



## HOW TO START A TROOP WITHOUT ENDING UP BROKE

When leaders first begin to calculate the costs for running a troop, it may seem a bit overwhelming. With planning and creativity, there are ways to keep activities within the financial means of the troop.

Planning and Goal Setting – At the beginning of every year, you should sit down with your girls and brainstorm about all the things they want to do that year – field trips, camping, awards to work on, service projects, and supplies needed. Then help the girls to vote and choose what to put on their troop calendar as activities for the year. Learning how to manage money is one of the most valuable life skills girls can gain in Girl Scouting.

Girl Scouts of Central Maryland offers the fall Cookie Program to help troops meet their financial needs. This program is also an excellent resource to help girls learn about goal setting and money management.

In addition to the funding the troop through the Cookie Program, here are some tips to help keep troop costs inexpensive:

- Watch garage sales and thrift stores for supplies. Don't be afraid to mention at a garage sale that it is for a Girl Scout troop – some people may give discounts or even donate items.
- Ask parents for old office letterhead and use the back. Great for drawing, paper airplanes, etc.
- Some companies will let employees use the printer/copier for the cost of paper or for free as a community service. See if any of your parents can do this.
- Have each girl bring a start up box/bag which would contain scissors, crayons, pencils, glue or glue sticks, etc.
- Ask parents for donations of excess craft materials, then base the crafts on what is available
- If a project calls for something special, have each girl bring in that item (i.e. shoe box, soda bottle, baby food jar)
- Have a Troop Shower/Juliette Low Birthday party. Ask each girl to bring in a wrapped "gift" item that could be used for crafts or for the first aid kit.
- Have a Troop Scavenger Hunt. Give each girl a list of items to hunt for around their home. Nothing can be taken without parent permission. Assign points to each item and offer a small prize (better yet, have a scavenger hunt party for all the girls). Items may include: tape, beads, fabric paint, yarn, ribbon, aluminum pie pans, stickers, etc.
- Brainstorm with other leaders at Service Unit meetings about inexpensive program and field trip ideas. Other leaders are the best resource!

## REMEMBER

**The best troop program need not be the most expensive one!**