



# Volunteer Essentials 2011



# Volunteer Essentials 2011–2012

## Contents

### [Quick-Start Guide](#)

We Are Girl Scouts  
Who Can Join Girl Scouts—and How?  
Girl Scouts' Organizational Structure  
Program Essentials: River Valleys' Core Girl Scout Program  
Getting Started with the National Girl Scout Leadership Program through Journeys  
Planning in a Girl-Led Environment  
Meeting with Girls for the First Time  
Using Safety Activity Checkpoints  
Understanding How Many Volunteers You Need  
Following the Girl Scouts Safety Guidelines

### [Chapter 1: Sharing Your Unique Gifts](#)

Your Role as a Girl Scout Volunteer  
Evaluating Your Skills  
Taking Advantage of Learning Opportunities  
Adult Awards and Recognition

### [Chapter 2: Program—What Girl Scouts Do](#)

Program Essentials  
The Girl Scout Leadership Experience  
Leadership Journeys!  
*The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*  
Girl Scout Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards  
Girl Scout Traditions—Pass It On  
Girl Scout Trips  
Our Own Council's Curricula  
Council-Sponsored Program Events  
Council-Sponsored Summer Camps  
Council Site and Equipment Rental

### [Chapter 3: Engaging Girls at All Grade Levels](#)

Arranging a Time and Space for Girl-Led Meetings  
Understanding Healthy Development in Girls  
Creating a Safe Space for Girls  
Arranging Meetings with Parents/Guardians or a Friends-and-Family Network

### [Chapter 4: Safety-Wise](#)

Knowing Your Responsibilities

- Responsibilities of the Volunteer: Girl Scout Safety Guidelines
- Responsibilities of Parents and Guardians
- Responsibilities of Girls

Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need  
Transporting Girls  
Approaching Activities

- Health Histories (including Examinations and Immunizations)
- Girl Scout Activity Insurance

Providing Emergency Care

*Volunteer Essentials: Contents—August 2011*

[GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org) . 1-800-845-0787

- First Aid/CPR
  - Procedures for Accidents
- Using the Safety Activity Checkpoints
- List of Safety Activity Checkpoints and Where to Locate Them
- Certificates of Insurance

## [Chapter 5: Managing Group Finances](#)

Establishing an Account  
 Helping Girls Reach Their Financial Goals  
 Money-Earning Basics  
 Collaborating with Sponsors and Other Organizations  
 Financial and Sales Abilities by Grade Level  
 Understanding the Girl Scout Cookie Program Activity  
 Product Sales: Financial Literacy and the Girl Scout Leadership Experience

## [Chapter 6: Volunteer Policies, Standards and Practices](#)

Definition of a Volunteer  
 Volunteers' Rights and Responsibilities

- Confidentiality
- Dress Code
- Equal Opportunity and Volunteer Management
- Representation of River Valleys
- Training

Climate and Safety

- Working with Children
- Safety Standards
- Background Check Policy Statement
- Criminal Background Check Procedure
- Disqualification from Volunteer Participation

Volunteer Grievance  
 Discriminatory Harassment Policy  
 Sexual Harassment Policy  
 Conflict Management Policy  
 Conflict of Interest

## [Chapter 7: Girl Scout Shop and Camp Locations](#)

Girl Scout Shop Hours and Locations  
 Girl Scout Camp Locations

### Forms

- [Activity Approval for Trips Form](#)
- [Bus Usage Form](#)
- [Crisis and Safety Management Report](#)
- [Crisis and Safety Management Report Form](#)
- [Girl Scout Trip Request to Plan Form](#)
- [Grants for Girls and Adults Application Form](#)
- [Troop Money Earning Project Approval Form](#)

# Volunteer Essentials 2011-2012

## Quick-Start Guide

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 their world.

We know you're busy and need to be efficient with your time. For that reason, this Quick-Start Guide to *Volunteer Essentials* gives you the nitty-gritty—what you need to know as a Girl Scout volunteer. We encourage you to read through these tips as soon as you can and then feel free to put down this handbook for now.

That's because the rest of *Volunteer Essentials* is a reference for you to use only as needed. When you have a question, simply look up the topic in the Table of Contents, and you'll find your answer. Think of *Volunteer Essentials* as your encyclopedia to Girl Scout volunteering. It's there when you need it but, rest assured, there's no need for you to read the entire book today.

You will find more information on the Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin River Valleys (River Valleys) website at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org).

If you are volunteering in the Troop Pathway, one volunteer from each troop will attend a Fast Start Meeting and be assigned a coach within their service unit. More information specific to starting a troop will be covered in this meeting.

Ready to get started? Then read the following handy tips and you'll be on your way!

**Thank you for volunteering!**

# We Are Girl Scouts

Girl Scouts was founded in 1912 by trailblazer Juliette Gordon Low. We are the largest girl-serving organization in the United States and the largest member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, a sisterhood of close to 10 million girls and adults in 145 countries.

