

## BACKGROUND

# GIRLSCOOUTS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

### Why It Matters

Eighty percent of all charities, nonprofit organizations, and religious congregations in the United States rely on volunteers to accomplish their goals. Over half of all American adults volunteer annually, and 65 percent of them were volunteers as young people. In a typical week, 37 percent of all teenagers will engage in one hour or more of community service – girls represent 42 percent of them.

Teens volunteer for many different reasons. For most, knowing that they are making a significant difference in the lives of others or for a cause they believe in gives them a sense of personal satisfaction and growth.

Leading by example, Girl Scout adult volunteers dedicate over 100 million hours a year to helping girls grow strong and giving girls the chance to enhance their self-esteem, discover a personal sense of competence, and develop social responsibility through community service.

### Program Activities

- Girl Scout Silver and Gold Awards – girls devote 30 hours (for the Silver Award) and 50 hours (for the Gold Award) to a project that meets an expressed need in their communities. To earn these awards, girls must combine their leadership skills, career interests, and personal values together in a community service project. These two awards are the highest awards Girl Scouts can earn as Cadette and Senior Girl Scouts.
- Campus Girl Scouts – a program that provides an opportunity for Senior Girl Scouts who are graduating from high school to continue as adult volunteers. In conjunction with this program, the Kappa Delta Sorority sponsors a patch program for girls who work on an activity with a member of Kappa Delta.
- Strength in Sharing, Philanthropy in Girl Scouting – this patch program promotes the idea that philanthropy can be cultivated in girls of all ages. Younger Girl Scouts will complete activities emphasizing the value of caring, sharing, and giving. Older Girl Scouts will develop these skills further in the “real world” in the areas of fund-raising, community organizing, grant writing, and career development.

### Did you know . . .

- ➔ *That nearly 900,000 adults in the United States are volunteers in Girl Scouting?*
- ➔ *When asked face-to-face, people are four times more likely to volunteer?*
- ➔ *Elizabeth Dole, former president of the American Red Cross and Carol Bellamy, executive director for UNICEF are Girl Scout alumnae?*

## History

Character, conduct and community service are core qualities of Girl Scouting. In the very first handbook, written by Girl Scout founder Juliette Gordon Low, Girl Scouts pledged to “do a good turn everyday to somebody.” If by chance, a girl went through the entire day without doing a good deed, she was required to do two the next day to make up for it. Good deeds and community service were thought to be character-builders for good citizens.

Today, in the 21st century, community service is still central to Girl Scouting. Daisy to Senior Girl Scouts participate in various community service projects as part of all badge and interest project criteria. As they get older, whole awards are devoted to community service including the Cadette and Senior Girl Scout Community Service Bars, and the Girl Scout Silver and Gold Awards.

### Who We Are

*Girl Scouts is the world's preeminent organization dedicated solely to girls – all girls – where, in an accepting and nurturing environment, girls build character and skills for success in the real world. In partnerships with committed adults, girls develop qualities that will serve them all their lives – like strong values, social conscience, and conviction about their own potential and self-worth. In Girl Scouts, girls discover the fun, friendship, and power of girls together. Through the many enriching experiences provided by Girl Scouting, they grow courageous and strong.*

***Girl Scouts. Where Girls Grow Strong.***

### Additional Resources

Girls can earn numerous age-appropriate Girl Scout awards including “Citizen Near and Far,” “Active Citizen,” “Junior Citizen,” “My Community,” “You and Your Community,” and “Leadership.”

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