



# **Welcome to the Service Team**



Thank you for deciding to serve your Girl Scout community as a member of the Service Team. You are very important in providing and sustaining Girl Scouting in your area.

This booklet contains information to get you started. It has been designed to answer some of your questions, offer helpful hints, and assisting you in reaching your fullest potential in your new volunteer role. This booklet was developed for use by volunteers who have a good working knowledge of the Girl Scout program prior to their appointment to the Service Team. Those without this information should attend Leadership Essentials and any grade level training appropriate to their positions.

In addition to this resource, various Service Team resources are sent to each Service Unit Manager (SUM) to be kept in a Service Team Resource Binder. Please check with your SUM or Membership and Community Development Specialist to review other materials in the binder.

Thank you for volunteering. Your efforts will create a positive difference in the lives of girls and adults in your community. Remember, your Membership and Community Development Specialist, along with the other members of the service team, are happy to help – just ask!

## The Girl Scout Mission and other Facts

### Girl Scout Mission

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

### Celebrating 100 Years

Founder Juliette Gordon Low organized the first Girl Scout Troop on **March 12, 1912**, in Savannah, Georgia.

### An American Institution

Girl Scouts of the USA was chartered by the U.S. Congress on **March 16, 1950**.

### Still Growing Strong

Today, there are **3.2 million Girl Scouts**—2.3 million girl members and 880,000 adult members working primarily as volunteers.

### Empowering Girls

In Girl Scouts, girls discover the fun, friendship, and power of girls together. Through a variety of enriching experiences, such as high adventure activities, Take Action projects, engaging STEM activities, cultural exchanges, and environmental stewardships, girls grow courageous and strong. Girl Scouting helps girls develop their full individual potential; relate to others with increasing understanding, skill, and respect; develop values to guide their actions and provide the foundation for sound decision-making; and contribute to the improvement of society through their abilities, leadership skills, and cooperation with others.

### At Home and Abroad

Girls at home and abroad participate in troops and groups in over **100 local Girl Scout councils in the United States and more than 92 countries** through USA Girl Scouts Overseas.

### An International Family

Through its membership in the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS), Girl Scouts of the USA is part of a worldwide family of **10 million girls and adults in 145 countries**.

### A Pivotal Part of Women's History

More than **50 million American women** enjoyed Girl Scouting during their childhood—and that number continues to grow as Girl Scouts of the USA continues to inspire, challenge, and empower girls everywhere.

## Guiding Principles

We believe the Girl Scout Promise defines who we are and is the cornerstone of our Movement.

We work to ensure our Movement is open to all girls and adults who accept the Girl Scout Promise and satisfy the membership requirements.

We believe girls learn by doing and that they learn best in a safe, positive environment.

We believe adults partner with girls to guide and inspire growth and achievement and that these partnerships are essential to the strength and capacity of our Movement.

We are community partners, take a leadership role in the community, and believe in the core human virtue of service, in taking action, and in making a difference in the world around us.

We are committed to advancing diversity and pluralism in our Movement and in the communities in which we live.

We are active partners in a worldwide sisterhood through our affiliation with WAGGGS and work with WAGGGS to address girls' needs and build a network of global citizens.

We hold that the ultimate responsibility for the Girl Scout Movement rests with its members, and we govern by a decisive and nimble democratic process that demonstrates our leadership in response to a fast-changing world.

We are a premier voice for girls and are expert on their growth and development.

## Girl Scout Leadership Experience

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience engages girls in discovering self, connecting with others, and taking action to make the world a better place. All Girl Scout experiences are intentionally designed to tie to one or more of the 15 national leadership outcomes or benefits, categorized under three keys to leadership.

### The Three Keys to Leadership

- **Discover:** Girls understand themselves and their values and use their knowledge and skills to explore the world.
- **Connect:** Girls care about, inspire, and team with others locally and globally.
- **Take Action:** Girls act to make the world a better place.

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience provides three processes for adults partnering with girls to incorporate: Girl Led, Cooperative Learning, and Learning by Doing.

## The Journeys

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience is made easy and fun for girls and adults through the journey approach.

- Journeys provide an important foundation for each level in Girl Scouting for girls and volunteers.
- The journeys have been created to provide meaningful and fun experiences centered on the three keys to leadership for all girls.
- Journeys help girls to frame topical issues that are all around them, with Girl Scout values.
- In partnership with adults who utilize the Girl Scout processes, girls encounter a safe environment, both physically and emotionally.
- Girls become aware of women who have used their talents, skills, and abilities, including celebrity status, to raise public awareness on issues such as discrimination and personal rights.
- Girls see examples of females who have spoken and acted with courage, confidence, and character.

As girls progress through the levels from Daisy to Ambassador, their awards signify attaining new and higher levels of knowledge and skills, and ultimately a deeper understanding of what it means to be a leader who makes a difference in the world.

