



2010-11 Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

GirlScoutsRV.org is up and running!

As you may know, we have just completed Phase I of the website redevelopment project, and the site launched on August 6. This process has been nearly a year in the making, and we've put a lot of hard work and consideration into the new site.

A lot of the updates you will see there were inspired by feedback from volunteer, girl, and outside user focus groups. The website was sent out and tested by a number of River Valleys volunteers who spent some time browsing the site and testing its functions. Their input was valuable as it helped us identify and address some changes that needed to be made. Without member input, these updates would not have been possible. Thank you.

You still have a chance to add your comments as we continue to improve the site to best serve our members as well as the general public. When you get a few minutes, go to GirlScoutsRV.org and check out all the different pages. Send us your feedback to girlscouts@GirlScoutsRV.org

And be sure to take advantage of and pass the word about the new function that allows alumnae to share their Girl Scouting stories!

How did this happen?

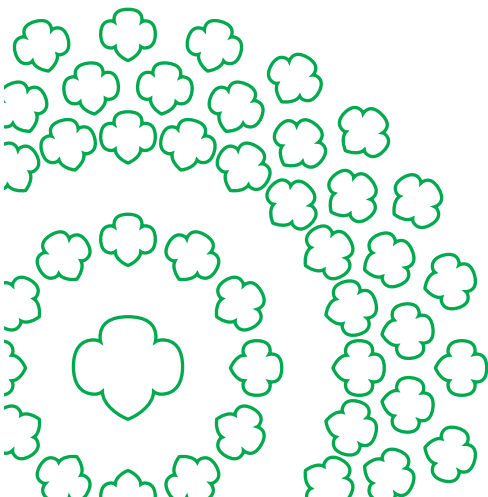
Well, we had heard from you that the River Valleys website just wasn't easy to use. It was cumbersome to register girls and it was confusing to find the information you needed.

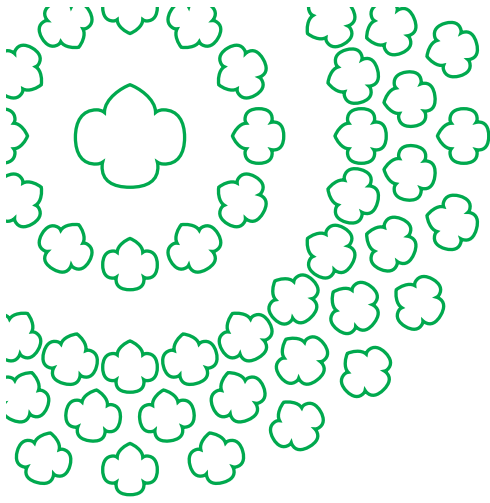
At the council, too, there were countless inefficiencies due to extra, unnecessary paperwork. We needed to take a user-centered approach to redeveloping the website that would meet current needs and anticipate future opportunities for our members and potential members. So we went through a process of better understanding the users -- what you as Girl Scouts do -- and how we could enable and support those needs.

Our guiding principle in this project was really developing an online, cohesive community that also inspires conversation among girls, volunteers, communities and the Girls Scout organization.

The results are:

- More intuitive usability-it's just plain easier to use and more user friendly
- Prominent placement of the Girl Scouts mission-you get the idea of what we do and what we are right off the bat
- More centralized data collection-for example, all the forms and documents are under Forms and Documents-not scattered according to department or activity
- More specialized information according to the user-there's clear information for girls by grade level, volunteers, and alumnae
- Content that's easier to manage-we'll be able to post and update information in a more organized and efficient way
- Targeted communications-you'll get the information you need, when you need it
- Interaction with social media-we're on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube and you can quickly link to those sites from the bottom of the homepage
- And, an improvement in the bottom line. River Valleys switched vendors from a paid database system to one that costs this council nothing!





