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Messages about Girl Scout Membership Needing Consistent Interpretation

1. Girl Scouting Is for Girls—Girls are the *only* reason for Girl Scouting. The purpose and the mission of this organization are to serve the unique interests and needs of girls. This is stated in our Preamble of basic beliefs and principles, defined in our Constitution, and made explicit in our Girl Scout Congressional Charter. It serves as the ideal goal for all of our planning.

2. Girl Scouting Is a Membership Organization --The membership policy as stated in the *Blue Book* makes clear that each girl and each adult participating in the Girl Scout Movement shall be registered as members with Girl Scout handbooks and other program resources, Girl Scout uniforms, and insignia are developed and produced by GSUSA for the exclusive use of its members.

3. Girl Scouting Provides a Unique Setting-- Girls, working in partnership with caring adults, can explore their potential in Girl Scouting without competition from boys. This opportunity is considered by educators to be essential to the encouragement of their future aspirations.

Girl Scouting is unique in providing leadership for girls *only*. In a climate when many youth organizations, schools, colleges, and other institutions chose to become coeducational, GSUSA chose to continue to devote its total resources to the development of girls in order to prepare them to fulfill their potential as women.

4. Role Models in Girl Scouting—The female role model is essential in carrying out the purpose of Girl Scouting. Interaction with women in leadership positions is of particular importance in the development of girls. All Girl Scout adults, women and men, bring special talents and expertise that enrich Girl Scout program for girls. However, recognizing the importance of positive female role models for girls as they develop the decision-making and planning abilities they will need as women, GSUSA stresses the importance of appointing women to Girl Scout leader positions. GSUSA recommends to councils that when men serve in troop leadership roles they do so as co-leaders with women.

5. GSUSA Places an Emphasis on Pluralism throughout the Girl Scout Movement—The Movement actively seeks members from every racial, ethnic, religious, and socio-economic group. The goal of GSUSA is to achieve a membership that is reflective of all population groups in the United States.

6. Elimination of Institutional Racism Is a Primary Goal of the Girl Scout Organization— GSUSA and Girl Scout councils consistently examine and subsequently correct any patterns of organization, practices, procedures, and resources that prevent or discourage the participation of minority girls or adults in the Girl Scout Movement.

7. Girl Scout Program Is Informal Education— Girl Scouting is based on the interests and needs of girls and therefore is concerned with the issues and problems affecting young girls and teenage youth. Girl Scouting's role in responding to these needs is educational and preventive, not "crisis intervention-oriented" or "curative."

8. A Girl Scout Council is Chartered by GSUSA to Make the Girl Scout Program Available to Girls in Its Jurisdiction—Program delivery and membership development are the primary functions of a Girl Scout council. A Girl Scout council exists to organize troops/ groups and provide them with necessary services. It is the responsibility of a council to provide girls who register as individuals with group experiences among peers, carried out in partnership with adults.

9. Girl Scout Councils Develop Organizational Structures to Provide Effective Services to Troops/Groups in Every Community—A council needs to organize its total resources (people, money, and facilities) to support adult leadership bringing program to girls. No one method can meet the needs of all geographic units or age groups in a council. Accordingly, methods for delivering program and support services need to be tailored to the distinct needs and resources of the group they are designed to serve.

10. **Girl Scout Councils Are Community Based Organizations—**Girl Scouting is supported by the community. This support is earned by enriching the lives of the community's girls and of many adults as well. Girl Scout councils work with other agencies and businesses in their communities to share their Girl Scout expertise. The end results of these cooperative efforts should be better delivery of Girl Scout program and increased membership. Girl Scout sponsorship is a prime example of community cooperation. It helps ensure quality program and the extension and the continuity of girl membership.

11. **A Girl Scout Council's Girl Membership Penetration Rate Is Used to Measure Council Effectiveness in Meeting Its Charter Accountabilities**—A Girl Scout Council's sole purpose is to reach out and deliver Girl Scout program to all girls in jurisdiction. The penetration rate is defined as the number of girl members a council serves in proportion to the number of girls age 5-17 in the population.

12. Membership Growth Is an Interdependent Responsibility of Councils and GSUSA—Girl Scout councils and GSUSA work in concert to achieve annual membership goals. The national organization provides a wide range of membership services and resources to councils; councils recruit girls and adults as members, deliver Girl Scout program, and provide training.