

*Girl Scout  
Parent  
Handbook*



## GIRL SCOUTS, SERVICE UNIT 126



Our goal is to help every girl grow as a Girl Scout. This handbook is designed to help you understand more about our program so your child can fully participate in all the great things Girl Scouts has to offer!

### *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.

### *Mission Statement*

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

## *Girl Scout Leadership Development Program*

The leadership model is the new design for what girls do in Girl Scouting and how adult support can strengthen their experience. It is the road map for determining what a girl will learn and how she will be impacted. The model defines and displays all the elements that must be in place to positively impact girls' lives. The Girl Scout Leadership Development Program is the model in action.

Through the Girl Scout Leadership Development Program girls will discover their personal best and prepare for a positive future, connect with others in an increasingly diverse world, and take action to solve problems and improve their communities. Girls have told us that these opportunities matter very much to girls—both in their daily lives and as they prepare for their futures. And, with our unique focus on a by girls, for girls approach and cooperative and experiential learning, girls will continue to have fun, friendship, and exciting adventures.

The Girl Scout approach to leadership is based on three pillars—Discover, Connect and Take Action. As a Girl Scout **discovers** her world, she develops a strong sense of self, gains practical and healthy life skills, and strengthens her values. As a Girl Scout **connects** with others in a global community, she forms caring relationships, promotes cooperation and team building, and embraces diversity. As a Girl Scout **takes action** in the world, she feels empowered to make a difference, identifies and solves problems she cares about, and advocates for herself and others. The Girl Scout leadership development pillars represent cycles of activities that engage girls in practicing leadership skills, based on the values of the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Girl Scouts will redefine with girls and the nation what it means to be a leader.

Girls may participate in a troop setting or in a short or long-term outreach program. Outreach programs allow girls to participate where there are no existing troops or no strong adult support network. These programs are provided at various sites including community centers, schools, day cares and Headstarts. Some girls participate in Girl Scouting during the school day or attend a summer program.

Girl Scouting opens up a world of opportunity for girls. Your daughter's troop is also a member of a Girl Scout service unit, council and national organization.

# *What Parents Need to Know*

## *Girl Scout Grade Levels*

The Girl Scout age levels are defined by grades. It is important to know your Girl Scout's grade level so that you can be directed to the appropriate materials and uniforms.

Daisy Girl Scouts – Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade

Brownie Girl Scouts – Grades 2-3

Junior Girl Scouts – Grades 4-5

Cadette – Grades 6-8

Senior – Grades 9-10

Ambassador – Grades 11-12

## *Troop Leader & Troop Number*

You'll need to know your leader's name and phone number, and the troop/group number. This information will help you get materials from the Promise Provisions Girl Scout Store and will enable us to direct your phone call or information you may need from your Membership Specialist (your service unit's Girl Scout staff liaison).

## *Date, Time & Location of Meetings*

Troop meeting information should be obtained from your troop leader. It is your responsibility to make arrangements to get your daughter to and from meetings. Your leader is a volunteer, so please plan your schedule so that your daughter is on time for the meeting and is picked up promptly after the meeting.

## *Uniforms & Handbooks*

Uniforms are not required in Girl Scouts, but we recommend that girls have a sash or vest to display their awards, badges and patches. The Girl Scout uniform can be put together in many different ways. Some troops will decide on certain pieces or may make their own T-shirts, while others allow the individual girls to decide what type of uniform to wear.

This information is available from the troop leader, so check with her before you go shopping. Please buy it with room to grow, since it will be worn for several years.

The Girl Scout uniform is worn with pride and readily identifies girls as members. Parents can purchase the Girl Scout uniform and other related items at the Promise Provisions Girl Scout Store. There are grade level specific handbooks available for girls in Girl Scouting. These books cover the Girl Scout Program and requirements for Daisy petals, Brownie Try-Its, Junior badges and Cadette/Senior interest projects or charms. Be sure to check with your Girl Scout leader for what items are needed and information about Promise Provisions.

