

## MAKE YOUR OWN BADGE

# Volunteer Tipsheet

### What is the purpose of the Make Your Own badge?

Educators, employers, and entrepreneurs all emphasize the importance of self-starters, problem solvers, and creative thinkers. The Make Your Own badge was developed so girls can practice being all of these things!

Like all the new badges, the Make Your Own badge emphasizes fun with purpose. Earning this badge is a special, creative process that contributes to a girl's growing leadership skills—she'll be discovering her sense of self, thinking critically and seeking challenges, and becoming a very resourceful problem-solver . . . to name a few.

When a girl completes a Make Your Own badge, she'll feel a huge sense of pride and accomplishment. And most importantly, she'll have learned a skill critical to her future success: she'll know *how* to learn.

### How does it work?

The Make Your Own badge is the essence of girl-led—girls decide on a skill they want to learn and create plans to learn it.

**Five steps.** Each girl manages her own learning process as she follows the five steps outlined in *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*: She picks a topic, develops a plan, learns a skill, and shares it with others. Her adult adviser signs her form and her badge is complete! Then she can customize and order her badge at [www.gsmakeyourown.com](http://www.gsmakeyourown.com). The website will be live in early 2012; the cost of ordering a badge is not yet known.

**Make your own, on your own!** The Make Your Own badge is designed to be completed independently by girls, with guidance from a parent or other trusted adult. Girls can work at their own rate, on their own time, with the help and guidance of their parent, teacher, or volunteer.

**Working together.** As the development process might be a challenge for younger girls, groups of Brownies or Juniors can work together as a group to create and follow the *same learning plan* for their badge. Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors working in a group setting can make a badge about the same topic, but each girl should have her *own individualized plan* to develop the skill at her own level, in her own unique way.

**Safety.** When girls are working on the Make Your Own badge in the care and guidance of their family, the family is responsible for their safety and well-being. If girls work on a Make Your Own badge as a troop or group, all council safety policies and procedures must be followed.

## How long does it take to earn a Make Your Own badge?

- Ideally, girls will start the Journey of their choice and earn a few of the National Proficiency badges to really understand “fun with purpose” before diving into a Make Your Own badge.
- During this time, girls might start imagining topics, creating their plans, and setting goals.
- Depending on the topic and details of each girl’s plan, the time it will take her to complete the badge will vary—from several weeks to several months.

## Guidelines

To ensure that girls have a feeling of pride and accomplishment when earning a Make Your Own Badge, please promote these guidelines! Each guideline offers the reason why following it is so important for girls.

**Great Make Your Own badges leave girls feeling proud and accomplished.** When a girl has completed her badge, she should be able to say: “I’m so proud I know how to \_\_\_\_\_.” The emphasis should be: Learn to earn!

**Girls learn a new skill.** A girl could earn a Make Your Own badge to become more advanced in a skill, or to learn more about a particular aspect of a topic she loves. The object is not to duplicate—it all comes back to learn to earn.

**Girls earn badges they create—not those created by another girl.** An important part of the Make Your Own badge is what girls find out about their own learning styles as they create a personalized plan to build a skill. If a girl does a badge designed by another girl, she doesn’t have this chance to learn about herself.

**Make Your Own badges are girl-led. No need for GSUSA, council, or volunteer approval.** The adviser helps a girl create her plan, and the adviser signature functions as an “autograph.” Once a girl has reached her goal, she keeps her signed form in her *Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting* as a keepsake of her experience.

**Make Your Own badges are most successful after completion of one or more National Proficiency badges.** When a girl completes a National Proficiency badge, she “learns by doing” the structure of a well-designed badge. She also develops an understanding of how she personally develops a skill, which she needs before beginning to design her own Make Your Own badge.

**Girls can develop and earn one Make Your Own badge each year.** Girls have plenty of fun award-earning opportunities on their Journey and in existing badges to fill a typical Girl Scout year. The intense learning process of a Make Your Own badge will take most girls several weeks when done well. One a year is a great accomplishment!

## What is my role as a volunteer?

The Make Your Own badge is designed for a girl to earn it on her own, with guidance from her family or another adult her family trusts. Remember, a girl's badge plan does not need approval from you, the council, or GSUSA. Your role in this process is to:

- Communicate with girls and parents about the value, purpose, and process of the Make Your Own badge.
- Assist girls in identifying and selecting an adviser, if they ask for your help. It doesn't have to be you! Possible advisers could be a parent, relative, coach, teacher, librarian, or local expert.
- Support girl efforts through general inquiries about her progress, and perhaps offering your venue as a place to share her skill.
- Ask girls which topics in their Journey they find inspiring. Help them see if there's an emerging interest they could explore further in a Make Your Own badge!
- Talk to your council—perhaps they know of other volunteers willing to lend time and talent to girls in pursuit of a Make Your Own badge.

If a girl asks you to be her adviser, or if a group of girls wants to work on the same topic and approaches you for assistance, you might help enhance the experience in these ways:

- Let the Make Your Own badge be a girl-led process. Challenge a girl to think about how to best learn, practice, and share the skill around which she creates her badge.
- Be supportive—but don't let your own enthusiasm take over and limit her efforts, especially if she chooses a favorite topic of yours. Similarly, if her topic is less appealing to you, remember that this is her choice, and continue to support her learning and fun!
- Encourage girls to really enjoy shaping their own learning experience. What's the rush? Real pride in accomplishment and true skill development will take some time.
- If you are working with girls in a troop or group to complete the Make Your Own badge, continue to ensure safety by following council policies and procedures throughout the process.