A Parent's Guide... To Girl Scouts of Western Ohio













CEO Message



Barbara Bonifas

As a parent, what is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of Girl Scouting? When I ask this question, the response I often hear includes: cookies, camping, crafts, badges, and games.

If your daughter has participated in the Girl Scout Program for a year

or more – you might have some additional thoughts. You may have seen that your daughter has had the opportunity to:

- Set goals
- Learn about money management
- Learn new skills by earning badges or try-its
- Learn something unique about herself
- Make new friends
- Learn about animals in their natural settings
- Plan and carry out a community service project
- Learn about healthy eating

We hope that you have seen your daughter grow both through the opportunity to participate in a variety of new activities and through her role in contributing to the planning and decision making about these activities.

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience is designed to give your daughter diverse learning experiences, but even more importantly, when girls learn to work together to explore, plan, participate in, and evaluate activities, they gain learnings for life.

Through the Girl Scout Leadership experience your daughter will:

- Develop a strong sense of self
- Gain practical life skills, such as problem solving, critical thinking, and conflict resolution
- Gain an understanding of the importance of community service
- Set goals and develop plans to reach her goals
- Know people who are different than herself
- Feel good about herself
- Think that learning is fun

As a part of your daughter's experience we want her to have the opportunity to plan activities that are both fun and learning opportunities. We want her to develop life skills that support her journey now and prepare her for adulthood – whether she will be a stay at home mom, community volunteer, entrepreneur, or CEO of a company.

Thank you for allowing the Girl Scouts to be one of the organizations that supports your daughter on her life journey.

E-News: Sign Up Now to Stay Informed

Do you receive E-News from Girl Scouts of Western Ohio? E-News contains the most up-to-date information on program events, training, product sales, camp, and much more. It's a great way as a parent to keep up-to-date on what's going on beyond your daughter's troop!

By signing up for E-News, you will receive on-going information that is pertinent to your selected areas of interest in a timely fashion!

Visit <u>www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org</u> to sign up.

The work of today is the history of tomorrow, and we are its makers.

Juliette Gordon Low,
Founder, Girl Scouts of the USA

Get Involved in HER Girl Scout Experience!

Are you interested in creating lasting change and making a difference in your community? There are many ways that you as an adult family member can be involved – with your daughter's troop or on the community or council level.

Involvement at the troop/group level:

You can make a great impact in your daughter's Girl Scout experience simply by volunteering with her troop for as little as one hour per month by:

- Providing transportation for troop trips
- Making telephone calls
- Keeping troop records
- Creating a troop newsletter
- Assisting with badge activities

You can also take on an even more exciting role as:

- Troop leader
- Co-leader
- Troop treasurer
- Troop cookie manager
- Series volunteer (six to eight week session)

For more details on how you can help within your daughter's troop, contact her troop leader.

Involvement at the community level:

Communities within Girl Scouts of Western Ohio are divided into what are called "service units." There are many unique and rewarding opportunities available within service units for parents:

- Recruiting girls and adults to the organization
- Coaching and mentoring leaders
- Coordinating Girl Scout Cookie activities
- Ensuring girls and adults are registered
- Publicizing local Girl Scout achievements

If you are interested in making a difference in your daughter's service unit, contact your regional Girl Scout Center.



Four Easy Steps to Becoming a Girl Scout Volunteer

- Complete a volunteer application and background check, available at <u>www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org</u> by clicking on "New Volunteers" or from your service unit manager or regional Girl Scout Center.
- 2. Connect with other Girl Scout volunteers in your community.
- Prepare for your role through trainings (online or in person).
 - 4. Join in the fun!

Involvement at the council level:

There are many ways for parents to contribute at the council level. One of the easiest ways is by making a donation to the Family Partnership Campaign, which helps to ensure girls get the best Girl Scout experience possible. You can also help by:

- Volunteering time to train adult volunteers
- Assisting with fund development or cookie sales
- Working with camp or program activities
- Being a part of a special project task group.

For more information on volunteering for Girl Scouts of Western Ohio, contact your regional Girl Scout Center.

Girl Scout Leadership Experience

The Girl Scout Mission

Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

The Council Goals

Girls will understand themselves and their values.