## Our Mission

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

## Our Vision

Girl Scouts strives to be the premier leadership organization for girls and experts on their growth and development.

## More than 3 Million Strong

We are urban, rural and suburban. We are in schools, churches, temples, mosques, public housing, foster homes and detention centers. Girl Scouts is in virtually every ZIP code in the United States and in 90 countries around the world.

- **2.3 million girls five to 18 years of age**
- **16,000 Girl Scouts overseas**
- **880,000 adult volunteers**
- **50 million alumnae**
- **112 councils throughout the United States**

At any given point in time, approximately 10 percent of girls are Girl Scouts, and

- **80 percent of women business owners were Girl Scouts**
- **69 percent of female U.S Senators were Girl Scouts**
- **67 percent of female members of the House of Representatives were Girl Scouts**
- **Virtually every female astronaut who has flown in space was a Girl Scout**

## The Girl Scout Leadership Experience

We have identified three keys to leadership: girls discover themselves and their values, connect with others, and take action to make the world a better place. At Girl Scouts, everything centers around the girl. Activities are girl-led, which gives girls the opportunity to learn by doing in a cooperative learning environment.

## 100 Years Young

We are about to celebrate a century of trailblazing, of leadership, of fun and friendship—and we're just getting started. Find out more at [GSRV100.org](http://GSRV100.org) (for River Valleys' Centennial information) and [www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org) (for national Centennial information.)

*Volunteer Essentials: Quick-Start Guide*—August 2011

[GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org) . 800-845-0787

# Who Can Join Girl Scouts—and How?

Girl Scouts is about sharing the fun, friendship and power of girls and women together. Any girl—from kindergarten through twelfth grade—can join Girl Scouts. Girl Scout volunteers are also a diverse group—you may be a college volunteer working on a community-action project, a parent/guardian volunteer ready for an outdoor adventure with your daughter’s group, or any responsible adult (female or male, who has passed the necessary screening 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). Financial assistance is available for the annual membership dues.

## Girls at Every Grade Level

After girls join, they 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**

## Flexible Ways to Participate

Across the country, the Girl Scout community is hard at work on a whole new approach to make sure that everyone can participate in Girl Scouting in the ways they want to. As a volunteer, you can choose from flexible ways to participate that offer the freedom to tailor your level of involvement to fit your schedule and lifestyle. You can also volunteer behind the scenes in your council office instead of volunteering directly with girls.

Depending on her program grade level, a girl will be able to choose to participate in different pathways—camp, events, series, troop, travel, and virtual—within a single membership year. And, as a volunteer, you, too, have the option of partnering with girls throughout a membership year or committing to an opportunity for only a few weeks or months. Based on independent research and extensive surveys with thousands of council staff members from around the country, we know which options will interest girls, based on their grade levels. River Valleys is



piloting and will be developing support and member options for the various Girl Scout Pathways in the coming year.

# Girl Scouts' Organizational Structure

Girl Scouts is the world's largest organization of and for girls, currently encompassing 2.3 million girl members and nearly one million volunteers! Three core structures support all these members: the national headquarters, your council and your support team.

## National Organization and Worldwide Sisterhood

The national office of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA), located in New York City, employs roughly 400 employees. (Visit [GSUSA online](#), where you'll find a wealth of resources for both girls and volunteers.) GSUSA is a member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS).

Global Girl Scouting ensures that girls 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 [Global Girl Scouting online](#) for additional information.

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 abroad. USAGSO now serves thousands of American girls living overseas, as well as girls attending American or international schools abroad. Through Global Girl Scouting, members participate in World Thinking Day on February 22, visit the four WAGGGS world centers (see the "For Travel Volunteers" appendix), participate in international travel, promote global friendship and understanding by supporting the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund and take action on global issues.

## Your Council

Girl Scout councils are chartered by the national office to establish local responsibility for leadership, administration and supervision of Girl Scout programs, and to develop, manage and maintain Girl Scouting in a specific area. Our council is called Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin River Valleys. Through River Valleys, the national office provides support materials to ensure that what is delivered is consistent for all volunteers across the country. Each year, River Valleys serves approximately 45,000 girls with the support of almost 18,000 volunteers across 49 counties in southern Minnesota and western Wisconsin. River Valleys' toll-free phone number is 800-845-0787 and our website address is [GirlScoutsRV.org](#).

## Your Support Team

A team of volunteers and staff provides you with local support, learning opportunities and advice. As a volunteer, you will have the most contact with your Girl Scout support team, which is called a service unit. Never hesitate to contact them, because your support team is your expert in all things Girl Scouting. If you have questions about the Girl Scout program, working with girls, resources in the national program portfolio (Girl Scout Leadership Journey books and the *Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*) or selling Girl Scout Cookies and other products, go to your team for answers and ongoing support.

