



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 2.8 million girls and young women, and over 963,000 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.

As of January 2008, there were four age levels were established for girls who participate in GSUSA:

Daisy	5-6	Kindergarten/Grade 1	Junior	8-11	Grades 3-6
Brownie	6-8	Grades 1-3	Studio 2B	11-17	Grades 9-12

In October 2008, as a part of a major restructuring of the Girl Scout program, age levels will transition to become:

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. As of January 2008, there were 55 Campus Girl Scouts groups on campuses across the United States. 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 at <http://www.girlscouts.org/join/campus/directory.asp>

Girl Scouts is presently undergoing a major restructuring of councils across the United States, realigning more than 300 councils to 109. Transition is anticipated to be completed sometime in 2010. 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 144 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 who participate independently from a troop setting are known as “Juliettes”.

Recognitions within Girl Scouts are structured by age level and involve accompanying levels of difficulty: Daisy Girl Scouts earn “Petals”, Brownie Girl Scouts earn “Try-Its”, Junior Girl Scouts earn “Badges” and “Signs”, Cadette & Senior Girl Scouts earn “Interest Project Awards” or Studio 2B “Charms”. In fall 2008, Girl Scouts will launch the “New Girl Scout Leadership Experience.” Full implementation of the initiative is anticipated by 2010. The program will involve “leadership journeys” that will be based upon three keys to leadership: “Discover,” “Connect” and “Take Action.”

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>.