Girl Scout Shop

Locations and hours (September-May)
For additional information for any of the shop locations, call 800-845-0787

Brooklyn Center Service Center
5601 Brooklyn Blvd
Brooklyn Center, MN 55429
Monday: 9:30 a.m.-7 p.m.
Tuesday-Friday: 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
Second Saturday of each Month:
9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

New logo T-shirts

Girl Scout T-shirts featuring the brand new Girl Scout service marks are here! Two styles to choose from in four great colors: kelly green, white, red, and navy. Traditional fit. At such a great price, you'll want more than one.

- Girls' sizes XS, S, M, L, XL; \$12
- Adult sizes S, M, L, XL; \$14
- Adult Plus sizes 2X, 3X, 4X; \$16

Real-time registration information

In the past, "online registration" meant sending an e-mail and waiting for a confirmation after a staff member physically entered your information. With the new process, you will see availability, pay online, and receive immediate confirmation.

We encourage you to re-register online by September 30. If you wait and are a troop leader, you'll miss out on the opportunity to use the system to register your troop for programs and events. If you do not re-register yourself and your girls, you will have to wait out the paper filing process and you'll potentially miss out on getting the best selection of activities.

The online registration format is generally intuitive, but there is online help and downloadable documentation to answer your questions. As always, you can contact your membership specialist if you need additional assistance.

Future Considerations

As we move forward in future features, we will work with service unit teams to define their service unit website needs. We will develop some templates that will allow service units to "piggy-back" on the River Valleys website. With 200+ service units, you can imagine that this will take some time, but we'll keep everyone "in the loop" as that part of the project moves forward. This means that service units will have the opportunity to let River Valleys host

We do not currently have control over the design of the registration site, but this will be remedied over time. Girl Scouts of the USA has customized this software and we are working with them on that.

We are also excited about a fundraising module that will make financially supporting Girl Scouts right here in River Valleys much easier! The module will also help us centralize some data collection that will help staff continue to offer the best Girl Scout Leadership Experience for all our members!

Adult Development

How do I register for Girl Scout training?

Online registration for training sessions is now available! Go to GirlScoutsRV.org, and you will find links to the online training registration website. One simple way to access online registration is to click on Volunteer, then click on Training, and finally click on View Upcoming Training Events.

The first time you visit the online registration site, you must activate your account or start by creating a profile, if you are new to Girl Scouting. Then you may search and register for training. Simply click on your desired session, add to your shopping cart, and enter your credit card information for any sessions requiring a fee. Detailed instructions are available on the online registration website.


What is GSUSA Volunteer Orientation?

GSUSA Volunteer Orientation (in both English and Spanish) is the first, close-up, introduction of the Girl Scout organization for new volunteers, and is a required training. The program content is standardized with consistent national Girl Scout messages and information.

Access the orientation by visiting <http://training.girlscouts.org>. To log on, use the assigned password: discover or in Spanish: descubrir. Next, access the Learning Log, complete all the requested information and choose the council name: Minnesota and Wisconsin River Valleys. When all questions are answered, click the 'Submit' button to record completion of the Online Volunteer Orientation. It takes about 25-45 minutes to complete. The orientation is also available as a self study in PDF on the River Valleys website GirlScoutsRV.org for individuals who do not have access to high-speed Internet.

What is Leadership Essentials training?

Leadership Essentials is a training session from GSUSA that teaches leaders about the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and the Girl Scout journey books-the GSUSA curriculum for girls in all grade levels.



**Building girls of
courage, confidence,
and character,
who make the world
a better place.**

Girl Scout Shop

Locations and hours (September-May)
For additional information for any of the shop locations, call 800-845-0787

Burnsville
Wood Park Office Building
1000 E. 146th St. Suite 119
Burnsville, MN
Wednesday: noon-5 p.m.
Call by noon on Tuesday to order
Call for holiday hours

New logo T-shirts

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- Adult Plus sizes 2X, 3X, 4X; \$16

Leadership Essentials is required for all new leaders. Dates and times for the three-hour volunteer facilitated training sessions are posted online at GirlScoutsRV.org. Leadership Essentials is also available as a self study in PDF or as a blended online learning session with two parts: the online portion and a River Valleys Add-On, a writable PDF. Both parts must be completed to fulfill the Leadership Essentials requirement.