## *Benefits of Girl Scouting to Parents*

National Girl Scout research has shown that Girl Scouting provides benefits to not only the girls involved, but their parents as well. As a Girl Scout parent you may spend more quality time with your daughter, enjoy a strengthened relationship, build lasting friendships with other adults, and develop leadership skills.

Girl Scouts gives parents and girls the opportunity to be involved in an activity that benefits the community and gives them a sense of personal satisfaction by achieving a goal together.

### *The Girl Scout Parent's Promise\**

On my honor, I will try:

To encourage and support my Girl Scout daughter,

To help her troop at all times, and

To obey the Girl Scout Parent's Law

### *The Girl Scout Parent's Law\**

A Girl Scout Parent understands the true purpose of Girl Scouting.

A Girl Scout Parent gets his/her daughter to and from meetings on time.

A Girl Scout Parent knows a troop is a team effort.

A Girl Scout Parent sees the job through to the end.

A Girl Scout Parent sets a good example at all times.

A Girl Scout Parent is enthusiastic and cheerful.

A Girl Scout Parent does not consider the leader a babysitter.

A Girl Scout Parent brings troop problems to the leader first.

A Girl Scout Parent always does his or her part willingly.

A Girl Scout Parent is aware that Girl Scouting is for all girls.



\* Adapted  
Parent's Promise  
And Law

## *What will my daughter do in Girl Scouts?*

Girl Scouts enjoy a variety of activities that are fun, educational and safe. They are based on a core set of values, and are flexible and adaptable to meet the needs and interests of all girls.

### *Make New Friends*

Girl Scouts provides girls with the opportunity to meet and interact with girls outside their own class, school, and community.

### *Badges*

Girls will learn many new skills in a variety of interest areas, including science, technology, arts, citizenship, getting along with others, math, nutrition/fitness, ecology and outdoors. Badges are earned awards (worn on the front of the vest/sash). Patches are usually awarded for participation in an activity or event (worn on the back of the vest/sash).

### *Trips*

Troops plan field trips, camping trips, overnight trips, and may attend service unit/council-sponsored events and programs. Service Unit and council sponsored events and programs give girls the opportunity to interact with other girls and adults in their community.

### *Camping*

Troops may choose to plan a picnic, hike or camp at one of our council-owned camps. Service unit day camps and summer resident camp are also available.

### *Service Projects*

Troops plan a variety of service projects to benefit their local neighborhoods and communities as well as participate in service unit or council-sponsored activities.

### *Ceremonies*

Ceremonies mark special Girl Scout events throughout the year. They can celebrate major transitions – such as bridging to another level, getting your Girl Scout pin or earning awards – or simply make the beginning or end of your group’s meeting special. You can also plan a ceremony around a theme (like friendship or nature) that you wish to explore in thought, words or song. Flag ceremonies are a special part of Girl Scouting that teach girls respect for the flag, what it stands for and how to handle it. Every Girl Scout ceremony enables girls to share in a special part of Girl Scout history and create their own special memories.

# *Who Pays for What?*

## *Troop Funds*

Troop funds are earned by the troop and are the property of the troop as a whole and not the individual members. The girls, with guidance from the leaders, will decide how these funds will be used for their programs. Leaders are required to keep troop financial records and to share this information with parents on a regular basis.

## *Troop Money Earning Activities*

All troops have two council-sponsored sales available to them as money earning activities – the Fall Sale (QSP/Ashdon Farm: magazines, candy and nuts), from September to October, and the Girl Scout Cookie Sale, from January to March. Parent involvement is necessary for successful sales. Permission from GSHNC is required before a troop may conduct any money-earning activities other than the Fall Sale or Cookie Sale.

## *Troop Program*

The troop will plan many different activities. Some may involve field trips, camping trips, overnight trips or service unit/council events and activities that will require funding by the troop and/or parents. Permission forms are required.