## The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting

In addition to the journeys, girls have the *Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*. There is a *Girl's Guide* for each level of Girl Scouts from Daisies to Ambassadors. The *Girl's Guide* features robust skill-building badge activities, updated and new awards, information on Girl Scout history and traditions, and – most of all – lots of fun!

Girls can grow as leaders and build new skills with a complete National Program Portfolio: ***Journeys + The Girl's Guide = The Girl Scout Leadership Experience***

## Pathways for Participation

GSUSA and the Girl Scout Leadership Experience program offers girls a variety of opportunities to discover themselves, connect with others, and take action to make the world a better place. Girls and adults participate in Girl Scouting through Girl Scout Pathways.

The pathways are:

- Camp: The camp pathway features day, weekend, and resident experiences that introduce and explore the out-of-doors. A defining characteristic of this pathway is that it is an outdoor, condensed experience.
- Events: Events are standalone program offerings; examples include our GS411 Activities, a career event for Seniors and Ambassadors, or a leadership conference for teenage Girl Scouts. The primary difference between events and all other pathways is that different girls participate in each event, as opposed to one group of girls coming together regularly.

- Series: Series offerings are a sequence of linked, cumulative program sessions that relate to a specific theme or purpose with the same group of girls participating in all sessions for a short duration. Each girl chooses to participate in the entire series as a complete program package; series offerings may be short term (for example, six days of two-hour daily meetings) or longer term (such as meeting every two weeks for twelve weeks) but always is shorter than an academic year.
- Travel: The travel pathway offers girls leadership opportunities and cross-cultural understanding through local, regional, national, and international travel. Girls prepare, plan, money-earn, and participate through group travel, council-sponsored trips, or nationally sponsored excursions. The travel pathway also facilitates appropriate progression; for example, younger girls participate in short, local trips to prepare them for longer, international trips as they progress through grade levels.
- Troops: The troop pathway offers the same group of girls the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities, usually over a span of nine to twelve months. Girls may join at any time during the troop year. **Note**: A troop that also goes camping or travels as a group is still operating in the troop pathway (not the camp or travel pathways).
- Virtual: The virtual pathway is an online Girl Scout community that provides girls with the opportunity to participate in Girl Scouting without regard to geographic location. Participation is through a Web-based platform developed by GSUSA and includes interactive and high-quality program activities in a safe, secure online environment.

# Policies of Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.

## Pluralism and Diversity in Girl Membership

All Girl Scout councils and USA Girl Scouts Overseas committees shall be responsible for seeing that membership is reflective of the pluralistic nature of their populations and that membership is extended to all girls in all population segments and geographic areas in their jurisdictions. A girl who meets or can meet membership requirements shall not be denied admission or access to Girl Scout program because of race, color, ethnicity, creed, national origin, socioeconomic status, or disability. Reasonable accommodations shall be made for girls with disabilities to ensure that girls have access to activities.

## Selection of Adults

Every adult volunteer and executive staff member in Girl Scouting must be selected on the basis of qualifications for membership, ability to perform the job, and willingness and availability to participate in training for it. In selection of adults, there shall be no discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, sex, creed, national origin, or socioeconomic status. There shall be no discrimination against an otherwise qualified individual by reason of disability or on the basis of age. Members of Girl Scout council boards of directors and the National Board of Directors shall be selected so that the boards of directors represent diverse population groups and can bring to their deliberations a variety of points of view and life experiences, as well as access to cultural, religious, educational, civic, and economic resources. Executive staff shall be selected as needed to provide managerial and specialist expertise, research capability, and continuity to support the delivery of program to girls through volunteers.

## Affirmative Action for Volunteers

There shall be no discrimination against an otherwise qualified adult volunteer by reason of disability or on the basis of age. Furthermore, there shall be no discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, sex, creed, national origin, or socioeconomic status. In addition, to ensure full equality of opportunity in all operations and activities of the organization, affirmative action policies and procedures shall be utilized in the recruitment, selection, training, placement, and recognition of volunteers. Special emphasis shall be placed upon securing representation of underrepresented population groups.

From: Blue Book of Basic Documents, 2009 (revised June 2010), page 19



## **CONSISTENT MESSAGES ABOUT GIRL SCOUT MEMBERSHIP AND PROGRAM**

### **Girl Scouting provides a unique all-girl environment.**

Working in partnership with caring adults, girls can explore their potential without competition from boys—an opportunity many educators consider essential for girls to achieve future aspirations. Unlike many other youth-serving organizations, GSUSA continues to devote its total resources to the development of girls.

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

To continue to serve the unique interests and needs of girls, the National Program Portfolio, a strengthened program model, with input from Girl Scouts, non-Girl Scouts, and youth development experts, has been developed.

### **The Girl Scout program meets the developmental, educational, emotional, and social needs and interests of girls grades k-12.**

The National Program Portfolio provides a framework for a consistent Girl Scout experience focused on personal growth and leadership development and differentiated more closely by age.