Girls will use their knowledge and skills to explore the world.

Girls will care about, inspire, and team with others locally and globally.

Girls will act to make the world a better place.

The 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.

The 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. As an astronaut, I saw the Earth from space and realized we all share the same water and air. Space travel really impressed upon me the importance of taking care of our planet, something I first learned as a Girl Scout!

Eileen Collins, NASA's first female space shuttle commander, former
Girl Scout

Girl Scouts provides, as it always has, the best opportunities for girls to get the experiences and tools they need to be successful leaders now and throughout their lives. The Girl Scout Leadership Experience engages girls in:

- **Discovering** themselves
- Connecting with others, and
- Taking action to make the world a better place.

These discoveries happen through the Girl Scout program, which is intentionally designed to be:

- Girl Driven by the girls, for the girls.
- Experiential learning by doing.
- Cooperative working in small groups and teams.
- **Non-Formal** intentional learning activities with girls directing the outcome.

With their Girl Scout leaders, girls team with one another to implement their own troop activities, based on **their** interests. In addition to helping girls take ownership of their experience, Girl Scout leaders ensure all activities are grade-appropriate and based on the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, as well as on the Girl Scout Promise and Law. They encourage each girl to express her feelings and ideas in this all-girl, girl-driven environment and to build leadership skills through the girl/adult planning approach.

Regardless of her unique interests, your daughter will find a special place in Girl Scouting where she can make a difference. Whether it's working on a local community service project, traveling abroad for diverse learning experiences, or attending summer camp, she will develop memories and skills to last a lifetime.

Girl Scout Journeys

A Girl Scout journey represents a new way that girls can participate in Girl Scouting. It is a fun and challenging experience spread over a series of sessions, with designated skills a girl develops as the outcome of her participation. Each themed and grade-specific journey has a clear starting point (an invitation to explore and take action) and a finite ending point (opportunities to enjoy closure through reflections, rewards, and celebration). Throughout their Girl Scout journey experience, girls and volunteers are guided by a series of grade-specific books that help facilitate activities and foster discussions.

Currently, there are two leadership journey series – *It's Your World-Change It!* and *It's Your Planet-Love It!* Each series is comprised of six journeys – one for each grade level in Girl Scouting. A third journey series is in development, see below for details.

The It's Your World-Change It! journeys engage girls in:

- A critical thinking process related to identifying and researching issues they care about.
- Developing community networks, and creating and implementing plans to take action.

The *It's Your Planet-Love It!* journeys invite Girl Scouts of every age on an adventure to:

- Explore the wonders of Earth as they enjoy the natural world
- Investigate the science that keeps our Earth—and us spinning.

The *It's Your Story – Tell It!* journeys, available December 2010, use a storytelling theme in a fun and grade-level relevant way for Girl Scouts to:

- Better understand themselves and their potential
- Develop media literacy and creative expression through a variety of arts, including performing, visual, culinary, and new media

No matter how much time girls spend on a journey, the whole is always greater than any single part. So when a Girl Scout journey comes to a close, girls and their adult guides truly feel a sense of accomplishment.



Frequently Asked Questions

Tell me about Girl Scouts of Western Ohio.

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio is a council that serves nearly 50,000 girls in a 32 county area throughout western Ohio and southeastern Indiana. More than 14,000 trained volunteers work to provide services and deliver the Girl Scout program to girls. Four regional Girl Scout Centers are located in Cincinnati, Dayton, Lima, and Toledo (see back cover for contact information).

Why should my daughter join Girl Scouts?

Imagine a new generation of leaders. Who lead in a new way. Who lead by principle rather than pride. Who care what leadership is for, more than who it's for. Who step across barriers of class and race every day. Who seek out the work that needs doing in the world. And bring boundless energy to every challenge. They are today's Girl Scouts.

Wherever girls live, whatever their circumstances, we help them learn to be safe, think for themselves, and lead the way for others. Leadership experiences for girls are what make Girl Scouting unique. We help every girl discover who she can be and what she can do, wherever she chooses to put her energies.

