

## Chapter 2: Girl Scouting 101

This chapter gives you a quick and easy introduction to Girl Scouting, including the following information:

- Who can join Girl Scouts and how girls and volunteers can participate
- What important dates are on the Girl Scout calendar
- How Girl Scouts is organized

### Who Can Join Girl Scouts—and How!

Any girl—from kindergarten through grade 12—can join Girl Scouts. Girl Scouts is about sharing the fun, friendship, and power of girls and women together, whether that’s a girl in the United States or an American girl living overseas. Volunteers are also a diverse group, and may be a college volunteer working on a community action project, a parent volunteer ready for an outdoor adventure with her daughter’s group, or any responsible adult (female or male, who has passed the necessary application process) looking to make a difference in a girl’s life.

What all members share, whether girls or adults, are the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Each member also agrees to follow safety guidelines and pay the annual membership dues of \$12 (or purchase a lifetime membership for \$300). After they join, girls team up in the following grade levels:

- Girl Scout Daisy, grades K–1
- Girl Scout Brownie, grades 2–3
- Girl Scout Junior, grades 4–5
- Girl Scout Cadette, grades 6–8
- Girl Scout Senior, grades 9–10
- Girl Scout Ambassador, grades 11–12

Across the country, the Girl Scout community is hard at work on a whole new approach to making sure everyone can participate in Girl Scouting in the ways they want to. Both girls and adult volunteers can choose from several flexible ways to participate—called “pathways”—that offer the freedom to tailor your level of involvement to fit your schedule and lifestyle. You can also volunteer behind-the-scenes instead of volunteering directly with girls.

Girls can choose one, all, or some of these pathways (camp, series, troop, travel, and virtual\*) within a single membership year, while you have the option of partnering with girls throughout a membership year or committing to an opportunity for only a few weeks or months. (\**The virtual pathway is still in development.*)

#### ***Did You Know?***

Girl Scouts has always been committed to ensuring all girls who want to be a Girl Scout can be. We reach out in a variety of unique ways to make sure that happens. Check with your Membership staff if you’re interested in learning more! Here are a few examples of happenings around the country:

- **Challenge and Change:** Funded in rural communities through a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, this program uses the GSLE to emphasize social entrepreneurial opportunities.
- **Girl Scouts Beyond Bars:** For more than fifteen years, Girl Scouts, in partnership with the National Institute of Justice, has provided girls with an opportunity to visit their incarcerated mothers and take part in troop meetings.
- **Girl Scouts in Detention Centers:** This program brings the GSLE to girls in juvenile detention centers.

# Girl Scout Calendar

Girl Scouts celebrate three special birthdays each year, which you're encouraged to include in your group planning.

- **February 22: World Thinking Day** (the birthday of both Lord Baden-Powell and Lady Olave Baden-Powell, the originators of Boy Scouts and the Scouting Movement worldwide). For World Thinking Day you can:
  - Invite a Girl Scout who has traveled outside the United States to share her experiences.
  - Plan a simple ceremony and present girls their World Association of Girl Guides & Girl Scouts Pin (also called the "Trefoil" pin).
  - Join other Girl Scouts to host an international festival by encouraging each girl or group of girls to discover the culture of another country and share what they've learned.

**March 12: The birthday of Girl Scouting in the USA.** The first troop meeting was held in Savannah, Georgia, on this date in 1912. Girl Scout Week begins the Sunday before March 12 (a day known as "Girl Scout Sunday") and extends through the Saturday following March 12 (a day known as "Girl Scout Sabbath"). Here are ideas to celebrate with your girls:

- Wear uniforms during the week
  - Have a Girl Scout birthday party with a sister troop or women's organization in your community
  - Deliver cupcakes to local radio personalities and have the girls visit on the air about Girl Scouting
  - Act out the story of the first meeting in 1912, imagining how it could have been
  - Put together a display for your local library or another public viewing spot
  - Package Birthday Boxes and deliver to a local food shelf to share with their clients on their birthdays.
- **April 22: Volunteer Leader Appreciation Day**—a day set aside especially for you! We thank the 2,000 adult volunteers in Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin Lakes and Pines who give so generously of themselves to help build girls of courage, confidence and character to make the world a better place.
  - **October 31: Founder's Day** (Juliette Gordon Low's birthday). Girl Scouts across the country honor Juliette Gordon Low, nicknamed "Daisy," in many different ways. Here are some ideas for your troop:
    - Tell Juliette's story to a Girl Scout Daisy Troop
    - Start earning the Juliette Low Heritage Patch with patch criteria found at [www.gslakesandpines.org](http://www.gslakesandpines.org) or contact any Girl Scout office.
    - Have a birthday party and invite a sister troop

## World Thinking Day

World Thinking Day, first created in 1926, offers a special day for Girl Scouts and Girl Guides from around the world to "think" of each other and give thanks and appreciation to their sister Girl Scouts. February 22 is the mutual birthday of Lord Baden-Powell, founder of the Boy Scout movement, and his wife, Olave, who served as World Chief Guide.