### **Female role models are essential for carrying out the purpose of Girl Scouting.**

Interaction with women in leadership positions is of particular importance in the development of girls. GSUSA recommends that men who serve in troop leadership roles do so as co-leaders with women.

### **Girl Scouts of the USA is a membership organization.**

The membership registration policy states that girls and adults participating in the Girl Scout Movement must be registered as members with Girl Scouts of the USA. The Girl Scout program, handbooks and other resources, uniforms, and insignia are developed and produced by GSUSA for the exclusive use of its members.

### **The membership of Girl Scout councils and USA Girl Scouts Overseas locations are to reflect the pluralism and diversity of their populations.**

No girl or adult who meets membership requirements will be denied admission or access to Girl Scout program because of race, color, ethnicity, creed, national origin, socioeconomic status, or disability.

### **Girl Scout councils are chartered by GSUSA.**

Councils develop organizational structures to provide effective services to girl members in their jurisdictions, tailoring methods for delivering program and support services to the groups they are designed to serve.

### **Girl Scout councils are community-based organizations.**

Successful councils deliver program activities that meet the needs of their communities, enriching the lives of girls and earning the support of the community. Girl Scout councils also work with local agencies and businesses to share their Girl Scout expertise.

**The girl membership-to-population ratio 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 its jurisdiction. The participation rate is based on the number of girls (grades K-12) who are members, relative to the number of girls in the population within those age groups.

**Girl Scout councils and GSUSA work in concert to achieve the membership goals of the Girl Scout Movement.**

The national organization provides a wide range of membership and program services and resources to councils. Councils recruit girls and adults, deliver Girl Scout program activities, and provide learning opportunities for the adults who serve them.

# The Service Unit

## WHAT IS A SERVICE UNIT?

A service unit is a geographic subdivision of the council. The service unit provides the primary support to troops within that area. Usually, elementary school boundary lines determine how service unit boundaries are comprised. A troop's service unit is determined by the school most of the girls attend. Troops will not be assigned to other service units unless there are extenuating circumstances that will be reviewed by the service unit and membership staff.

The **Service Unit Manager (SUM)** is accountable for the health and welfare of Girl Scouting in service unit. They are appointed by a Membership and Community Development Specialist for a term of one year and are responsible for:

- membership growth.
- ensuring that girls and troop leaders receive the support they need.
- directing the delivery of services within the service unit.
- recruiting and directing the work of the team members who assist in organizing troops and in providing support to Girl Scout troop leaders.

Basic to the Service Unit Manager's success is knowledge of the area in which she/he works, knowledge which includes the demographics of the area, how to effectively lead and manage other volunteers and physical resources available and present and potential membership statistics. This information will help the Service Unit Manager to determine the size of the service team, what special qualifications the members should have and what plans need to be developed for recruiting and maintaining a membership that is reflective of the local population.

No Service Unit Manager works alone. She/he receives direction and support from a Membership and Community Development Specialist. She/he coordinates service team and service unit meetings, sees that GSUSA and GSCM policies, standards and procedures are observed, and appoints and dismisses, if necessary, team members and troop leaders. The Service Unit Manager recruits and appoints all service team members who serve one year terms. Reappointment is made on the basis of performance and the needs of the council. The position appointment should be signed and kept on file at the council service center. Careful thought should be given to the selection of the service team. Each volunteer selected should have the qualifications, skills, experience and time necessary to undertake the responsibilities of the job. Service team members have specific responsibilities, but also share in the responsibility of the overall success of the service unit. The service team members should reflect the racial, ethnic and economic diversity of the geographic area's population.

# The Service Team

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SERVICE TEAM

This is a basic guideline for a Service Team to follow in order to assure it is providing adequate services within the Service Unit. Each Service Unit should work with their Membership and Community Development Specialist to develop the best framework that will meet the needs of their community.

The Service Team is Responsible For:

### A. Membership

- Organize, coordinate, and carry out recruitment plans with Service Team and Membership and Community Development Specialist (MCDS)
- Obtain leadership – insure the application process is followed and make appropriate appointments to positions
- Work with all members of the Service Unit and MCDS to attain membership goals
- Maintain sufficient troops of all grade levels to offer progression within the Girl Scout program
- Troops should be of a size established in *Volunteer Essentials* in order to offer a well balanced program.

### B. Volunteer Support

- Provide leaders/volunteers with training, workshops, and on the job support
- Encourage participation at Council trainings, events, and activities
- Conduct sufficient meetings of leaders and support personnel to assure quality control of troop programs and timely distribution of information

### C. Program

- Offer girls programs of high quality
- Provide stimulating inter-troop events
- Encourage girl participation in Council, National, and International Events
- Promote Camping and Out- of-Door activities

### D. Paperwork

- Accurate and timely submission of registrations
- Approval or Denial of applications for trips and money earning activities (then forwarded to GSCM for final approval)
- Paperwork for Events as necessary for the Service Unit

- General Paperwork –
  - ✓ Service Unit Rosters
  - ✓ Delegate Information
  - ✓ Volunteer Applications and Appointments
- Timely return of year-end financial reports and SU reports

#### E. Problem Solving

- Establish clear and consistent actions for problem solving and conflict resolution
- Unbiased decision making.