NOTE: New leaders must complete GSUSA Orientation and Leadership Essentials to complete their required training as a leader, and one leader from each troop must attend a Fast Start meeting.

What is a Fast Start meeting?

A Fast Start meeting provides new leaders with information to help them get started with their troop, such as holding a family meeting, registering girls and adults, setting up a troop bank account, planning troop meetings, and connecting with other Girl Scout volunteers. Service unit Fast Start coaches set up and facilitate Fast Start meetings, as well as provide guidance and answer initial questions from new leaders. One leader from each troop must attend the Fast Start meeting.

Who facilitates training sessions?

Training sessions are facilitated by a group of experienced River Valleys' adult Girl Scout volunteers. Facilitators apply for their position and commit to facilitating multiple training sessions each year throughout River Valleys' jurisdiction. This dedicated group of volunteers brings exciting opportunities to Girl Scouts by providing leaders with the skills and knowledge needed to run a troop and carry out beyond the troop activities. If you're interested in learning more about becoming a River Valleys facilitator, contact the adult development department at training@girlscoutsrv.org.

What are adult enrichment events?

River Valleys offers five annual adult enrichment events: Lakamaga Adult Education Conference, Super Saturday, Leadership Conference, Mid-Winter Warm Up, and Outdoor Education Conference. These events give volunteers exciting opportunities to fulfill required leader training, network with other adult volunteers, and experience enrichment training sessions. Enrichment training sessions provide leaders with skills

to take back to their troop like constructing a craft, personal leadership development, conflict resolution, and much more. For more information and to view upcoming events, check out the Volunteer tab - Training page on the River Valleys website.

What is enrichment training?

Enrichment training sessions are a chance for leaders to learn more about girls and skills related to Girl Scouting. Sessions are offered as stand-alone trainings throughout the year and with the five adult enrichment events. River Valleys offers Take Action Basics: Light Their Fire, Take Action Highest Awards: Fuel Their Flame, Extra! Extra! For Girl Scout Leaders (all grade-levels), and certification for a variety of activities such as canoeing and archery. Dates and locations for these training sessions can be found on the Volunteer tab - Training page on the River Valleys website.

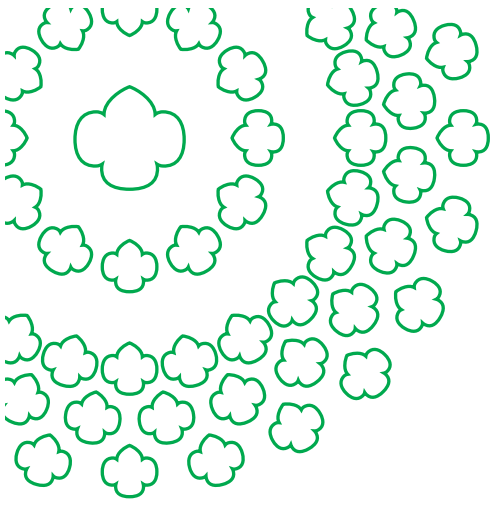
What is "Beyond the Troop" training?

Beyond the Troop is a group of training sessions for any registered adult member who is looking to do activities and programs with girls that take place beyond a regular troop meeting. These activities might include working with girls to prepare food and cook over a fire, planning an overnight in the backyard or a tent camping trip, or planning an extended trip. All sessions incorporate girl planning and cooperative learning, and will help volunteers identify the necessary safety requirements associated with beyond the troop activities, as highlighted in Volunteer Essentials: Chapter 4, Safety-Wise. For more information on the various Beyond the Troop training sessions or to register, visit GirlScoutsRV.org.

What is a trained troop?

A trained troop is any troop where all the leaders have completed their required training and one leader has attended a Fast Start meeting and one or more registered adult members have successfully completed:

- Safety-Wise First Aider requirements as needed for activities (e.g. biking or ice skating);
- Beyond the Troop training as need for activities (e.g. camping or extended travel);
- Fall Product Program and Cookie Program Activity training.