# Program Essentials: Our Core Girl Scout Plan

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 Charts for first-time troops are included in the New Troop Welcome Kit. Program Essentials Charts for second-time (and third-time in the case of Girl Scout Cadettes) troops are available to download at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org).

River Valleys has developed a number of resources supporting Program Essentials, including easy to use Program Essentials Meeting Plans for Girl Scout Daisy, Brownie and Junior troops and resource packets and program kits for all program grade levels.

Each girl who completes the Program Essentials requirements is eligible to receive a pin. For more information on these pins, refer to “Chapter 2: Program—What Girl Scouts Do.”

# Getting Started with the National Girl Scout Leadership Program through Journeys

The Girl Scout program is based on the Girl Scout Leadership Experience in which girls discover themselves, connect with others and take action to make the world a better place—all within the safety of an all-girl environment where girls take the lead, learn by doing and learn cooperatively.

At the core of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience are national Girl Scout Leadership Journeys, fun and challenging experiences grouped around a theme and spread over a series of sessions. Each journey has all the important components of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience sewn right in. So, to guide girls on a great journey, all you need is enthusiasm and a sense of adventure. Before you dive in, try these six simple tips:

1. **Check out the journey maps** at [www.girlscouts.org/program/journeys/maps](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/journeys/maps). These maps show you how all the fun and meaningful traditions of Girl Scouting fit right into any national leadership journey. There, you can also find information about the topics that each journey covers, which you can share with girls. And you'll find even more fun traditions to complement your journey in the new *Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*, a resource for each grade level of Girl Scouting.
2. **Find your journey.** In Program Essentials, River Valleys recommends doing the journeys in this order: do *It's Your World—Change It!* with girls in their first year of a program grade level, and do either *It's Your Planet—Love It!* or *It's Your Story—Tell It!* with girls in their second year of a program grade level. Talk to the girls about each journey and which one they'll take each year.
3. **Get to know the journey.** Pick up a girls' book and adult guide. Read the girls' book just for the pleasure of it to get an overview of the journey's theme and content. If you are leading a first-time troop, you will receive a free set of books in your New Troop Welcome Kit.
4. **Review the sample session plans in the adult guide.** These sample session plans give you ideas about how to bring the journey to life with girls, but leave plenty of room for creativity and customization.
5. **Invite girls (and their parents/guardians) to use their imaginations** to make the journey come to life in ways that excite them. Remember that you and the girls don't have to do everything exactly as laid out in the sample sessions.
6. If you are leading a Girl Scout Daisy, Brownie or Junior troop, **read through the River Valleys Program Essentials Meeting Plans** for your troop's program grade level and year to see how everything can come together. These plans have been specially designed for River Valleys volunteers to give you a "one-stop shop" resource with detailed troop meeting plans for your entire year. By following these meeting plans, you can reduce your preparation time and ensure you are covering the core activities as outlined in your Program Essentials Chart. The meeting plans for first-time troops are in the New Troop Welcome Kit, and the meeting plans for second-time troops are on the River Valleys website at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org).

7. **Step back and watch** how the girls, with your knowledge, support and guidance, have enormous fun and a rewarding experience. Celebrate with them as they earn their national leadership journey awards and perhaps some Girl Scout badges, too!

# Planning in a Girl-Led Environment

To start planning your time together, first draw up a calendar:

January	February	March
April	May	June
July	August	September
October	November	December

If your group will be meeting for less than a year, adjust the calendar to suit your needs. Or, if you're planning a multi-year event, such as a travel excursion, add one or two more years to the framework. Then consider the following questions:

- How many meetings will you have each month? When do you plan to break for holidays?
- How many weeks do you need for the Girl Scout Cookie Program Activity and Fall Product Program?
- Which Program Essentials Chart activities will you try first?
- Will you have time in your schedule for guest speakers and visitors?
- If you've worked with this group before, what are their preferences? Badge work? Field trips? Other activities? These can also be tied to a Girl Scout journey theme! For more ideas, see the online [journey maps](#) and then choose the grade level of the girls you're working with.

Include all of these considerations in your calendar as a starting point. Girls will fill in the details as they customize their journey. After you've drafted a loose framework, ask the girls what they think. Remember that you want girls to lead, but younger girls will need more guidance while older girls will require far less. Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors may not even want you to

draft a calendar in advance, so if they balk at what you've done, simply put your calendar away and let them take the reins. (Journey books for older girls include planning pages specifically designed to help them customize their journey.) Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies, on the other hand, may enjoy your calendar and just fill in a few ideas here and there that will clue you in to their interests.

As your group starts its journey, get a discussion (or debate!) going on the journey's theme and what it means to the girls. Probe to find out what they're most interested in accomplishing during their time together, and then help them connect those interests to their journey. This will help them chart the course of their journey and their time together.