#### F. Effective Communication

- Between staff and volunteers – delivery of information should be accurate, positive, and timely
- Between Service Unit Manager and Membership and Community Development Specialist on a regular basis
- Establish various methods of information transfer including use of e-mail, fax, phone, alternate phone numbers, etc.
- Support and Promote Council Activities such as Cookie Program, S.H.A.R.E., Training, Programming Opportunities, etc.

#### G. Recognition of Volunteers

- Thank Volunteers on a regular basis. VRC Resource 05-1606: Thank You! Thank You!! Thank You!!!
- Submit Volunteers for GSCM and GSUSA recognitions. VRC Resource 06-100: Adult Recognitions Digest
- Share Volunteer successes at meetings
- Submit success stories to GSCM Director of Communications for Council Publications
- Celebrate Leaders Day – April 22<sup>nd</sup>

## SERVICE TEAM STRUCTURE

Each Service Team is structured based on the needs of the community. How you do it will depend on a variety of factors, probably the main one being the size of your Service Unit.

The following is a list of suggested positions for a Service Unit. Please work with your Membership and Community Development Specialist to decide what will work best for your area. You may wish to split a job into smaller tasks or even create a new position.

Service Unit Manager	Manage a team of volunteers in order to deliver Girl Scout program to girls and adults effectively and efficiently, to ensure membership growth, and to achieve the goals and objectives of the Girl Scout Council. Skills needed – tactful, works well with others, good communication skills good delegation skills, well organized.
Troop Consultant	Ensure quality program for girls by providing ongoing assistance to adults. The consultant will help leaders get started, will act as a resource to leaders, and will participate in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the Service Unit's Plan of Work. Skills needed – organized, Girl Scout program knowledge, creative, good communication skills.
Troop Organizer/ Recruiter	Recruit and place adults, organize troops/groups, place girls who wish to become members throughout the year. Develop membership in unserved/underserved populations to ensure a diverse membership. See that girls have the chance to progress to the next grade level. Skills needed – organized, knowledge of community resources, good communication skills, public speaker, responsive and reliable to return messages right away.
Service Unit Registrar	Ensure that girls and adults are registered in the Service Unit. Skills needed – Detail oriented, organized, good with paperwork and computer, reliable, major time commitment in spring and fall.
Service Unit Cookie Manager	Responsible for coordinating the cookie program, training and supporting troop cookie managers, and disseminating cookie program information and materials to troops/groups in the Service Unit. Skills needed – detail oriented, organized, good with paperwork and computers, reliable, works well with others
Service Unit Booth Sale Coordinator	Arrange for permission to sell cookies at locations within the Service Unit and coordinate schedules for troops planning to participate in the direct sale. Skills needed – organized, reliable, knowledge of community, works well with others.
Service Unit SHARE Coordinator	Responsible for presenting the SHARE Campaign to each of the troops. Assist troops with family SHARE presentations as necessary. Promote SHARE at all Service Unit Events and Activities in order to increase family participation. Skills needed – works well with others, organized, exciting public speaker, tactful, Girl Scout program knowledge, good communication skills.



Public Relations	Increase visibility of Girl Scouting within the local community. Activities may include placing articles in local newspapers and fliers, coordinate displays in public areas, notify troops of local opportunities such as parades, festivals, etc. Work with the Council's Director of Communications to share and disseminate Girl Scout news. Skills needed – knowledge of community media, excellent communication and writing skills, works well with others.
Secretary	Take notes and prepare minutes of Service Team and Service Unit meetings. Handle correspondence as directed by the Service Unit Manager. Skills needed – detailed oriented, excellent writing skills, reliable and punctual.
Treasurer	Manage Service Unit checking account, assist new troops with opening bank accounts. May review troop financial forms as needed. Skills needed – detail oriented, reliable, accounting skills.
Event Director	Oversee the planning and implementation of Service Unit Program Events such as Thinking Day programs, dances, bridging programs, age level activities, special interest activities, etc. Skills needed – organized, detail oriented, knowledge of Girl Scout program, works well with others.
Meet and Greet/ Specialist	Conduct Meet and Greets to the Service Unit with new leaders. Skills needed – Girl Scout program knowledge, people person, excellent communication skills.

## Recruiting and Appointing Service Team Members

The Service Unit Manager (SUM) works with the Membership and Community Development Specialist (MCDS) recruiting service team members. The SUM should share her/his ideas for team members with the MCDS before appointment. If a Service Unit Manager will be stepping down, the MCDS is responsible for recruiting and appointing a replacement, not the outgoing SUM, although they are encouraged to share suggestions.

Service teams thrive when there is a committed and diverse pool of adults to be considered for positions. Look beyond current troop leaders; they are already volunteering and it is important to locate individuals who truly can commit the time to fulfilling the service team positions requirements. Consider recruiting former leaders, lifetime members, parents of current girl members and community members.