Girl Scout Shop

Locations and hours (September-May)
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Chanhausen
Klein Bank Building
600 W 78th St Suite 10D
Chanhausen, MN
Tuesday: 12 noon-5 p.m.
Call by noon on Monday to order
Check for holiday hours

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What if I have outdoor experience or previous outdoor training?

Any previous Girl Scout outdoor training counts! Review the information on the Training page at GirlScoutsRV.org or contact your adult development specialist to discuss what training you have completed and which Beyond the Troop training you may still need. If you have camping experience or training, you maybe be able to receive "equivalent qualifications" by completing and submitting the equivalent qualifications application available in PDF on the Training page of the River Valleys website.

What is Volunteer Essentials?

Volunteer Essentials is a reference document published by GSUSA and used across the country by Girl Scouts. It can be thought of as an "encyclopedia to Girl Scout volunteering," meant to supplement other River Valleys resource publications with additional information about Girl Scout basics, volunteer tips, Girl Scout activity resources and traditions, and ideas for ways to engage girls. It also contains primary reference information for safety in Girl Scouting. Volunteer Essentials is available for PDF download on the River Valleys website.

Will there be a new Safety-Wise this year?

GSUSA's previous Safety-Wise publications and update supplements have been discontinued. Volunteer Essentials: Chapter 4, Safety-Wise is now River Valleys' key safety reference document, providing volunteers with basic program activity guidelines and assuring safe and quality experiences for girls. The Safety-Wise chapter of Volunteer Essentials and the 47 specific Safety Activity Checkpoints are available for PDF download on the River Valleys website. Check Volunteer Essentials Chapter Four: Safety-Wise and any applicable Safety Activity Checkpoints before participating in any activity with girls.

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience: Program Essentials

What is the Girl Scout Leadership Experience: Program Essentials?

Program Essentials is the core plan that girls and leaders use to implement the Girl Scout Leadership Experience in River Valleys. The national Girl Scout leadership journey books are the foundation of Program Essentials, which is complemented by additional skill building activities.

Program Essentials ties directly to the 15 outcomes of The Girl Scout Leadership Experience, and troop leaders are asked to help measure those outcomes through a built-in, easy-to-use evaluation tool.

Program Essentials contains grade-appropriate activity sessions (with options at the troop, service unit, and council levels) for an entire program year; we've drawn from the best-of-the-best of activities in Girl Scouts that have resonated with girls across these program focus areas:

- Leadership Progression
- Take Action (Community Service Learning Projects)
- Career Literacy
- Financial Literacy
- Outdoor Awareness
- STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)
- Healthy Living
- Cultural Literacy
- Building Girl Scout Connections
- Celebrating Accomplishment/Reflection/Recommitment

Girls and troops may add additional activities should they want to further explore particular interests.

Program Essentials was piloted in 2009-10 and was a big success! Both new and experienced leaders have given feedback that Program Essentials guided them in delivering a fun, well-rounded Girl Scout core program for the entire year. And, Program Essentials is helping River Valleys to ensure a consistent experience for all girls throughout the council and to articulate the outcomes of Girl Scouts to families, donors, and the larger community.

Troops that have had well-rounded programming up to this point will find that Program Essentials links directly with what they have already been doing. We've taken the feedback from 2009-10 participants, and the grade level-specific girl research done for the council's strategic plan, and made Program Essentials even better for 2010-11.



Building girls of
courage, confidence,
and character,
who make the world
a better place.

Girl Scout Shop

Locations and hours (September-May)
For additional information for any of the
shop locations, call 800-845-0787

Northfield Service Center
1025 Hwy 3 North
Northfield, MN 55057
Wednesday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Call by noon on Tuesday order

New logo T-shirts

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What's new, and where can I find Program Essentials for 2010-11?