# Meeting with Girls for the First Time

When you first get together with girls (and this meeting may also include parents/guardians, or you may decide to hold a separate meeting for the adults), you'll want to get to know the girls and give them a chance to get to know one another.

- **Ice-breaker games that let girls share simple details about themselves are a great way to start off your first gathering.** Journey books often start with such an icebreaker, so if you're digging in to a journey right away, you'll be all set. You can also search the Internet for "ice-breakers for kids" to find more ideas.
- **Introduce your troop's Program Essentials Chart.** The Program Essentials Chart outlines the activities your girls will do throughout the year.
- **Introduce the Girl Scout Leadership Journey books and the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.** You can start with something as simple as asking the girls to raise hands or shout out what "leadership" means to them, and then compiling a list that you can tie to the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, including the three keys of discover, connect and take action. Or, you can do something more complex, such as having the girls create masks from their journey book and choosing a character to play for the evening. Attend a Leadership Essentials or Extra! Extra! training session for ideas on how to kick off and use the journey books.
- **Talk about the three processes—girl-led, learning by doing and cooperative learning—in a grade-level appropriate way.** Consider dividing the girls into small groups or two-person teams to recall the activities they've led in the past, the times when they've learned by doing and the ways in which they've learned cooperatively in groups. What was beneficial about those experiences? What was difficult about them?
- **Find out what interests the group.** Do they want to dig deeper into the Girl Scout Leadership Journey or a related theme? Without promising anything yet, ask the girls to talk about what they're passionate about, what they've always wanted to do and how they would spend their time if money or other barriers were no object. Build off the ideas shared, but also ask direct questions of the girls who seem shy or unsure about answering so that no one is left out.
- **Get the girls talking about how they want to schedule their time together.** Use the planning pages from their journey book (referring to the draft calendar you started only as needed, so that girls are allowed to lead). Consider questions like these:
  - Can girls organize and plan a field trip or longer travel opportunity that will allow them to learn more about a particular journey topic or theme?
  - Is there an event that meshes with this topic or area of interest?
  - Can the girls locate and communicate with an expert in the field via e-mail or social media?
  - Can they invite a guest speaker to answer questions or demonstrate particular skills?
  - Which badges can the group choose to work on that will deepen their skills in this particular area?

- If they are Girl Scout Juniors or older, are they interested in pursuing their Girl Scout Bronze, Silver or Gold Awards?
- Do they have ideas for activities that will involve younger or older girls?

# Using Safety Activity Checkpoints



When preparing for any activity with girls, start by reading the Girl Scout Safety Activity Checkpoints for that particular activity. You can find these at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org) and/or River Valleys will provide you some other electronic or printed form.

Each Safety Activity Checkpoint offers you information on where to do this activity, how to include girls with disabilities, where to find both basic and specialized gear required for the activity, how to prepare yourselves in advance of the activity, what specific steps to follow on the day of the activity and so on.

In addition to reading these checkpoints yourself, you can e-mail or print them for co-volunteers, parents/guardians and the girls themselves. The checkpoints are formatted as checklists so that you, your co-volunteers and the girls can check off each step that

has been accomplished.

In keeping with the three processes of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, be sure that:

- **All activities are girl-led**, taking into account the age and abilities of the girls. Older girls can take the bulk of the responsibility for carefully planning and executing activities, while younger girls will require more of your guidance but should still be deeply involved in making decisions about their activities.
- **Girls have the chance to learn cooperatively**, by having girls teach each other new skills they may need for activities, rather than hearing all that from you.
- **Girls learn by doing**. If research or special equipment is needed, they'll learn better by doing that research themselves rather than if you do the legwork and report back to them. Even Girl Scout Daisies can do basic research and give reports or do show-and-tell for each other. And Girl Scout Ambassadors may need you only for moral support as they research, teach each other and plan every detail of their excursions.

If Safety Activity Checkpoints do not exist for an activity you and the girls are interested in, be sure to check with River Valleys *before* making any definite plans with your group. A few activities are allowed only with written pre-approval from River Valleys and only for girls 12 and older, while some are off limits completely.

**Caution:** You must get written pre-approval from River Valleys for girls ages 12 and older who will operate motorized vehicles, such as go-carts and personal watercraft, use firearms, take trips on waterways that are highly changeable or uncontrollable, or fly in noncommercial aircraft, such as small private planes, helicopters, sailplanes, untethered hot-air balloons and blimps.

**Warning:** The following activities are never allowed for any girl: potentially uncontrolled free-falling (bungee jumping, hang gliding, parachuting, parasailing and trampolining); creating extreme variations of approved activities (such as high-altitude climbing and aerial tricks on bicycles, skis, snowboards, skateboards, water-skis and wakeboards); hunting or shooting a projectile at another person; riding all-terrain vehicles and motor bikes; taking watercraft trips in Class V or higher; and simulated skydiving and zero-gravity rooms.

