

A Parent's Guide...

To Girl Scouts of Western Ohio



Girl Scouts®

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

LOOK INSIDE FOR:

- **Frequently Asked Questions**
- **Family Involvement**
- **Cookie & Fall Product Sales**
- **And Much More**

CEO Message



Barbara Bonifas

Girl Scouts - An Educational Experience!

Formal education, non-formal education, and informal education each have an impact on your daughter. Most of us are aware of formal education, but may not be as familiar with non-formal and informal education.

Non-Formal Education - Process of using intentional learning activities that enable the learner to actively participate in directing her own learning.

Informal Education - Process used in interactions that happen with family and friends.

Girl Scouting is a non-formal educational organization. As part of your daughter's experience, we want her to enjoy planning activities that are both fun and learning opportunities for her. So while she is engaged in activities like a mini-archeological dig at camp, marching in a parade, or serving dinner at Ronald McDonald House®, adult leaders are helping her to try out new things, practice life skills, form healthy habits, and find out about civic engagement through problem solving, critical thinking, and learning about other people and cultures.

I encourage you to take some time to review *A Parent's Guide to Girl Scouts of Western Ohio*. It is designed to provide you with information to answer questions you may have about today's Girl Scout program. It is my hope that this publication will help you understand the positive and lasting impact Girl Scouting has on girls' lives. I also encourage you to explore our website, www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org, where you can find valuable information about our program and the many opportunities that await your daughter in Girl Scouting.

Whether this is your daughter's first or thirteenth year in Girl Scouts, every parent who invests in Girl Scouting is providing an opportunity that will last a lifetime. Our commitment to you is shared in the Girl Scout Promise & Law (page 4) and is delivered by our mission: ***Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.***

Thank you for allowing Girl Scouts the opportunity to be one of many organizations that supports you and your daughter in 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 www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org to sign up.

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 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

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.

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.



4 Easy Steps to Becoming a Girl Scout Volunteer

1. Complete a volunteer application and background check, available at www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org or from your service unit manager or regional Girl Scout Center.
2. Connect with other Girl Scout volunteers in your community.
3. Prepare for your role through trainings (online or in person).
4. Join in the fun!



Girl Scout Leadership Experience

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 activities, 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.



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.



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.

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.

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.



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.



Frequently Asked Questions



Tell me about Girl Scouts of Western Ohio.

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio is a council that serves more than 50,000 girls in a 32 county area throughout western Ohio and southeastern Indiana. More than 15,000 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?

Think of Girl Scouts as the jewel in the crown of your daughter's activities. Within Girl Scouts, she can pursue music, sports, and dozens of other activities. But Girl Scouts adds an extra dimension. This is an organization by girls, for girls, and of girls devoted to building self-esteem, strong values, and social conscience. The inner strength and sense of self-assuredness they gain through Girl Scouts will stay with them long after they have hung up their ballet slippers or soccer spikes.

Girl Scouting offers girls an opportunity to learn and grow in a diverse community, engage in service to their community, and learn leadership skills to help them become successful adults. Many successful women past and present were once Girl Scouts, including: Madeleine Albright, Janet Reno, Billie Jean King, Lucille Ball, and Elizabeth Dole. In fact, 82% of high-achieving Girl Scout alumnae believe that Girl Scouting influenced their success.

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 11-12

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 the pathways offer flexibility for girls and parents to determine how they will participate in Girl Scouting. They include, but are not limited to:

- **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 out-of-doors and/or includes a focus on environmental or outdoor education.
- **Events:** Girls participate in local or council-wide events; different girls participate each time.
- **Special Interest:** 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 they 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. 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. 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 really earning, and these 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 criminal 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 program. Ask her to explain why certain policies and procedures were 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 have the opportunity to participate in the Girl Scout Cookie program activity. 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 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:

- Ethical decision-making
- Leadership development
- Advertising and promotion
- Presentation skills
- Self-esteem
- Interpersonal communication

It is also important to remember that all local Girl Scout Cookie and Fall Product proceeds remain in 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 provides 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.abcsmartcookies.com (ABC, our Girl Scout Cookie baker), or www.nutsforknowledge.com (Trophy Nut, our Fall Product supplier).



