



Girl Scouts USA – Fact Sheet

The following information has been assembled by the National Scouting and Youth Services Committee to assist chapters with their interaction with Girl Scouts of the United States of America.

The mission of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America (GSUSA) is to build girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place. The GSUSA serves 1.9 million girls and young women, and over 800,000 adult volunteers. The organization was founded in 1912 and is headquartered in New York City.

The Girl Scout program is based on the Girl Scout Promise and Law and upon four fundamental goals that encourage girls to: develop to their full potential; relate to others with increasing understanding, skill, and respect; develop a meaningful set of values to guide their actions and to provide for sound decision-making; and to contribute to the improvement of society. Youth membership in Girl Scouts is limited to young women at all age levels. Adult membership is open to both women and men.

There are six age levels established for girls who participate in GSUSA:

Daisy	Kindergarten/Grade 1	Cadettes	Grades 6-8
Brownie	Grades 2-3	Seniors	Grades 9-10
Junior	Grades 4-5	Ambassadors	Grades 11-12

Girls “Bridge” up to the next age level, Brownies also “fly-up” to Juniors.

Campus Girl Scouts is the GSUSA organization for college age adults who wish to volunteer to support their local Girl Scout council. As participants within Campus Girl Scouts are adult volunteers, membership is open to both women and men. The groups are organized through the local Girl Scout Council. For information on the location of Campus Girl Scout groups and contact information, visit the GSUSA website.

Through 2010, Girl Scouts underwent a major restructuring of councils across the United States, realigning more than 300 councils to 109. Though chartered through GSUSA, each council is independently operated and staffed. Organizational structure within councils also varies.

GSUSA is a member organization within the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS). It is comprised of 145 Girl Guide/Girl Scout national associations and provides the structure for uniting all its member organizations and promotes and establishes the Girl Guide/Girl Scout program in new countries around the world.

Most girls participate in Girl Scouts through a traditional “troop” setting. Troops are “owned” by their local council and may or may not be sponsored. Sponsors do not “own” troops. Troops are most commonly organized around a single age level to promote age appropriate programming and peer interaction. Girls may also choose to participate independently from a troop setting.

Recognitions within Girl Scouts are structured by age level and involve accompanying levels of difficulty: Daisy Girl Scouts earn “Petals” and “Leaves”, while older girls earn “Badges”. Recently, Girl Scouts has launched the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, structuring the recognition program around National Leadership Journeys. The “Journeys” are each based upon three keys to leadership: “Discover,” “Connect” and “Take Action.” There are three “Journey” themes; “It’s Your World – Change It!”, “It’s Your Planet – Love It!”, and “It’s Your Story – Tell It!”. Each age level of Girl Scouting has a program guide to lead girls on each of these Journeys. Badges are structured into categories including, Legacy, Financial Literacy, Cookie Business and Skill Building. Girl Scouts programming focuses on four pillars: STEM education, the outdoors, life skills, and entrepreneurship.

Significant awards within Girl Scouts include: *the Girl Scout Gold Award*, considered the highest award in Girl Scouts; *the Girl Scout Silver Award*; and *the Girl Scout Bronze Award*. The Girl Scout Gold Award focuses on a 14- to 18-year-old Girl Scout’s interests and personal journey through leadership skills, career explorations, self-improvement, and service. The Girl Scout Silver Award symbolizes an 11- to 14-year-old Girl Scout’s accomplishments in Girl Scouting and community activities as she matures and works to better her life and the lives of others. The Girl Scout Bronze Award recognizes that a Junior Girl Scout has gained the leadership and planning skills required to follow through with a project that makes a positive difference in her community.

Important “holidays” within Girl Scouts include: World Thinking Day (February 22) recognizing the world movement of Girl Guiding and Girl Scouts; Girl Scout Week (early March) that recognizes the founding of Girl Scouts in the United States on March 12th; Leader Day (April 22) which recognizes the contributions of Girl Scout volunteers; and Founder’s Day (October 31) recognizing the birthday of Juliette Gordon Low, the founder of Girl Scouting in the United States.

Additional information about the Girl Scouts of the United States of America, including a link to locate the Girl Scout Council in your area can be found on their web site at <http://www.girlscouts.org>.