The journey begins with the Girl Scout environment itself. A girl's leadership blooms among other girls – away from school pressures, social cliques, and boys – where she can be herself and try new things. Among Girl Scouts, activities are girl-led. She learns by doing, and the learning is cooperative, not competitive.

To discover who she can be, she needs access to wise adults who both inspire her and respect her. Our volunteers do this every day. To discover what she can do, she needs participation opportunities as varied as the world – so she can "try on" different leadership roles and grow into the ones that fit her best. Girl Scouting provides these opportunities.

What are the grade levels/names of Girl Scouts?

Girls ages 5-17 can join as girl members. Each level of membership offers new, fun, and exciting experiences and discoveries. The grade levels are:

Girl Scout Daisies: Grades K -1
Girl Scout Brownies: Grades 2-3
Girl Scout Juniors: Grades 4-5
Girl Scout Cadettes: Grades 6-8
Girl Scout Seniors: Grades 9-10
Girl Scout Ambassadors: Grades 11-2

As girls progress in Girl Scouts, they gain new skills and experiences, so the longer a girl participates, the more she gains from her experience.

How can my daughter get involved?

Girls can become involved in Girl Scouting in a variety of ways; these are referred to as the Girl Scout Pathways. The pathways recognize that different girls have different personal strengths, skills, and interests, and offer flexibility for girls and parents to determine how they will participate in Girl Scouting. These pathways include, but are not limited to, the following:

- *Troops:* Series of program activities with the same group of girls; typically spans the length of a school year.
- Camp: Day and resident camps; the essence is outof-doors and/or includes a focus on environmental or outdoor education.
- **Events:** Girls participate in local or councilwide events; different girls participate each time.
- **Series:** Girls participate in a series of program activities with the same group of girls relating to a specific theme or purpose.
- *Travel:* Girls plan, earn money, prepare, and participate in regional, national, and international trips.

Are uniforms required in Girl Scouts?

Uniforms are not required for participation in Girl Scouting. Girls are encouraged to wear a uniform for visibility and to demonstrate their Girl Scout spirit, but uniforms are only required if girls participate in ceremonies or officially represent the Girl Scout Movement. Some troops choose to purchase uniforms, others make troop t-shirts, still others allow each girl to decide for herself what her uniform will be. A girl is always welcome to participate in Girl Scouting whether or not she chooses to wear a uniform.



How often should I expect my daughter's troop or group to meet?

How often a troop meets depends on a variety of factors, including the availability of the meeting place and the schedules of the troop leaders and girls. Usually troops meet for an hour or two, from once a week to once a month. Many troops meet every other week. Occasional troop activities may involve longer time commitments, such as field trips and camp outs.

How much does Girl Scouts cost?

Girl Scout membership fees are \$12 per year – that fee goes directly to Girl Scouts of the USA and does not stay with Girl Scouts of Western Ohio. Most troops also collect dues or program activity fees to support their needs, as well as participate in council sponsored money earning activities, such as the Girl Scout Cookie Sale. Participation in Girl Scouting should not be expensive for girls and their families, as Girl Scout troops have the opportunity to earn funds through the Girl Scout Cookie and Fall Product Sales and through other money-earning projects.

Does my daughter have to earn badges?

No Girl Scout is required to earn badges; in fact, badges are just one way a girl can demonstrate the progression of skills and abilities she has attained in Girl Scouting. The experiences she has and the skills she gains are what she is earning that will last a lifetime.

My daughter has a disability. Will she be allowed to join Girl Scouts?

Girl Scouting does not discriminate on any basis, including disability. In fact, the founder of Girl Scouts, Juliette Gordon Low, had a severe hearing disability. Girls of varying abilities enjoy participating in Girl Scouting, and we have a long history of adapting activities for girls who have special needs, including those who have physical or mental disabilities and those who are chronically ill.

Does Girl Scouts have a particular religious affiliation?

Girl Scouts does not endorse or promote any particular philosophy or religious belief. Our movement is secular and is founded on American democratic principles, one of which is freedom of religion. We welcome Girl Scouts from diverse backgrounds.

Who is leading my daughter's troop? Will my daughter be safe?