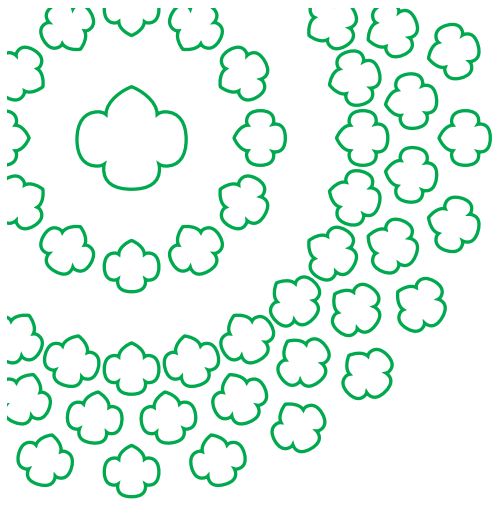
- Both the Program Essentials charts and the Program Essentials meetings plans for first-time Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies and Juniors have been updated. They are included in the new troop welcome kits and are available on the website.
- The Program Essentials charts for second-time Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies and Juniors have been updated. They are direct-mailed to troop leaders and available on the website.
- New this year! Program Essential charts for Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors are available. Brand-new troops will receive them in their new troop welcome kit. They are direct-mailed to returning troop leaders and available on the website.

What is the council implementation plan for Program Essentials?

- All brand-new troops will use Program Essentials.
- All second-year and longer troops at the Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors will use Program Essentials, unless they planned their 2010-11 troop activity schedules last spring, in which case they should integrate Program Essentials with their activities as much as is possible.
- Second-year and longer Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors are strongly encouraged to use Program Essentials.
- By the end of the 2010-11 membership year, all Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors will use Program Essentials. All Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors will use Program Essentials by the end of 2011-12.

What's great about Program Essentials?

- Leaders used to ask: "What should I be doing with my girls?" Program Essentials is the easy to use, vital tool leaders and volunteers have asked for to guide them as they deliver a fun, well-rounded Girl Scout core program.
- It helps busy leaders spend more quality time with their Girl Scouts, rather than trying to figure out or plan an entire year's worth of activities.
- Program Essentials helps leaders with Girl Scout programming in areas they may not feel comfortable working with girls (e.g. science, technology, engineering, math (STEM) or outdoor awareness) by giving them more directed activities and resources to help girls discover their talents in a variety of program areas.
- Girl Scouting is girl-led. In Program Essentials, girls choose grade-appropriate programs that interest them, as well as the pace and order in which to do activities with support from their leaders.
- Program Essentials presents program content in an organized way and helps ensure a consistent experience for all girls throughout River Valleys.
- Using the 15 outcomes of the GSUSA Girl Scout Leadership Experience, Program Essentials defines what girls do and learn in the Girl Scout year, helping volunteers and staff articulate the importance and value of Girl Scouts to families, donors, and the larger community.



Girl Scout Shop

Locations and hours (September-May)
For additional information for any of the shop locations, call 800-845-0787

Redwood Falls Service Center
809 East Bridge St.
Redwood Falls, MN 56283
Monday-Friday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

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What kits and equipment support Program Essentials?

- River Valleys' program kits and equipment support these focus areas within Program Essentials: cultural literacy, financial literacy, healthy living, leadership progression, outdoor awareness, and STEM. Check the River Valleys website for the complete list of available kits and equipment.
- The activity section of each Program Essentials chart will showcase the kits and equipment that support those activities. If a troop decides to complete an activity that is supported by a program kit/equipment, then follow the check out procedures below.
- Kits and equipment are available at all service centers and can be checked out through our Business Services department. To check out kits/equipment, access the Council Equipment Reservation Form found on the River Valleys website or call 800-845-0787 for assistance. The Council Equipment Reservation Form can be returned to the service center or email the document to girlscouts@girlscoutsrv.org. Kits and equipment can be checked out on a first-come, first-served basis. After your request is processed, Girl Scouts staff will contact you to make arrangements to receive your equipment.

Program Highlights And Events

Where can I find information on the 2010-11 council-sponsored program events?