Meet with prospective candidates to ascertain their interests, abilities, experience and time commitments. Be honest about the amount of time a position will require. Always get back to anyone expressing interest in volunteering within one week.

### Potential Sources for Service Team Members:

- Local Businesses/Industries - many large businesses have a volunteer resource person or a bulletin board where a volunteer poster can be placed
- Local Colleges/Tech Schools - campus volunteer resource center, campus groups, department offices where information on about volunteering can be placed
- Service Clubs - local Chamber of Commerce often have listings of local service clubs and special interest groups such as the American Association of University Women (AAUW)

### AFTER SERVICE TEAM MEMBERS ARE RECRUITED

1. Service Team members are to be appointed by the SUM using form 03-321 which can be found online or in the Volunteer Resource Center.
2. Make specific position assignments including accountabilities, specific areas of assignment (grade level coordinator, cluster coordinator, etc), and time commitment agreed upon.
3. Meet with team members to ensure they have orientation for their position and are aware of appropriate trainings they must attend.
4. Assist team members in developing individual objectives and schedules
5. Monitor team members' work and progress. Do periodic check ins between team meetings.
6. Work with the Membership and Community Development Specialist to maintain a good working relationship and constant communication with staff.

## Leadership Tips

To be a successful Service Team member takes time, effort, and teamwork. As a member of the service team, you represent a long tradition of dedicated adult service to Girl Scouts. If you believe in your own commitment - and honor it - others will catch your enthusiasm.

### Set clear expectations

Let the volunteer know what is expected:

- Review the position description with the volunteer
- Discuss frequency/importance of meetings
- Set goals with timelines
- Let the volunteer know what to expect from you, the service team, and the council staff
- Availability of help, advice, or referral of resources
- Information and regular communication
- Opportunities to review progress and expectations

### Be aware of the needs of individuals

- Recognize what motivates volunteers (not the same for everyone)
- New volunteers may feel **isolated or overwhelmed**. Make sure they receive the support they need
- Experienced volunteers may be looking for new opportunities or training. Encourage and help them to broaden their interests

### Be available when you are needed

- Listen well. Be present with the people you are talking with
- Offer advice in a supportive manner
- Voice your instructions and advice clearly

### Confront inappropriate behavior

- When possible, catch problems before or as soon as they happen
- Your job as service team member is to serve as an impartial, informed mediator
- Consult with your MCDS if there are any potential or existing problems. Service team members should first communicate with the SUM.

### Work together to get the job done

- Set clear agendas and conduct meetings efficiently with a defined timeline
- Set objectives that are reasonable, attainable, accepted and understood by ALL
- Decide what needs to be done and assign roles. Ensure assignments are clear and reasonable in terms of time, skills and resources
- Make sure everyone is following *Council Volunteer Policies* and *Safety Activity Checkpoints*
- Ensure that volunteers are connected with each other, know where to find answers and are empowered to make informed decisions
- Decide how you will communicate with each other, make decisions and resolve problems

## Service Unit Goals

Once the Team is established, one of the first tasks will be to sit down together to create the Service Unit's goals and plan for the year. This will be your blueprint for the year and you should build a goal check-in time into your monthly Team Meeting agenda. Doing this will make sure you and your Team stay on track and keep the big picture in mind. A template for these goals, Service Unit Plan of Work (03-1762) can be found in our forms section online.

**HOW** you reach those goals and **WHO** will be responsible for each phase of the plan is something you'll need to work out with your Team. However you choose to approach it, you'll want to remember the responsibilities of a Service Unit and also GSCM's Council Goals.

Girl & Adult Recruitment – This goal goes right to the heart of things -- we can't do any of it if there aren't any girls to serve or adults to lead the way. Every year hundreds of girls living in your Service Unit want to get involved in Girl Scouts! We need volunteers to make that happen. The SU is a vital link in the recruitment team. Your SU together with the membership staff, plan recruitments throughout the year which allow girls to join the movement at any time of year.

Questions you'll want to ask your Team to help create the plan should include:

- Based on our goal, how many new troops should we try to organize?
- What's the best way to plan our recruitments (i.e., school by school, community centers, etc.)?
- How can we recruit adult volunteers?
- How do girls get placed into troops?
- Who is responsible for following-up with newly recruited Leaders?
- Who will follow-up with individually registered girls?

Girl and Adult Retention – Making sure that the girls (and their Leaders) are happy and feeling good about their Girl Scout experience doesn't just happen – it's something that we all have to work toward. The Service Unit should have a goal of providing an excellent support system to the Leaders so that they don't get overwhelmed. It should also set a goal that supports high quality programming for the girls. Therefore, you'll definitely want to use the information included in later sections of the manual to help you set your goals.

