

January 14, 2009

Draft 1/14/09

Connie L. Lindsey, President
National Board of Directors
Girl Scouts of the USA
420 Fifth Ave.
New York, NY 10022

Dear Connie:

On behalf of the board of directors of Girl Scouts of Western Ohio, I want to congratulate you on your election as President of Girl Scouts of the USA. Your willingness to accept the challenges ahead of us is admirable and we want to extend our support to you as you move forward.

We were encouraged by your speech at the National Council Session, particularly with your statement that “being accountable means ensuring that our councils are strong and well-positioned to provide girls with the staff, volunteers, resources, programs, and experiences they need to develop their leadership potential.” We also heard you say that “being accountable means being accessible, inclusive, and collaborative with a commitment to positive action.” We could not agree more with these statements and commend your commitment to this work.

I would like to offer a recent example of a missed opportunity by GSUSA to demonstrate agility. I am aware that CEOs asked Kathy Cloninger for assistance with this year’s cookie sale marketing. In light of the economic challenges our country is facing and the critical financial importance of the cookie sale to councils, a request was made for new messaging to assist us in communicating the importance of the cookie sale to the public. The response by GSUSA staff was to refer the CEOs to messaging that was developed in past years and to promise that new messaging would be developed for the 2010 sale. This is certainly not a demonstration of an organization that is an agile partner, demonstrating proactive behavior to ensure councils are “strong and well-positioned”.

Our board noted the results of the August 2008 Services to Councils Survey showing that 40% of councils rated the partnership/relationship between GSUSA and councils and the response time to councils as fair or poor – we are sure the national board finds these as unacceptable as we do! We encourage the national board to hold the CEO accountable for responsiveness for delivering a significant increase in the survey results by August 2009 – this would be measurable and reportable to councils as a clear signal that accountability is a priority and an important focus area for the national board.

Again, congratulations on your election. We look forward to your leadership in this time of great change for our organization. Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss these issues further.

Sincerely,

Nancy C. Dawes,
Chair