The coming program year features council-sponsored program events to engage girls in the three Girl Scout Keys to Leadership: Discover, Connect, and Take Action. The complete 2010-11 council-sponsored program event listing is online at GirlScoutsRV.org.

This year's events focus on healthy living, leadership progression, literacy (career, cultural, and financial), outdoor awareness, and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math). "Don't miss" events include:

- Girl Fest 2010
- Design It, Build It
- Camp Rocks at Camp Elk River
- Choose your own Adventure
- Future You Career Workshop
- Healthy Girls: Eat, Live, Play Well
- Girls in Sports
- It's Your Story: Tell It! Lock-In at the WOW Zone
- Take Action Workshops: Girl Scout Gold, Silver, and Bronze Award
- Daisies in Space

How do I register for Girl Scout council-sponsored program events?

Online real-time registration for program events is now available! Go to GirlScoutsRV.org, and you will find links to the online registration site. Go to "Events" in the main navigation bar, then click on "browse all open events," which will open the registration portal. If you'd like to narrow your search from there, click on "Program Activities & Events" and you can search by Girl Scout grade level or focus area.

The first time you visit the online registration site, you must activate your account (or start by creating a profile, if you are new to Girl Scouting). Then you may search and register for council-sponsored program events and training sessions. Simply click on your desired session title(s), add to your shopping cart, and enter your credit card or troop debit card information for any sessions requiring a fee. Detailed instructions are available on the online registration website.



Building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

Girl Scout Shop

Locations and hours (September-May)
For additional information for any of the shop locations, call 800-845-0787

Rochester Service Center
4228 8th St SW
Rochester, MN 55902
Tuesday-Friday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
First Saturday of each month:
9 a.m. - 12 Noon

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Will there be a River Valleys council-wide Take Action project this year?

Yes, a Take Action project will be launched in early 2011. Watch the website and River Valleys' newsletters for details.

Is there a new Journey series coming out?

Yes! It's Your Story - Tell It! is due to arrive in December. This Girl Scout leadership journey series uses a storytelling theme in a fun and grade-level relevant way for girls to better understand themselves and their potential. Building a strong sense of self is an underlying goal of the series, made possible in part by a generous grant from the Dove Self-Esteem Fund. To learn more visit the GSUSA website at www.girlscouts.org/program/journeys/your_story/default.asp

What else is new in program for 2010-11?

Be sure to attend your service unit's first leader meeting of the new program year to find out more about:

- The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting from Girl Scouts of the USA, which will provide updated badge activities and handbook information for girls
- destinations
- The Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards

River Valleys' Three-Year Strategic Plan

River Valleys was one of 10 councils selected by Girl Scouts of the USA to pilot a new strategic learning process in the first half of 2009. The council strategy team consisted of volunteers, community members, board members, and council staff management. This process resulted in the creation of a vision statement for the council, the identification of our competitive focus, and strategic priority goals in the areas of program, volunteerism, technology, funding, marketing, and alumnae.

The strategic priority goal for program is to provide a defined and consistent program for girls that is relevant, compelling and delivers on the Girl Scout Leadership Experience outcomes.

What this means for our members and supporters is that River Valleys will:

- Hone in on addressing the topics that are most important to girls' lives
- Provide greater consistency of experience that meets parents/guardians' expectations
- Simplify the program delivery process for volunteers working with girls
- Ensure volunteers are prepared and motivated to achieve specific outcomes with girls
- Establish outcome measurement capabilities to meet donor requirements

Four cross-functional teams worked from October 2009 through March 2010 to develop the specific strategies that will get the organization to this end-goal. Each team did a deep analysis of a specific segment of our current and potential girl membership: girls in grades K-3, 4-5, 6-8, and 9-12. These strategies will now drive River Valleys' plans of work for the next three years.

River Valleys' girls and volunteers can prepare for implementation of these strategies through advisory groups, local dialogues, and other engagement opportunities. For information on upcoming opportunities in your area, contact your service unit manager.