In addition, you'll want to ask yourselves certain questions when planning for retention, such as:

- What do the Leaders need to learn about to enhance their troop experience?
- What kind of events do the girls want?
- How do we involve girls in the planning of activities?
- How can we make sure our younger girls are seeing our older girls in action?

### Service Unit Team

- Is our Team complete?
- What other positions do we need/want to recruit?
- Has everyone received training for their position?

### Communications

- Who will be responsible for and how do we want to make sure we keep
- All our Leaders informed and aware?

### Volunteer Support & Recognition

- How will we make sure our volunteers get everything they need to be great Leaders and how do we plan on acknowledging their contributions?
- Who will do Meet and Greets in the Service Unit?

### Council Advancement

- Do you have the volunteers in place to support the cookie program?
- Does your Service Unit have volunteers to assist with SHARE?

A Service Unit should expect approximately 75-80% of the girls to remain in Girl Scouting from one year to the next. This normal retention rate (also known as 'attrition') is one of the big reasons that every Service Unit has to focus on recruitment first. Even the best Service Units lose enough girls each year that there would be no girls being served in just a few years if we don't continually replace them. Your Membership and Community Development Specialist can assist you in finding and interpreting the data you need to track retention.

## General Calendar for the Year

As a rule, the Girl Scout year tends to follow particular seasonal patterns; however, a Girl Scout membership is good for 12 months. Girls and Volunteers should be made aware of program and training options that allow them to get a full year of benefits out of their membership. Here are some key topics and tasks to remember when your Team creates the calendar for the Service Unit. Once the Service Unit's calendar is decided upon, distribute it to all your volunteers so that they will be prepared and aware of upcoming dates and projects.

### Fall – September thru November

- Team Meeting, finalize goals and plan for coming year
- Conduct Fall recruitments – organize new troops and place girls
- Conduct follow-up recruitment of girls who attended day camp, resident camp, or summer programs
- Compile lists of girls who cannot be immediately placed
- Follow up with troops who did not Early Bird
- SU Cookie Manager Training/Troop Cookie Manager Training
- Assist new leaders – Meet and Greets, etc.
- Help troop leaders recruit cookie facilitators for their troops if needed
- Create SU calendar for the year (including dates for all Team and SU meetings, events already scheduled, Girl Scout holidays, etc.).
- Invite newly recruited Leaders to SU meeting and plan investiture ceremony for them and rededication for returning volunteers
- Celebrate Juliette Low's Birthday – Oct 31

### Winter – December through February

- Review recruitment progress, conduct winter recruitments as necessary & plan for Spring recruitment
- Encourage bridging activities
- Begin discussions about adult recognitions –nominations due 2/28
- Celebrate World Thinking Day – Feb 22

### Spring – March through May

- Organize troop configurations for coming year (who is disbanding, merging, needs placement, etc)
- Conduct Spring Recruitment
- Encourage summer camp participation
- Celebrate the Girl Scout Birthday – March 12
- Volunteer Appreciation (Leader Appreciation day is 4/22)
- Promote Early Bird Registration
- Set up Service Team for upcoming year

## Summer – June through August

- Troops - End of Year Paperwork and Early Bird registration due to GSCM by June 30
- Service Team complete Plan of Work
- Deadline for SU Financial Report and Annual Report – June 30
- Follow up on outstanding year end paperwork
- Recruit and place new girls
- Set up new troops
- Organize fall recruitment and Back to School events
- Notify troops of first Service Unit meeting and Cookie training





# Guidelines and Protocols

## GUIDELINES FOR PROCESSING AND RETAINING TROOP FORMS

- 1. Troop Financial Report:** This form must be turned in to the Service Unit Manager by June 15 of every year. The Service Unit Manager is to review and send into the Membership and Community Development Specialist by June 30. It is then forwarded to the Chief Financial Officer for review. Those not submitting Finance Reports are subject to being removed from holding a volunteer position with GSCM.
- 2. Troop Activity: Parent Permission Slips:** This form is kept with the service unit records for one year from the date of the activity. In the event of any injury at a troop activity, Parent Permission Slip for the injured girl must be sent to the Council Service Center to be filed with any insurance claims. Also, the related Troop Trip Request for Approval form should be sent in for the council files.
- 3. Troop Activity: Troop Trip Request for Approval:** This form is to be approved by the Service Team, and then forwarded to the Membership and Community Development Specialist for council approval. A copy is kept with service unit records for one year from the date of the activity unless, as stated above, an injury occurs at this particular activity. In that case this form must be sent to the Council Service Center with the Parent Permission Slip for the injured girl.
- 4. Incident and Accident Report:** This report must be completed and filed with GSCM within 48 hours of an incident or accident. Please also include the other pertinent information as stated above. The form (07-127) is available on our website. Please follow the Crisis Communication Plan (00-600) in the event of a serious incident or accident.
- 5. Girl Scout Accident Insurance:** It is very important for service team members to know that Girl Scout accident insurance covers only accidents that occur during an approved Girl Scout activity. This means that the service unit manager (or assigned team member) must have signed the Troop Activity: Request for Approval form. If the troop leader does not have this form signed by the service unit manager or the assigned team member, the activity is not considered approved and the accident insurance would not be valid.
- 6. Troop Money Earning Request:** This form is to be approved by the Service Team, then forwarded to the Membership and Community Development Specialist for council approval. A copy of this form is kept with the service unit records for one year from the date of the activity.