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 well-maintained, 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!**

Dear Girl Scout Parents:

The state of the US economy is causing **Hard Times** for families all across the country. Foreclosures, job losses, plants closing, stocks dropping, pockets emptying - it's in the news everyday. 'Hard' means 'tough' and 'difficult', but it also means 'solid' as in 'reliable', 'steady', and 'sure'. In **Hard Times**, you want something solid to hang on to, something solid underfoot. **Hard Times** call for solid foundations. Girl Scouting is that solid foundation that we want for our girls in **Hard Times**.

Girl Scouting teaches girls self-reliance, which helps to dispel fear of the unknown. Girls learn how to 'make do' - how to use what they have to solve problems. Girl Scouts learn how to care for others and include them in problem solving, which helps to build friendships and mutual understanding. Girl Scouting teaches honesty and personal sacrifice, which not only benefits your Girl Scout, but also helps to strengthen the community as a whole. Girl Scouting is so valuable to our girls and our community that we cannot let it falter. Especially in these **Hard Times**, Girl Scouts of Western Ohio needs your support.

Each year, through the Family Partnership Campaign, Girl Scouts of Western Ohio offers an opportunity for Girl Scout families to financially support the Girl Scout program. Every gift, large or small, is vital to ensuring that Girl Scouting is available to all girls who want to participate. Funds collected through the Family Partnership Campaign help to support things, such as: reduced camp fees for all girls, adult training, resources for all girls and adults, and keeping our camps and other council facilities safe and well-maintained.

We will get through these **Hard Times**, I know we will. Your gift to the Family Partnership Campaign helps to provide a solid foundation for **Good Times** in the future, when our daughters, connected to their communities and sure of their abilities, will change the world and make it a better place for us all.

Yours in Girl Scouting,

Wendy Gustafson
Girl Scout Parent & Volunteer

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. GSUSA also develops Girl Scout policy and direction.

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio

What 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 funds raised 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
- ★ Recruitment and training of volunteers, including increasing costs in areas such as background checks and specialized training for issues including behavior management and conflict resolution
- ★ Communication resources including newsletters, the council website, and the summer opportunities brochure
- ★ Maintenance of 12 camp properties and 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 2008, Girl Scouts of Western Ohio spent 85% of its total budget on direct program services for girls.

What makes up the council's funding?

Many people think that the sale of Girl Scout Cookies and Fall Product items provide all the funding the council needs. This is by no means the case. United Way contributions, program fees, investment income, grants, contributions from individuals, 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 life 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.

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 self-worth. 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** – 1-2 nights for girls and an adult chaperone or the entire family
- **3-day Resident Camp** – overnight camping for three nights at one of our camp facilities
- **1-week Resident Camp** – overnight camping for a week at one of our camp facilities
- **1-2 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



Missy Madigan's daughter, Caitlin, started kindergarten very shy. When Caitlin's teacher suggested Missy and her husband check into Girl Scout Daisies to help her become more social, they didn't hesitate. What they found was an organization that has helped Caitlin become more social, build her self-esteem, and make new friends.

And all this has happened with the help of Missy who stepped up to become the troop leader. "I am active in other groups in the community and felt that it might be stressful to take on more, but I am glad I did," says Missy. "I am learning a lot alongside my daughter, and I hope it continues for many years."

Watching the girls in her troop learn new things and become friends has been rewarding for Missy. She encourages other parents to get involved in their daughter's Girl Scouting experience. "It is a great feeling to be connected with my daughter and her friends in such a great organization," comments Missy.

The efforts and dedication of our parents like Missy play an enormous role in the development, growth, and success of our Girl Scouts. Thank you on behalf of Girl Scouts of Western Ohio.

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio Regional Centers

**Check out your regional Girl Scout Shop
for exciting gift ideas for your Girl Scout!**

Cincinnati

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

Dayton

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

Lima

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

Toledo

2244 Collingwood Blvd.
Toledo, Ohio 43620
(419) 243-8216
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F (419) 245-5357

www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org

