respecting all girls and adults equally, with no preferential treatment
- Creating a safe space for girls
- Prioritizing the safety of all girls

- Supporting and reinforcing a group agreement
- Handling pressure and stress by modeling flexibility and a sense of humor
- Creating an experience for and with girls
- Getting fit (appropriate to the trip)

Be sure every chaperone reviews chapter four the “Safety Guidelines” chapter.

Letting Girls Lead

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

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

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

Tips for Girls Traveling Alone

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

Staying Safe During the Trip

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

- Who her buddy is—and how the buddy system works
- What to do if she is separated from the troop, whether by accident or because of a crime
- What to do if she loses something significant: money, passport, luggage
- How to report a crime
- What to do if emergency help is needed
- How to perform basic first-aid procedures
- How to deal with a large crowd (if applicable)
- What to do in the event of a crime
- What behaviors you expect—and what consequences exist for not living up to those behaviors

Travel Security and Safety Tips

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

- Always lock the door behind you, using the deadbolt and the chain or anchor.
- Do not open the door for strangers; if hotel staff claims to be at the door, call the front desk to confirm.
- Don't mention or display your room number when in the presence of strangers.
- Never leave jewelry, cameras, electronics, cash, or credit cards in your room.
- Never leave luggage unattended in the hotel lobby (or in an airport or train or bus station).
- When arriving at the hotel, locate emergency exits.
- Keep a small flashlight on your bedside table, along with a small bag with your room key, wallet, passport, and cell phone. Take the flashlight and bag with you if you have to leave the room in an emergency.
- If a fire alarm goes off, get out as quickly as possible. Don't stop to pack your suitcase. Before leaving your room, feel the door: If it is warm, do not open it. Stay in your room and stuff towels around the door. Call the hotel operator immediately. If the door is cool, proceed slowly out the door, looking for flames or smoke. Repeat these instructions for any door you encounter.
- Contact the front desk to make sure girls' rooms are cleared of any minibars or refrigerators. Also be sure the hotel doesn't provide access to inappropriate movies on TVs and does not allow long-distance calls. Alert the hotel management that underage girls are staying in the hotel, and ask them to contact you if any girls are seen out of their rooms after bedtime.

International Travel

Traveling abroad is a great way to learn about other cultures. For more than 50 years, Girl Scouts of the USA has offered girls international travel opportunities. Girl Scouts of the USA founder Juliette Gordon Low, a prolific traveler herself, provided financial assistance so that girls and young women from around the globe could attend world conferences. Her dedication to international understanding and travel inspired the creation of the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund.

International travel gives girls the chance to make new friends, build leadership skills, and share ideas with women and girls globally. Every year Girl Scouts venture to international events through Girl Scout destinations (formerly called Wider Opportunities) a travel program for girls ages 14-17 (council sponsored trips may carry different age requirements). Contact your local Girl Scout council to find out how to apply or volunteer for destinations.

International Travel Safety

It is up to individual councils, girls, and parents/guardians to realistically assess each situation based on travel dates, comfort level, and current safety information. Girl Scouts of the USA relies on the United States Department of State for travel advisories and notifies councils about advisories to destinations.

Travel Tips

- Submit Intent to Travel Form three to six months prior to travel.
- Travel insurance can be purchased from Mutual of Omaha. International Plan 3PI provides insurance for accident and sickness and travel assistance services.
- Consider buying travel insurance in case of flight cancellation, delays, or date changes.
- Register your group with the U.S. embassy in countries you plan to visit, provide a list of names and group itinerary.
- Research the country before visiting. Be prepared to experience cultural differences, local political considerations, and language barriers.
- Create an emergency plan with a phone tree for back home contacts and in-country contacts (e.g., number for the U.S. embassy, American Express, Red Cross), and a "lost plan" for each location you visit in case any group members get separated.
- Carry international calling cards that you can purchase in local shops. Most U.S. cell phones do not work overseas; some will work in Canada and Mexico. Contact your phone provider to find out before you go.
- Avoid wearing clothing, pins, logos, etc. that identify the group as Americans (pack Girl Scout uniforms to wear at special Girl Guide/Girl Scout gatherings, ceremonies at the world centers).
- Adult chaperones bring:
 - Two individually signed and notarized Permission to Travel with Minor forms for each girl signed by both parents (or guardians). If a single parent or guardian has custody, attach documentation stating the minor is in the sole custody of the signer of the Permission to Travel with Minor form.
- Health forms and insurance information and emergency contact information.
 - First-aid kit including items such as Benadryl, Tylenol, anti-diarrhea medicine, stomach upsets and motion sickness medicines. Parents/guardians must indicate on the health forms which over-the-counter drugs girls are permitted to take.
 - Medication for girls, unless a girl has physician or parental note to carry her own. This authorization may be needed in situations where home hospitality is given and the girl is away from the first-aider.

- Girls carry:
 - A copy of her health form and insurance information.
 - A copy of the group itinerary with all contact numbers.
 - Citizenship documents or documentation of her legal status to reenter the United States. Check [U.S. State Department](#) for requirements for individual countries entry requirements.
 - An international calling card.
 - Personal medications to be administered in case of emergency, such as bee sting kits, asthma inhalers, etc. (Girls need a doctor's note to keep the medication with her at all times.)
- Before the trip, circulate an e-mail list so that girls can get to know each other and share information about their destination. Include the name of an adult who can answer questions.
- Discuss ways to be respectful and tolerant of other opinions and cultures.
- Write up an agreement of acceptable behavior, developed jointly by girls and adults, that everyone promises to abide by.
- Be sure a council contact is included in the notification plan in case of an emergency.
- Remember that the safety and security of girls and adults is your top priority.