## *Troop Dues*

Many troops have weekly or per-meeting dues to help with their expenses. The troop dues are set by the troop and are payable even if the girl misses a meeting.

## *Financial Assistance*

Assistance is available for girls and adults who need financial help in order to participate in the Girl Scout program. Financial assistance is available for registration, dues, uniform components, books, service unit or council-sponsored events and programs and summer resident camp. Check with your leader, service unit or Albany Service Center for more information.

## *Membership Fee*

Each girl and adult helping with the troop pays a \$15 annual membership fee. This goes directly to Girl Scouts of the USA for program development and activity insurance. No money stays with the local council. The membership fee is turned in to the troop leader along with the completed membership form.

# *Responsibility of Girls and Parents*

## *Girl Scout's Responsibility to the Troop*

- ◆ To attend meetings and outings.
- ◆ To fulfill obligation of dues, and know that permission slip are signed by a parent or guardian.
- ◆ To complete any missed activities.
- ◆ To pass along important information to parents or leaders.
- ◆ To treat each member of the troop as a sister.
- ◆ To respect Sister Girl Scouts.
- ◆ To respect troop leaders and troop parents.
- ◆ To participate in the meetings.
- ◆ To conduct themselves in a safe manner.
- ◆ To listen to others in the troop and show respect for what they are saying.

## *Parent's Responsibility To The Troop*

- ◆ To see that your daughter arrives and is picked up on time for all meetings and outings.
- ◆ To help your daughter fulfill troop responsibilities (dues, permission slips, snack, uniforms, etc.).
- ◆ To be supportive of your daughter in her Girl Scout endeavors (help her to complete missed activities).
- ◆ If possible, to notify the leaders ahead of time if your daughter will not be at a meeting.
- ◆ To check with your daughter's leader for any important news or permission slips that may need to be signed, and to return completed paperwork promptly.
- ◆ To assist the troop and the troop leaders during meetings or activities on a rotating or as needed basis.
- ◆ To consider being a member of the Troop Committee.
- ◆ To keep in contact with the leaders and give them feedback.
- ◆ To discuss any issues that arise privately with the leader, not in front of the girls.
- ◆ To help the troop leaders establish and maintain a positive environment within the troop, by talking with your daughter about acceptable behavior and by setting a positive example yourself.
- ◆ To let your daughter know that you consider her participation in Girl Scouting to be important and special.
- ◆ To attend parent meetings, group activities and special ceremonies.





## *Volunteers are the Lifeblood of Girl Scouting*

Our volunteers make a difference...in the lives of girls, in the success of families and in the growth of communities. The strength of Girl Scouting rests on the shoulders of adult volunteers who are committed to helping all girls develop into strong, confident, capable women.

Remember that your daughter's troop leader is a volunteer. She spends a great deal of time attending trainings and preparing for and leading her meetings. Please support your Girl Scout's troop and encourage her participation in activities, to enable her to enjoy her Girl Scout experience. Girl Scouts is a team effort among leaders, girls and parents. There are many ways you can help your Girl Scout's troop:

- ◆ Assistant Leader
- ◆ Refreshments chair (bring snacks to each meeting)
- ◆ Special events chair (arrange trips and other events)
- ◆ Transportation chair (coordinate who will drive on each field trip)
- ◆ Record keeper (keep all troop records, including registration and individual girl records)
- ◆ Recognitions chair (check girls on recognitions work, arrange help when needed, keep record keeper informed)
- ◆ Phone tree chair (coordinate calling the girls if necessary)
- ◆ Fall Sale chair (responsible for the Fall Sale – Brownies and up)
- ◆ Cookie chair (responsible for the Cookie Sale – Brownies and up)
- ◆ Emergency contact (available for leaders and parents to contact in case of an emergency while the troop is on a field trip)

### *Have you hugged your Troop Leader today?*

Your troop leader is a volunteer, paid in smiles and hugs. There are many ways you and your Girl Scout can show your appreciation. Leader Appreciation Day is April 22. Keep in mind that these thoughtful gestures would be greatly appreciated at any time!