**One additional note:** What may seem benign to one person could be a sensitive issue for another, so when you or the girls wish to participate in anything that could be considered controversial (health or education in human sexuality, advocacy projects, work with religious

groups, or anything that could yield a political/social debate), put the topic on hold until you've obtained written parental/guardian permission on forms available from River Valleys. Included on the permission form should be the topic of the activity, any specific content that might create controversy and any action steps the girls are to do when the activity is complete. Be sure to have a form for each girl, and keep them on hand in case a problem arises. For non-Girl Scout activities, find out in advance (from organizers or other volunteers who may be familiar with the content) what will be presented, and follow River Valleys guidelines for obtaining written permission.

# Understanding How Many Volunteers You Need

Girl Scouts adult-to-girl ratios show the *minimum* number of adults needed to supervise a specific number of girls. (Councils may also establish *maximums* due to size or cost restrictions.) These supervision ratios were devised to ensure the safety and health of girls. For example, if one adult has to respond to an emergency, a second adult is always on hand for the rest of the girls. It may take you a minute to get used to the layout of this chart, but once you start to use it, you'll find the chart extremely helpful.

	Group Meetings		Events, Travel and Camping	
	<i>Two</i> unrelated adults (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	Plus <i>one</i> additional adult for each additional number of this many girls:	<i>Two</i> unrelated adults (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	Plus <i>one</i> additional adult for each additional number of this many girls:
<b>Girl Scout Daisies (K–grade 1)</b>	12	6	6	4
<b>Girl Scout Brownies (grades 2–3)</b>	20	8	12	6
<b>Girl Scout Juniors (grades 4–5)</b>	25	10	16	8
<b>Girl Scout Cadettes (grades 6–8)</b>	25	12	20	10
<b>Girl Scout Seniors (grades 9–10)</b>	30	15	24	12
<b>Girl Scout Ambassadors (grades 11–12)</b>	30	15	24	12

Here are some examples: If you're meeting with 17 Daisies, you'll need three unrelated adults (in other words, not your sister, spouse, parent or child), at least one of whom is female. (If this isn't making sense to you, follow the chart: you need two adults for 12 Daisies and one more adult for up to six more girls. You have 17, so you need three adults.) If, however, you have 17 Cadettes attending a group meeting, you need only two unrelated adults, at least one of which is female (because, on the chart, two adults can manage up to 25 Cadettes).

In addition to the adult-to-girl ratios, please remember that adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old or at the age of majority defined by the state, if it is older than 18.

# Following the Girl Scouts Safety Guidelines

Every adult in Girl Scouting is responsible for the physical and emotional safety of girls, and we all demonstrate that by agreeing to follow these guidelines at all times.

1. **Follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints.** Instructions for staying safe while participating in activities are detailed in the Safety Activity Checkpoints available from River Valleys. Read the checkpoints, follow them and share them with other volunteers, parents/guardians and girls before engaging in activities with girls.
2. **Arrange for proper adult supervision of girls.** Your group must have at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers present at all times, plus additional adult volunteers as necessary, depending on the size of the group and the ages and abilities of girls. Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old (or the age of majority defined by the state, if it is older than 18) and must be screened by River Valleys before volunteering. One lead volunteer in every group must be female.
3. **Get parent/guardian permission.** When an activity takes place that is outside the normal time and place, advise each parent/guardian of the details of the activity and obtain permission for girls to participate. Forms for this purpose are located on the River Valleys website.
4. **Report abuse.** Sexual advances, improper touching and sexual activity of any kind with girl members are forbidden. Physical, verbal and emotional abuse of girls is also forbidden. Follow the River Valleys guidelines for reporting concerns about abuse or neglect that may be occurring inside or outside of Girl Scouting. These guidelines are located in *Volunteer Essentials*.
5. **Be prepared for emergencies.** Work with girls and other adults to establish and practice procedures for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost girls/adults and site security. Always keep handy a well-stocked first-aid kit, girl health histories and contact information for girls' families. Health history forms are located at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org).
6. **Travel safely.** When transporting girls to planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities that are outside the normal time and place, every driver must be an approved adult volunteer and have a good driving record, a valid license and a registered/insured vehicle. Insist that everyone is in a legal seat and wears her seat belt at all times, and adhere to state laws regarding booster seats and requirements for children in rear seats.
7. **Ensure safe overnight outings.** Prepare girls to be away from home by involving them in planning, so they know what to expect. Avoid having men sleep in the same space as girls and women. During family or parent/guardian-daughter overnights, one family unit may sleep in the same sleeping quarters in program areas. When parents/guardians are staffing events, daughters should remain in quarters with other girls rather than in staff areas.
8. **Role-model the right behavior.** Never use illegal drugs. Don't consume alcohol, smoke or use foul language in the presence of girls. Do not carry ammunition or firearms in the presence of girls unless given special permission by River Valleys for group marksmanship activities.
9. **Create an emotionally safe space.** Adults are responsible for making Girl Scouting a place where girls are as safe emotionally as they are physically. Protect the emotional safety of girls by creating a team agreement and coaching girls to honor it. Agreements typically encourage behaviors like respecting a diversity of feelings and opinions, resolving conflicts constructively and avoiding physical and verbal bullying, clique behavior and discrimination.
10. **Ensure that no girl is treated differently.** Girl Scouts welcomes all members, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, culture, background, sexual orientation, gender, ability, family structure, religious beliefs, education and socioeconomic status. When scheduling, helping plan and carrying out activities, carefully consider the needs of all girls involved, including school schedules, family needs, financial constraints, religious holidays and the accessibility of appropriate transportation and meeting places.