Girl Scout troop leaders undergo comprehensive training to enable them not only to conduct activities in a safe manner, but to make each girl feel safe and secure in the troop environment. They often have daughters of their own in their troops. Leaders are appointed on a yearly basis after completing training, both general and specific, for the age of girls they are leading. They have all passed a background check and are required to follow stringent rules governing safety/supervision issues. Of course, parents are encouraged to register and participate with the troop in its activities.

I have questions about my daughter's troop. Who do I ask?

Your first step is to communicate with the troop or group leader. Ask the leader to meet with you when it is convenient for both of you. Ask her to share the goals of the troop and how these goals fit into the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Ask her to explain why certain policies and procedures where put into place. The troop leader is a great resource for you – she is volunteering her time to ensure that your daughter and the rest of the troop members have the opportunity to participate in Girl Scouting.

If you have concerns that the troop or group leader cannot address, please contact your regional Girl Scout Center.

How can I get financial assistance?

No girl is denied membership because of inability to pay; financial assistance is available to ensure that every girl is able to participate. Approximately, one-fourth of girls in Girl Scouting receive financial assistance. To request financial assistance, please contact your regional Girl Scout Center.

Girl Scout Cookie & Fall Product Sales

Twice a year, Girl Scouts have the opportunity to learn life skills and earn money for troop activities through the Girl Scout Cookie and Fall Product program activities.

Each winter, Girl Scouts participate in the Girl Scout Cookie program activity. Girl Scouts of Western Ohio are excited to announce that our cookie baker for the 2011 cookie sale is Little Brownie Bakers. Little Brownie Bakers has 35 years of experience serving Girl Scouts through the annual Cookie Sale.

Girl Scouts have the opportunity to sell cookies in a variety of ways that are age-appropriate. They may sell to family and friends, neighbors, throughout the community, and even through booth sales at local businesses.

The Fall Product program activity is a 'family and friends' sale, in which girls sell nuts, candy, and magazine vouchers primarily to family and friends. It is a great way for troops to earn start-up funds while giving girls practice in goal setting, customer service, and financial literacy.

The key to both of these program activities is that they are "girl led," girls set goals and decide how the troop will spend the earnings. Through democratic processes at the troop level, girls work as a team to decide how troop proceeds are best utilized. They develop a plan to use the earnings to turn their dreams into reality by planning for camp, service projects, and special activities together.

Through the Girl Scout Cookie and Fall Product Sales, girls learn:

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







These skills and activities support the Girl Scout Leadership Experience by providing girls a way to Discover, Connect and Take Action.

It is also important to remember that all local Girl Scout Cookie and Fall Product proceeds remain with Girl Scouts of Western Ohio. Money is used to ensure Girl Scout opportunities are available to every girl in our service area. This revenue is used to benefit girls – some of it directly by remaining in the Girl Scout troop/group treasury, and some of it indirectly by subsidizing the cost of providing the Girl Scout program in the local area. It offers crucial funding for Girl Scouts of Western Ohio to provide program opportunities to girls, maintain camp properties, and support adult volunteers.

Parents play an important role in both sales. Whether it's mentoring your daughter or transporting Girl Scout Cookies, you can help your daughter's troop be successful. Be sure to ask your daughter's troop leader how you can help.

For more information about Girl Scout product sales, visit these websites: www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org, www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org</

Fund Development

Dear Girl Scout Parents,

Each June, I help lead a special unit at Day Camp in which we present a program opportunity especially designed for Girl Scout Cadettes who wish to become Program Aides. During camp we teach basic outdoor skills and one of the most basic of these skills is fire building.

Fire building is not as easy as it might seem. Different types of wood must be gathered. Tinder is pieces of wood that will catch fire easily from a match or a spark. Kindling takes over from the tinder and turns the spark into a true flame. You need a heap of kindling to maintain a healthy fire!

You are the kindling in the Family Partnership Campaign. Your daughter and her leader have provided the tinder and the spark. Together they have made an ember start to glow – a fresh coal of learning and new experiences, of friends and belonging, of self-confidence and service. Now is your chance to feed this new fire by adding your kindling, your support for Girl Scouting. Your pledges and donations add up and build up this remarkable program for girls so that all girls may be warmed and enlightened by its flame.