Today, girls show their appreciation and friendship on World Thinking Day not only by extending warm wishes but also by offering a voluntary contribution to the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund, which helps offer Girl Guiding/Girl Scouting to more girls and young women worldwide.



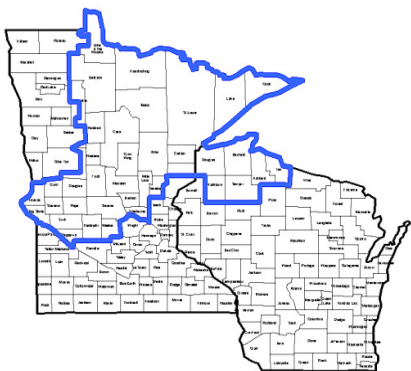
*The symbol for the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS).*

## Girl Scouts' Organizational Structure

Girl Scouts is the world's largest organization of and for girls, and it currently encompasses 2.6 million girl members and nearly one million volunteers! Two core structures support members: local councils and the national headquarters.

### Local Councils

Girl Scout councils are chartered by the national office to establish responsibility for leadership, administration, and supervision of the program, and to develop, manage, and maintain Girl Scouting in a geographic area. As a volunteer, it is through your Girl Scout council that you will have the most contact. However, the national office also provides resources, especially those you can find online at [www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org). In addition, councils are provided with program and other support resources by the national office to ensure that what is delivered through the councils is nationally consistent for all girls across the country.



Lakes and Pines serves 39 counties throughout northern Minnesota and northwest Wisconsin. Like our sister councils around the nation, we provide direct services to girls, the volunteers who work with them, and our local community.

Lakes and Pines council was established in January 2008 by combining the former Northern Pine and Land of Lakes councils, as well as part of the former Peace Pipe and Pine to Prairie councils. In the 2007-2008 membership year, there were 9,136 girl members, 2,402 adult members, 334 lifetime members for a total of 11,872 Girl Scout members.

In the 2007-2008 membership year there were 1,148 troops and groups. One in every 10 girls in our area is a Girl Scout.

### National Organization and Worldwide Sisterhood

The national office of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA), located in New York City, employs roughly 400 employees. (To visit GSUSA online, direct your browser to [www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org), where you'll find a wealth of resources for both girls and volunteers.) This 97-year-old organization is affiliated with a worldwide family of 10 million girls and adults in 145 countries through the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS).

As girls engage in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (see Chapter 3), Global Girl Scouting ensures that they have increased awareness about the world, cross-cultural learning opportunities, and education on relevant global issues that may inspire them to take action to make the world a better place. Visit [www.girlscouts.org/who\\_we\\_are/global](http://www.girlscouts.org/who_we_are/global) for additional information.

#### **Juliette Low World Friendship Fund**

To honor Juliette Gordon Low's love of travel, of experiencing different cultures, and of making friends, Girl Scouts created the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund in 1927. Today, this fund supports girls' international travel, participation in adult learning, and attendance at other international events—any event that fosters global friendships that connect Girl Scouts and Girl Guides from 145 nations. Visit [www.girlscouts.org/juliette\\_low\\_fund.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/juliette_low_fund.asp) to find out more or donate to the fund! See Chapter 6 for more on traveling with Girl Scouts.

Since 1925, USA Girl Scouts Overseas (USAGSO; a division of Global Girl Scouting) has helped ease the transition for American families relocating overseas by offering the familiar traditions and exciting opportunities of Girl Scouting to girls. USAGSO now serves thousands of American girls living overseas, as well as girls attending American or international schools.

Through Global Girl Scouting, members participate in World Thinking Day on February 22, visit the four WAGGGS world centers (see Chapter 6), participate in international travel, help promote global friendship and understanding by supporting the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund, and take action on global issues.