## GUIDELINES FOR APPROVAL OF A TROOP TRIP

In order to approve troop trips, the service unit manager or her designee should be familiar with the Volunteer Essentials and the Safety Activity Checkpoints, which are available on the GSCM website.

The approver should consider the sections in the *Trip Application* and the following questions before granting approval. A negative answer to any of these questions indicates that the planning for the activity should be reviewed with the troop leader:

1. Is the purpose of the activity related to ongoing troop program and not an end in itself or a way to "use up" troop funds?
2. Time – Is there sufficient time for girls to complete their plans? Most adults can organize an outing or a camping trip very quickly but girls need time. Girl planning committees need time to gather the necessary information; the girls need time to report back to the others. Parents need time to receive and return the permission forms and make arrangements to be available to drive. Girl planning, when done well, takes time!
3. Is it appropriate for the program age level and the girls' experience? Does it follow a natural progression in experiences? Are the girls mature enough to accept the responsibilities involved?
4. Is it financed adequately? Does the program value of the activity justify the expense? Girls should be financing their troop activities with their dues and monies earned from the cookie program. Activities should be budgeted accordingly. Troop leaders are discouraged from allowing girls to plan activities that will require them to provide large amounts of their own money. Although a limited amount of financial assistance is available from GSCM's Financial Assistance fund, this is not intended to provide for expensive activities that are beyond the troop's budget.
5. Is the activity properly chaperoned? Too many adults can indicate a lack of girl planning or that the project is being adult generated.
6. Is the planning realistic? Is there a good balance of activities and rest?
7. Is transportation adequate? Do drivers of private cars have a current driver's license and insurance? Does the troop leader know that each driver of a vehicle must carry a copy of the Emergency Procedures and a GSUSA insurance form?
8. If the troop is participating in an outdoor activity, have the emergency and First Aid procedures been given special consideration? Are the adults familiar with the sites? Has an adult completed outdoor training?
9. Do girls and troop leaders understand applicable steps in the Safety Activity Checkpoints. Does the troop leader need additional help from the troop consultant or a troop leader who has conducted a similar activity? Does the service team need more information before approval can be given?
10. Guidelines for Troop Trips can be found in the Girl Scout Resource Packet for Trips and Travel (02-828)

## GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING SERVICE UNIT EVENTS

Girls need opportunities beyond the troop to help them realize they are part of The Girl Scout Movement and a group much larger than their own troop. For this reason, Girl Scouts of Central Maryland plans events throughout the year for girls. Because of the large number of girls, it is not always possible to plan a meaningful council-wide event for all age levels. It is here that the service team plays an important role in providing beyond-the-troop activities for girls.

Many service units have successfully used multi-troop activities to give girls an opportunity for learning and fun. At the same time, troop leaders are given help with troop activity ideas. Badge workshops, Juliette Low birthday parties, Thinking Day events, songfests, dance workshops, outdoor days, and bridging ceremonies are some of the possibilities for beyond the troop experiences for girls at the service unit level. *Safety Activity Checkpoints and Volunteer Essentials* should always be referenced when planning activities. GSCM offers Event Planning workshops in the spring in fall for adults interested in planning events beyond the troop level. Check the Adult Learning Schedule for upcoming dates.

Many times girls and troop leaders wish to invite parents and friends to a special event or troop meeting. Community involvement in Girl Scout activities is the best public relations tool there is. It also can be the worst. In order to help the girls and troop leaders carry out effective public activities the service team needs to consider whether:

1. The girls are involved in planning the activity.
2. The activity or agenda and/or props reflect Girl Scouting ideals and the development of girl creativity.
3. The length of time, dress, etc., is appropriate to the occasion.
4. The purpose of the activity is made clear to the participants.
5. The mechanics and timing of activities are well planned:
  - size of room, location and position of chairs are appropriate.
  - acoustics of sound system enables all to hear.
  - equipment to be used is in working order.
  - hostesses, the flag ceremony, introductions, activities and the closing are coordinated so that the event starts and ends on time and girl and adult interest is maintained.
  - clean up is organized.
  - "thank you" notes are written.
6. The value-received equals cost if the girls or the public is charged a fee or items are sold. Money earning guidelines are followed.
7. Costs such as rental fees, fees for utilities, etc. have been prorated among the participants.

**SIMPLE, INEXPENSIVE and SHORT activities are the KEYS to SUCCESS.**

### Service Unit Encampments -

If your Service Unit is planning an encampment, troops participating in a Service Unit Encampments are required to have an adult with Basic Troop Camping. In the event a troop does not have a trained adult as part of the troop, they may "buddy up" with a troop that does. Keep in mind, this means that the Trained Adult must work with both troops to prepare for the encampment prior to attending. Encampment Directors, must be informed of any "buddy" troops" when registering.

