

Introduction

Welcome to the great adventure of Girl Scouting! Thanks to volunteers like you, generations of girls have learned to be leaders in their own lives and in the world.

No matter why and how you choose to spend your time with Girl Scouts, your investment in time and energy will pay back ten-fold. Little can compare to the satisfaction you'll feel as you help girls grow in self-confidence, discover their genuine selves, connect with the people and community around them, and take action to make a difference in the world.

The Beginnings of Girl Scouting

Juliette "Daisy" Gordon Low assembled 18 girls from Savannah, Georgia, on March 12, 1912, for a local Girl Scout meeting. Her goal: Bring all girls out of isolated home environments and into community service and the open air. Girl Scouts hiked, played basketball, went on camping trips, learned how to tell time by the stars, and studied first-aid. For more on Juliette Gordon Low, visit www.girlscouts.org/who_we_are/history/low_biography.)

Today, Girl Scouts has a membership of more than 3.5 million girls and adults, and over 50 million women in the United States are Girl Scout alumnae. You belong to this powerful network!

Girls and Women Today

Although girls and women have made remarkable progress since Juliette Low founded the first Girl Scout troop in 1912, inequalities still persist:

- Women earn 77 cents for every dollar their male counterparts earn.
- For every dollar a white man earns, African American women earn 67 cents and Hispanic women earn approximately 58 cents.
- Women represent almost 50% of the workforce, but only 10% are CEOs of Fortune 500 companies.
- Women are granted fewer than 27% of Ph.D.s in physics, 20% in computer science, and 17% in engineering.
- Female professors represent only 36% of tenured faculty nationwide.
- Only 13% of universities granting doctorates have women presidents.
- Women only hold 87 of the 535 seats (16.3%) in the U.S. Congress.
- Women only hold 75 of the 315 elective executive offices (24%) across the country.
- Since the end of World War II, women have served as president or prime minister only 42 times throughout the world.

Why Girl Scouts?

Girl Scouts understands girls have unique needs that are best met in a program designed specifically for them and delivered in an all-girl setting. Research tells us a girl's leadership blooms when she's among other girls, away from school pressures, social cliques, and boys; in a place where she can be herself and take on new challenges; where activities are girl-led; where each girl learns by doing, and the learning is cooperative, not competitive; and where adults mentor girls and model skills, behaviors, relationships, and careers that girls can emulate.

Girl Scouts has developed an exciting model that meets every one of these needs—it's called the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE). Everything girls do in Girl Scouting is infused with the GSLE, which shows girls how to discover who they are and what they stand for, connect with vibrant and diverse peers in their own neighborhoods and around the globe, and together take action to make a difference in the world, inspiring and advocating for others along the way. The GSLE identifies fifteen exciting outcomes/benefits for girls, all of which propel girls toward becoming the exceptional women they were born to be.

In order for your community—indeed, for the world—to be at peace and work cooperatively, you recognize that tomorrow's leaders require mentoring. Girl Scouts, and the powerful model that is the GSLE, offers girls the tools they need to be successful leaders now and throughout their lives. And you're the critical link, as you learn about, understand, and deliver the GSLE to the girls in your group.

The Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law

You belong to this powerful organization of—and *for*—girls. The Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law speak to the vision we all share for girls and that inspires each of us to work on behalf of awakening girls' leadership.

The Girl Scout Mission

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

Every opportunity in Girl Scouting, from a group meeting to travel to earning badges, encourages girls toward this incredible mission of becoming courageous, having self-confidence, and being a person of character who takes action to make a difference in the world.

Mission Statements Throughout the Years

The current Girl Scout Mission is critically relevant to today's world, just as previous mission statements were relevant to the girls and women of their time:

- **1912:** "Train girls to take their rightful place in life, first as good women, then as good citizens, wives and mothers."
- **1924:** "Realize the ideals of womanhood as a preparation for their responsibilities in the home and service to the community."
- **1953:** "Help girls develop as happy, resourceful individuals, willing to share their abilities as citizens in their homes, their communities, their country and the world."