11. **Promote online safety.** Instruct girls never to put their full names or contact information online, engage in virtual conversation with strangers or arrange in-person meetings with online contacts. On group websites, publish girls' first names only and never divulge their contact information. Teach girls the [Girl Scout Online Safety Pledge](#) and have them commit to it.
12. **Keep girls safe during money earning.** The Girl Scout Cookie Program Activity and other council-sponsored product sales are an integral part of the program. During Girl Scout product sales, you are responsible for the safety of girls, money and products. In addition, a wide variety of organizations, causes and fundraisers may appeal to Girl Scouts to be their labor force. When representing Girl Scouts, girls cannot participate in money-earning activities that represent partisan politics or that are not Girl Scout–approved product sales and efforts.

# Volunteer Essentials 2011-2012

## Chapter 1: Sharing Your Unique Gifts

No matter how you volunteer with Girl Scouts, your investment in time and energy will pay back tenfold. 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.

Information found in this chapter:

[Your Role as a Girl Scout Volunteer](#) (including the Girl Scout Promise and Law)  
[Evaluating Your Skills](#)  
[Taking Advantage of Learning Opportunities](#)  
[Adult Awards and Recognition](#)

### Your Role as a Girl Scout Volunteer

Your most important role as a Girl Scout volunteer is to be excited about everything this opportunity affords you: a chance to partner with girls, play a critical role in their lives and watch them blossom! You also want to be someone who enjoys the activities you'll be embarking on with the girls—whether you're a camp volunteer, working with girls who are traveling, or partnering with girls on a short-term series on a topic that interests you.

As a Girl Scout volunteer, you'll serve as a partner and role model to girls. You'll also work closely with a co-volunteer. Two adults must be present at all times when working with girls and at least one of those volunteers must be female and *not* related to the other adult. This is an important distinction that bears repeating: Men can serve as troop volunteers, but an adult female who is not related to the other volunteer must be present at all times and at no time is a girl to be alone with only one volunteer. Remember to also check the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the Quick-Start Guide and in "Chapter 4: Safety-Wise" in this handbook.

### Your Responsibilities

Your other responsibilities as a Girl Scout volunteer include:

- Accepting the Girl Scout Promise and Law.
- Understanding the three keys to leadership that are the basis of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience: discover, connect and take action.
- Sharing your knowledge, experience and skills with a positive and flexible approach.
- Working in partnership with girls so that their activities are girl-led, allowing them to learn by doing and allowing for cooperative (group) learning; you'll also partner with other volunteers and council staff for support and guidance.
- Organizing fun, interactive, girl-led activities that address relevant issues and match girls' interests and needs.
- Providing guidance and information regarding Girl Scout group meetings to girls' parents or guardians on a regular and ongoing basis through a variety of tools, including e-mail, phone calls, newsletters, blogs, other forms of social media and any other method you choose.

- Processing and completing registration forms and other paperwork such as permission slips.
- Communicating effectively and delivering clear, organized and vibrant presentations or information to an individual or the troop.
- Overseeing with honesty, integrity and careful record-keeping the funds that girls raise.
- Maintaining a close connection to your volunteer support team.
- Facilitating a safe experience for every girl.

## Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:

To serve God and my country,  
 To help people at all times,  
 And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

## Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be

honest and fair,  
 friendly and helpful,  
 considerate and caring,  
 courageous and strong,  
 and responsible for what I say and do,

and to

respect myself and others,  
 respect authority,  
 use resources wisely,  
 make the world a better place,  
 and be a sister to every Girl Scout.

## Your Support Team

In your role as a Girl Scout volunteer, you'll team up with co-volunteers, parents/guardians, members of the community, council staff and others who have expressed interest in working alongside you. The adult guide for each journey gives you tips and guidance on creating a friends-and-family network to support you all along the way.