## GUIDELINES FOR GRANTING PERMISSION FOR A TROOP MONEY EARNING ACTIVITY

Before granting this permission, the service unit manager or the designated team member should:

1. Review money earning policies in the Guide to Council Policies (00-221)
2. Review the money-earning section of *Volunteer Essentials*.
3. Determine from the troop's "Permission for Troop/Group Money Earning" whether or not a specific program need for the additional funds has been established and, if so, whether it reflects girl involvement in the planning rather than an adult's idea of what the projected expenses of the troop might be.
4. Check to see if the troop has participated in or will be participating in GSCM's cookie program. Troops registered at the time of the cookie program who do not participate may not conduct any additional money earning activities.
5. Decide whether the application should be approved or rejected as is or whether changes should be requested.
6. Sign the application, and forward to your Membership and Community Development Specialist for final approval.
7. Troops should not conduct money earning activities that will compete with the cookie program during that time period.

## GUIDELINES FOR HANDLING DISCREPANCIES IN TROOP FUNDS

At the time of appointment, a Girl Scout troop leader should be told that she or her designated representative is the custodian of troop funds. The troop leader is responsible to the Girl Scouts of Central Maryland Board of Directors for any monies collected in the name of Girl Scouts. Such monies are to be used ONLY by the troop for troop activities. The troop leader is responsible for maintaining records and preparing reports, which reflect the status of funds within the troop.

If a troop leader fails to maintain records and prepare reports, the service unit manager or the designated person should review the situation with that troop leader and try to reconcile the problem.

The following are guidelines applicable to more serious situations:

### **Existence, Amount or Status of Troop Bank Account Unknown**

If a troop leader has moved, leaving no records, no accounting of funds and no access to the troop bank account and the service unit manager has exhausted all means at her disposal to determine the status of the account, she should consult directly with the Membership and Community Development Specialist for support and advice. This situation can be avoided by having the service unit manager or a member of the service team as a co-signer for all troop bank accounts.

### **Misappropriation of Troop Funds**

If it is suspected that there has been misappropriation of funds or when actual misappropriation is established, the SUM should immediately contact the Membership and Community Development Specialist so appropriate measures can be taken.

## GIRL PLACEMENT

### Recommended Placement Options to Consider

When placing girls consider the following to ensure a fair placement process:

1. Re-registering girls within a troop.
2. Daughters of leaders.
3. Girls of same program grade level whose troops are not re-registering.
4. Bridging girls.
5. Transferring girls registered in other service units within council or from outside the council including girls previously registered in Troop 21215, the Council's troop for girls waiting to be placed.
6. Girls new to Girl Scouting and/or waiting lists.
7. Previously registered girls with a lapse in membership.
8. In Council transfers.

## Media Relations Information for Volunteers

This content is intended for the sole use of Girl Scouts of Central Maryland volunteers. It should not be distributed in its entirety or posted online (i.e. public Websites, internet forums, etc.)

### Speaking To The Media

We ask that volunteers and girls include the GSCM Communications Department whenever they are approached by mainstream/daily media outlets, television stations and radio stations. This is to ensure a consistent message throughout our Council. If you are contacted by or would like to contact small community newspapers or community radio stations, you can. We just ask that you call the Communications Department so we are aware of the story and we can brag about your efforts!

### Media Show Up At An Event

If media show up unexpectedly at an event, utilize the opportunity to promote Girl Scouting and the wonderful things we are doing to develop leadership in our girls. Do your best to answer their questions. If you are unsure of the answer or a potentially controversial topic comes up, do not answer! Instead, direct their questions to the Director of Communications. You can use the following phrase to help you make the transition, "I am not the appropriate person with whom you should speak; let me put you in contact with the Director of Communications at Girl Scouts of Central Maryland who can answer your questions in much greater detail." Before the media leave the event, be sure you know the name of the media person and the name of the media outlet she/he represents and ask when they are planning to run the story. Please contact the Director of Communications as soon as possible so that we are aware of the story and can handle any necessary follow-up. If your interactions with the media occur outside of regular business hours, please contact Maria Johnson, Vice President of Advancement, 443-802-7831.

### Involving The Girls

Please try to allow the girls to tell the story and do the interviews whenever possible. You must have a signed permission form that allows them to be quoted, photographed and/or filmed. Be sure that details about troop meetings (time, location, etc.) are not published.

### Media Don'ts

- Don't give out any information, including proprietary information and/or names of the individuals involved in a crisis.
- Don't say "no comment." Instead say, "Let me put you in touch with our Director of Communications and she will call you back."
- Don't argue with a reporter or become defensive or hostile.
- Don't place blame.
- Don't underestimate any reporter and never speak "off the record."

### Communications Department

Danita Terry, Director of Communications  
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