Each and every gift, large or small, is vital to ensuring that Girl Scouting is able to nourish that spark in all girls. Funds collected through the Family Partnership Campaign help pay for camping facilities, leader training, financial assistance for girls, and support for troop leaders in neighborhoods. Each and every gift is important! A gift from every Girl Scout family will enable us to meet our goal. Just as each stick of kindling feeds the fire, your generous support will prepare the next generation to face the world with courage, confidence, and character, and make the world a better place!

When you register for Girl Scouts, check the "I would like to contribute" box on the bottom of the registration form. Your gift is tax deductible and your contribution can be included in the same check as the membership registration fee.

Please be our kindling and make your gift to the Family Partnership Campaign.

Yours in Girl Scouting,

Wendy Gustafson
Girl Scout Parent & Volunteer

Did You Know?

- 87.7% of Girl Scouts developed and strengthened their skills to resist negative behaviors like drugs and alcohol.
- 66% of today's female leaders in the United States are former Girl Scouts.
- 46% of Girl Scouts surveyed stated that Girl Scouting helped them do something good for their community.
- Only 1% of all Girl Scouts ever go before a juvenile court judge.

Your financial support helps to ensure that:

- Every girl has access to the Girl Scout program and is able to develop her courage, confidence, and character
- Your daughter's troop leader has access to the resources she needs to be a trained, knowledgeable Girl Scout volunteer
- When your daughter goes to a Girl Scouts of Western Ohio camp, she will be using facilities that are wellmaintained, safe, and accessible.
- The Girl Scout program thrives in our community for years to come

How can you support Girl Scouts of Western Ohio?

Simply check the 'contributions' circle on your membership registration form, and mail your registration form along with your donation to your regional Girl Scout Center. You can even include your donation on the same check with your membership fee. Or you can simply mail a contribution to your regional Girl Scout Center. Make sure to put 'Family Partnership Campaign' in the memo line of your check.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Financial Facts

Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA)

Did you know that the \$12 annual Girl Scout membership fee pays for registration into our national organization GSUSA? It does not remain with Girl Scouts of Western Ohio. GSUSA utilizes membership fees, as well as funding from other sources, to provide a variety of services, including: developing new program opportunities for girls; providing grants to local councils for innovative program opportunities; and assisting local councils with management, human resource, and membership questions or issues.

Girl Scouts of Western OhioWhat does it cost to keep a girl in Girl Scouts?

We estimate that \$300-400 is spent per individual Girl Scout every year. This amount includes dollars spent at the council level to supplement program opportunities, financial aid and other related expenses. It also includes money contributed by parents toward activities and money earned by the troop to help defer costs for each girl.

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio provides approximately a 50% subsidy for every council-sponsored program activity (including resident camp, Troop Adventure Camp, Cadette/Senior/Ambassador Conference, and many more). In addition to these direct service expenses, Girl Scouts of Western Ohio incurs many other costs, such as:

- Financial assistance to girls and troops in need
- Training of volunteers, including specialized training for issues such as behavior management and conflict resolution
- Volunteer screening/background checks
- Communication resources including newsletters, the council website, service unit webpages, and the summer opportunities brochure
- Maintenance of 11 camp properties and four regional Girl Scout Centers

Non-profit standards state that an organization is managed well if it spends 70% of its funds on direct service to clients. In 2009, Girl Scouts of Western Ohio spent 83% of its total budget on direct program services for girls.

What makes up the council's funding?

Many people think that the Girl Scout Cookie and Fall Product Sales provide all the funding the council needs. This is by no means the case. United Way contributions, program fees, investment income, grants and contributions, sales of supplies and other miscellaneous revenue are also important to the budget. The continued support of those who believe in the Girl Scout mission, promise, and law including volunteers and parents of our girl members is critical in maintaining a financially sound Girl Scout council.