- ◆ Send a card or letter
- ◆ Give her a drawing
- ◆ Take a photograph of the troop
- ◆ Make a homemade treat
- ◆ Offer to babysit for the leader
- ◆ Donate to Girl Scouts in her name
- ◆ Prepare dinner for the leader and her family
- ◆ Thank her in a letter to the editor of your local paper.
- ◆ Nominate her for an award (contact service unit for nomination form)

## *Where do Girl Scout Leaders come from?*

You don't have to have children to be a troop leader! Leaders are **volunteers** - parents, grandparents, guardians, aunts, uncles, other family members and adult friends of registered girls who give unselfishly of their time. Don't forget college students who need a community service project. What makes a troop thrive?

- ◆ Helping hands
- ◆ Enthusiasm
- ◆ Positive attitudes
- ◆ Team work
- ◆ Dedication

### *Can one person run a troop?*

No! Even with just a few girls, there must be a minimum of two registered adults present, one of whom must be a female.

- ◆ Each leader must have a support team of assistant/co-leaders and **involved** family members.
- ◆ When enough people pitch in to help at meetings, the pressure is taken off the leader, and your child receives a better program.

### *What is a team?*

A team is a group of people who can share ideas and communicate honestly what they feel and think. They work together to include individual differences in their plans. They accept each other. Everyone participates in an effort to achieve a common goal so that others beyond the original group can think and work with them.

### *As a parent or guardian, what can I do to help?*

- ◆ As you enter the meeting, ask what needs to be done. For younger girls, set up projects or snacks, collect dues, take attendance, and hand out materials. With older girls, guide them in these tasks.
- ◆ Take the initiative to guide the girls from activity to activity to avoid chaos
- ◆ Take the initiative to help collect and put away materials after a project is completed and help clean up the activity and snack tables. With older girls, help guide **the girls** to put away and clean up.

## *Girl Scouts, Northeastern New York*

Girl Scouts “builds girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place” and has served girls since 1916 in Northeastern New York. Nearly one of every 8 girls between 5-17 years old is a Girl Scout, gaining access to leadership and team-building skills, career skills and exploration, and character building with the guidance of caring adult role models.

Girl Scouts of Northeastern New York (GSNENY) was established in June 2007 from the union of four Girl Scout Councils (Hudson Valley, Mohawk Pathways, Adirondack and North Country) and now serves the 15 counties of: Albany, Clinton, Columbia, Greene, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Montgomery, Hamilton, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Warren and Washington.

- ◆ Serving 10,000 girls+ and their families
- ◆ Serving 5,000+ adults and volunteers
- ◆ Serving more girls within the region and reducing/eliminating any waiting lists of girls who have signed up to be involved with Girl Scouting
- ◆ Increasing our capacity to meet the rapidly changing needs of today’s girls to achieve the goals of program delivery, volunteer management and funding
- ◆ Increasing programs at the council level around advocacy, culture, environment, healthy living, the outdoors and STEM
- ◆ Reaching out to girls in rural areas and decreasing the barrier of distance for girls to participate in Girl Scout activities and educational programming
- ◆ Increasing Girl Scout programming in urban areas and continuing to form partnerships with local community organizations that provide opportunities for under-served families
- ◆ Continuing to set the example of leadership and self-determination that are an inherent part of the Girl Scout program

The leadership experiences for girls are what make Girl Scouting unique. We help every girl discover who she can be and what she can do, wherever she chooses to put her energies. The experience begins with the Girl Scout environment itself. A girl’s leadership blooms among other girls – away from school programs, social cliques and boys – where she can be herself and try new things. In Girl Scouts, activities are girl-led. She learns by doing and the learning is cooperative, not competitive.