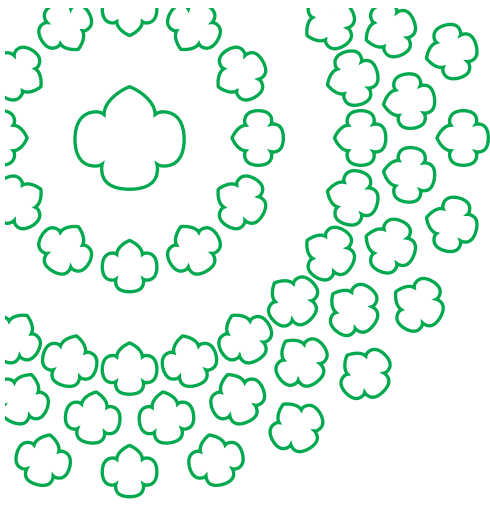
Product Program Cookies Now!

Starting today, River Valleys is embarking on a new and exciting way for girls to participate in the cookie program. They will have cookies in their hands when the cookie program starts up on Feb. 5. This Cookies Now! approach will ensure transaction and cookie satisfaction for girls, families, volunteers, and cookie customers.

What is Cookies Now!?

Using this system, cookies and payment for cookies are exchanged in one quick and easy step. More benefits are:

- Immediate cookie gratification for customers. They love getting their cookies as soon as possible
- It's easier! Girls visit customers once to "order" and "deliver" plus, there's a shorter time for girls to sell cookies so they can focus on other Girl Scout activities



Girl Scout Shop

Locations and hours (September-May)
For additional information for any of the shop locations, call 800-845-0787

St. Paul Service Center
400 Robert St. South
St. Paul, MN 55107
Monday: 9:30 a.m.-7 p.m.
Tuesday-Friday: 9:30 a.m. -5 p.m.
First Saturday of each Month:
9:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

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- Cookie Go Day moves to February 5 to avoid some of the traditionally very cold January days
- River Valleys will provide plenty of tools and information to guide girls when placing their orders to make sure they have plenty of cookies in hand
- River Valleys is expanding their Cookie Cupboard locations for additional access to cookies
- It works! A successful pilot in six River Valleys service units saw huge increases in per girl averages and packages sold, which means more proceeds for troops to do great things!
- Troops even have their proceeds earlier, making the whole program more girl and volunteer friendly

While some things change, many aspects of the Cookie Program will stay the same with Cookies Now! including:

- Two weeks of door to door sales opportunities followed by five weeks of Cookie Booths in February/March
- Troops will still take delivery of an initial cookie order, which will serve as the troop's initial cookie inventory
- Girls continue to earn awards & recognitions during the entire program
- Troops will continue to earn proceeds during the entire program
- Great programs continue like Cookie Care & Share, Cookie Booths, Cookie Rallies, CEO and more!

More ingredients to Cookies Now! will be revealed this fall through the River Valleys website and in cookie materials in October/November. Questions? Contact the River Valleys product program team at productsales@girlscoutsrv.org.

Fall Product

Build on troop funds, construct a plan to jump-start your Girl Scout year or simply design an easy way for your troop to self-fund their activities ... it is all possible with the 2011 River Valleys Fall Product Program. Troops can offer nut/chocolate items and magazine subscriptions/renewals (online or in person) to friends and family from October 9–October 24. Girls will love the award and recognition items, plus troops can earn fun and functional items, too.

Important facts:

- Troop proceeds of \$1 per nut/chocolate item and \$2.50 for every magazine subscription sold
- Volunteer friendly program packed with opportunities for girls
- Service Unit fall product program managers receive materials in late August to distribute to troops in September
- Identify your troop fall product program manager early to guide troop participation in this friends and family program. An online self-study prepares the volunteer for their duties
- There's a new goal-setting activity in the "Construct a Plan" activity book
- Access the Fall Product Program page at http://www.girlscoutsrv.org/activities_for_girls/cookies_and_fall_product for great tools, tips and resources
- Opportunities are available for troops that wish to participate even if the service unit is not participating.

Questions? Connect with your River Valleys Product Program Team at productsales@girlscoutsrv.org.