Troop/Group Finances

In Girl Scouts there are financial policies and standards that govern all troop/group monies. (For more information on these policies, please ask your troop leader.) Troops generally pay for troop program-related items, such as:

- Recognition items like badges and awards
- Troop meeting activities, field trips, and troop camping

Financial management is one of the many areas of experiential learning that Girl Scouting provides for girls. By working as a team to plan their activities and develop budgets, girls will gain an understanding of money management, a skill that can be carried into their adult lives. Activities such as bringing/collecting troop dues, creating budgets for special activities, and voting on how to spend funds teach girls to live financially-educated and responsible lives. The Girl Scout Cookie and Fall Product Sales activities also provide girls with the opportunity to budget, to set goals, and to gain the leadership skills to become the entrepreneurs of tomorrow.

Financial Assistance in Girl Scouting

No girl should ever be denied the opportunity to participate in Girl Scouts because of financial need. Funding is available to ensure all girls have access to program activities, membership fees, handbooks, etc. Talk with your daughter's leader or contact your regional Girl Scout Center for more information.

Girl Scout Camp

The Benefits of a Camp Experience

Summer resident camp is a long-standing Girl Scout tradition. Ask any girl who's been to camp, and she'll have a story to tell, a memory to recount. Summer resident camp can be a powerful experience for a girl. Staying overnight, away from home, out in nature, with others, teaches invaluable lessons. Girls learn to work together, make choices, take responsibility, build independence and self-reliance, and gain confidence.

Girls, through their participation in camp, have opportunities to gain a sense of achievement, a feeling of belonging and recognition, and a heightened sense of selfworth. They learn to share, to assume responsibility, and



to cooperate more effectively with others. Girls are given the opportunity to think and make decisions. Indeed, participation in camp gives a girl the sense of competence that equates with a sense of confidence.

Camp is a long-standing Girl Scout tradition for good reason! Lasting long after the summer ends, the benefits of a summer resident camp experience will remain with a girl indefinitely.

Camping Opportunities

- Day Camp a week-long camp (usually themed) for girls to attend just during the day
- Family Camp one two nights for girls and an adult chaperone or the entire family
- Troop Adventure Camp (TAC) overnight troop camping for two - three nights, with activities led by camp staff.
- **Resident Camp** overnight camping for three nights or a week at one of our camp facilities
- One two week Adventure/Travel Camp overnight camping for one - two weeks, beginning at one of our camps, proceeding to an adventure location, and ending back at one of our camps (for experienced campers)
- Camp Leadership Opportunities for girls who are ready to give others the camp experience, these are opportunities such as counselor-in-training

Parent Spotlight

School was back in session and Melanie Edrington's daughter, Haley, was beginning her second year of Girl Scout Daisies. Melanie wanted to be more involved, so with her daughter and four of her friends, Melanie started a brand new troop. She was fully enthralled with the idea of helping girls build courage, confidence, and character – and was a woman on a mission.

The first meeting with 10 brand new girls was interesting. Some of the girls knew one another, but not all of them. They first did a project that paired the girls up to make life size paper dolls of each other. The girls started to talk; there was giggling in the air. Soon the room was filled with so much chatter that the time slipped away from them.

"Here we are several months later and the girls are all great friends," says Melanie. "The back of their smock is filled with all the fun things we have done together. I am sure that the girls have enjoyed their time thus far in their Girl Scout Journey. I know I have!"

Melanie was worried about what type of troop leader she would be. Would she be a good role model for these girls and would the girls learn from this experience? After the first year she knows now that eight hours a month of her time as a Girl Scout leader brightens the girls' lives and gives them memories they will remember all their lives.

We are truly appreciative of the time, talents,



and treasures that our parents like Melanie share. Girls need access to wise adults who inspire and respect them. Thank you all for your efforts and dedication to Girl Scouting.



Regional Centers

Cincinnati

4930 Cornell Road Cincinnati, Ohio 45242 T: (513) 489-1025 (800) 537-6241 F: (513) 489-1417

Lima

1870 W. Robb Avenue Lima, Ohio 45805 T: (419) 225-4085 (800) 962-7753 F: (419) 229-7570

Dayton

450 Shoup Mill Road Dayton, Ohio 45415 T: (937) 275-7601 (800) 233-4845 F: (937) 275-1147

Toledo

2244 Collingwood Blvd. Toledo, Ohio 43620 T: (419) 243-8216 (800) 860-4516 F: (419) 245-5357



www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org