## *Volunteer Training*

Volunteer Learning opportunities in Girl Scouting help volunteers gain the knowledge, skills, and confidence to successfully facilitate a meaningful and safe Girl Scout experience. Learning opportunities come in many forms: face to face classes, online resources, discussions, conferences and more! Opportunities are offered throughout the year. The online class calendar contains courses for leaders, assistant leaders, service team members, first-aiders, outdoor enthusiasts and more. Parents are also encouraged to take courses on behalf of their troop. All courses are designed to enhance and develop your knowledge, skills, abilities, and enthusiasm for Girl Scouting.



Adult learning opportunities and resources can be found [here](#). There are online courses as well as face to face classes; registration for classes is available online.

# *Commit to a Girl - Commit to Our Future!*

## *Make a Gift*

A tax-deductible gift to the Annual Fund is the most fundamental way to invest in girls grades K-12 participating in Girl Scouts throughout the 15 counties served by Girl Scouts of Northeastern New York (GSNENY). Donors may direct gifts toward one of the following funding priorities during the fiscal year October 1 – September 30:

- ◆ Direct where the gift is needed most
- ◆ Direct the gift toward expanding leadership opportunities for girls through PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT (i.e. programs around STEM, financial literacy, healthy living, environmental leadership, global citizenship, camp, travel, etc.)
- ◆ Direct the gift toward advancing Girl Scouting through MEMBERSHIP OUTREACH and VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT (i.e. scholarships for girls to afford participation in Girl Scouts, training & resources, technology enhancements, etc.)
- ◆ Direct the gift toward developing a national agenda for girls through knowledge, networks & ADVOCACY. (i.e. training, program development, etc.)

## *Why We Sell Cookies*

In addition to participating in a service project for their council, girls take part in the Cookie Sale to grow strong in several important areas:

- ◆ Girls learn to set goals, for themselves and for the group, and to formulate a plan of work to achieve those goals.
- ◆ Girls develop managerial skills by coming up with strategies and motivating each other to achieve their objectives.
- ◆ Girls learn interpersonal skills necessary to communicate to a variety of potential customers about purchasing cookies.
- ◆ Girls grow in self-confidence and pride by accomplishing goals that financially benefit the troop and the council.
- ◆ Girls learn how to manage money. By setting monetary benchmarks to participate in specific activities, they learn to develop and work within a budget.
- ◆ Girls have FUN! In pairs and within their troops, they enjoy fellowship with each other and opportunities to interact with friends and neighbors.

## *Girl Scout Store*

### *Purchasing official pins and badges*

**Click here** to access the Girl Scout Store Mail Order Form to place an order by mail.



Click the shop button above to be automatically directed to the new user friendly website. All current website customers will need to register on the new site in order to create a username and password. **IMPORTANT:** Troop leaders or officers must contact the store, before registering, to be set up as a tax-exempt customer. If you need to be tax-exempt please email [storeorders@gsneny.org](mailto:storeorders@gsneny.org) and provide your name, troop number, email, and mailing address. Once the email request is received, tax-exempt status will be created and an email sent to register on the new web-site. Questions or assistance with registering on the new site please call 518-489-8110.

### *Catalogs*

GSUSA mails catalogs each July. The Promise Provisions Girl Scout Store keeps additional copies on hand. Leaders are asked to supply a copy of the catalog and store schedule to each troop family. All items in the catalog can be purchased at or through our store. Only by purchasing at or through our council's store do the girls in our council benefit.

### *Store Hours*

Monday through Wednesday, and Friday: 10:00 am – 4:30 pm

Thursday: 10:00 am – 7:00 pm

1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of the month from 10 am – 1 pm

Summer Hours (June 14 – August 6, 2009)

Monday through Thursday: 10:00 am – 5:00 pm







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[www.gsny.org](http://www.gsny.org)