Your support team may help by:

- Filling in for you
- Arranging meeting places
- Being responsible for communicating with girls and parents/guardians
- Locating adults with special skills to facilitate a specialized meeting
- Assisting with trips and chaperoning
- Managing group records
- Assisting in opening a troop bank account

If you have a large support team, the first thing you'll want to do is meet with this group and discuss what brought each of you to Girl Scouts, review your strengths and skills and talk about how you would like to work together as a team. Also discuss:

- When important milestones will happen (Girl Scout Cookie activities, field trips, travel plans, events, dates for a series or camp) and how long the planning process will take.
- When and where to meet as a group, if necessary.
- Whether, when, where and how often to hold parent/guardian meetings.
- Whether an advance trip to a destination, event site, or camp needs to happen.

Plan to attend support meetings—usually held several times throughout the year—that provide excellent opportunities to learn from other volunteers.

## Evaluating Your Skills

Use the following checklist to determine your strengths and areas for growth and then work with your volunteer support team to boost the areas in which you can do some additional learning and skill building.

### Focusing on Girls

- I create a fun, interactive, girl-led series of activities.
- I help girls set realistic and clearly defined goals and objectives.
- I am respectful of and empathetic to girls.
- I create a friendly environment for girls and adults.
- I foster partnerships that provide opportunities for girls to lead their own activities.

### Demonstrating Flexibility

- I adjust, modify behavior and remain flexible in response to changes, obstacles and divergent opinions.
- I maintain a sense of humor and emotional composure, even when under pressure or opposition.

### Communicating Well

- I express ideas and facts clearly, concisely and accurately.
- I communicate in a manner that's appropriate for each individual and group.
- I use appropriate nonverbal communication.
- I actively listen to others and incorporate their ideas and perspectives.
- I facilitate group discussion, clarify the points of others and encourage group responses and actions.
- I present information that is clear, organized and vibrant.

## Fostering Diversity

- I understand that each individual brings a unique—and important—experience to Girl Scouting and I embrace those differences.
- I value, develop, nurture, use and celebrate both group and individual diversity.
- I strive for inclusiveness in all activities, removing barriers to participation for both girls and their parents/guardians.
- I challenge the biases of others.
- I treat others fairly.

## Living with Personal Integrity

- I demonstrate dependability, honesty and credibility.
- I accept responsibility for my actions.
- I maintain confidentiality.
- I uphold ethical standards.

## Taking Advantage of Learning Opportunities

Girl Scouts strives to provide you with just enough information to successfully manage your group of girls and let you know how to get additional information on certain topics when you need it. Volunteer learning is offered in a variety of ways to best meet individual learning styles—written resources, face-to-face learning and interactive online learning.

You'll find self-studies to complete on your own schedule and at your own pace, as well as face-to-face training opportunities that allow for immediate feedback on skills learned and knowledge gained. You also have resources to use as a reference during the year. Read what you need now and come back when you're ready for more. At this point, you have probably completed the online Volunteer Orientation and will soon be scheduled for Leadership Essentials, which will provide an in-depth focus on delivering the Girl Scout Leadership Experience—the outcomes/benefits for girls, the processes (girl-led, learn by doing and cooperative learning) and the three leadership keys (discover, connect and take action). Visit River Valleys' website at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org) for more information.

Learning opportunities ensure that you have the support you need in Girl Scouting. River Valleys will provide you with the instruction and guidance necessary to fulfill your role as a Girl Scout volunteer—learning that will not only help you work more effectively with Girl Scouts but also introduce new skills and behaviors into your work life, relationships and personal development. In the end, your service will be recognized and evident to all the girls you help become confident, courageous and character-driven young women. And that's the greatest reward of all!

## Quick Guide to River Valleys' Volunteer Training

River Valleys' Board of Directors requires all volunteers to attend training to ensure that they understand Girl Scouts as an organization as well as the duties of the position they have agreed to perform. Training must be completed within four months after the first day of appointment to a volunteer position. Visit [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org) for more information and to register for training sessions.

## Training Requirements for Girl Scout Troop Leaders

New Girl Scout troop leaders are required to take the following training in the recommended order within four months after their first day of appointment:

1. **Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) Volunteer Orientation**, available online in English or Spanish or in a self-study PDF that you may download at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org) (online password: discover) (contraseña de acceso: descubrir).
2. **Fast Start Meeting** within the service unit, a learning session to help new leaders gain more in-depth knowledge on starting a troop. Only one leader for a new troop is required to attend this meeting; additional leaders are encouraged to attend.
3. **Leadership Essentials** is available in facilitated learning sessions, online with River Valleys' Add-On, or in a self-study PDF at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org) (online password: discover) (contraseña de acceso: descubrir).

## Trained Troop Requirements

In addition to the training above, a troop will need the following:

- One registered adult member who has successfully completed CPR/first-aid training as needed for activities. Many healthcare providers are qualified first aiders for troop activities; see [Chapter 4: Safety-Wise](#) for a list of qualified professionals.
- One registered adult member who has successfully completed Fall Product Program and Girl Scout Cookie Program Activity training.
- One registered adult member who has successfully completed the Beyond the Troop training as needed for activities (for example, outdoor cooking, camping, travel).

## Service Team Position Training Requirements

Girl Scout volunteers are required to take training to fulfill the requirements for appointment to a service unit team position within four months after her/his first day of appointment. Position descriptions are available on the River Valleys website at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org).

## Accommodations in Training

Most training sites are accessible to participants with disabilities. Please call the Adult Development staff regarding accessibility. American Sign Language interpreters are available upon request.

Whatever your volunteer position, your hard work means the world to girls, to your council staff and to Girl Scouts of the USA. Girls could never experience all the benefits of Girl Scouting without you, so thank you, from the bottom of our hearts.

We want you to have such an incredible time working with girls that you want to stay in Girl Scouting! So, after you complete your current role, River Valleys' staff will guide you through a reappointment process in which you'll talk about the positive parts of your experience as well as the challenges you faced and discuss whether you want to return in this position or try something new. During this process, River Valleys' staff will also want to lavish you with praise, rewards, recognition and thanks for all the hard work you do!

## Adult Awards and Recognition

Adults participate in Girl Scouting to support girls and the Girl Scout Movement. Although volunteers do not seek special rewards for their contributions, everyone likes to feel appreciated. There are many ways to express appreciation and recognition in Girl Scouting. Look at the Awards and Recognition for Adult Volunteers page on [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org) for more information.

### Weeks Designated for Volunteer Appreciation

Volunteer Appreciation Week—the third week in April—is set aside especially for you. Girl Scouts pay tribute to the volunteers who help girls make the world a better place. The week centers on the long-standing National Girl Scout Leaders' Day (April 22) but expands the definition to include all volunteers who work in so many ways on behalf of girls in Girl Scouting.

And in conjunction with "Make a Difference Day," Girl Scouts also celebrates "Volunteers Make a Difference Week," which begins the weekend in autumn when we set our clocks back.

# Volunteer Essentials 2011-2012

## Chapter 2: Program—What Girl Scouts Do

The Girl Scout program—that is, what girls do in Girl Scouting—offers incredible opportunities for girls to grow their leadership skills, develop lifelong friendships and earn awards during their Girl Scout Leadership Journey, no matter what their grade level, experiences or background.

Each Girl Scout journey offers opportunities to earn prestigious leadership awards. Beginning in grades four and five at the Girl Scout Junior level, girls also have an opportunity to earn the highest awards in Girl Scouting—the Girl Scout Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards. Earning topical badges to complement their journey activities is another important Girl Scout tradition that encourages girls to learn, develop and demonstrate important practical life skills. Skill-building badge activities allow girls to focus on these interest areas: career literacy, cultural literacy, financial literacy, healthy living, outdoor awareness and STEM (science, technology, engineering and math). And Girl Scout ceremonies and songs continue to link girls not only with their Girl Scout peers today but with the many Girl Scouts who came before them. This chapter shares details on each of these exciting elements of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

Information found in this chapter:

- [Program Essentials](#)
- [The Girl Scout Leadership Experience](#)
- [Leadership Journeys!](#)
- [The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting](#)
- [Girl Scout Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards](#)
- [Girl Scout Traditions—Pass It On](#)
- [Girl Scout Trips](#)
- [Our Own Council's Curricula](#)
- [Council-Sponsored Program Events](#)
- [Council-Sponsored Summer Camps](#)
- [Council Site and Equipment Rental](#)

### 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 Charts for first-time troops are included in the New Troop Welcome Kit. Program Essentials Charts for second-time (and third-time, in the case of Girl Scout Cadettes) troops are available to download on the River Valleys website at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org).

River Valleys has developed a number of resources to support Program Essentials, including easy-to-use Program Essentials Meeting Plans for Girl Scout Daisy, Brownie and Junior troops and packets and program kits for all program grade levels.

Each girl who completes the Program Essentials requirements is eligible to receive a pin. These pins:

- are a special Our Own Council's Earned Award that can be earned each year
- can be worn on the front of the sash/tunic/vest above the journey awards
- represent one year of Program Essentials completion
- are signified by a different colored pin for each Girl Scout grade level
- are free of charge

To receive the girls' pins, troop leaders must:

1. Have the girls complete the Program Essentials Chart requirements by September 30.
2. Bring the completed chart to the nearest Girl Scout Shop soon after September 30 and exchange it for the pins. Charts may also be faxed, mailed or e-mailed to your local Girl Scout Shop, and pins will be mailed within two weeks of receipt of the chart.

To learn where to place the pins on the uniforms, visit the River Valleys website at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org).

## The Girl Scout Leadership Experience

The Girl Scout program is based on the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, a national model that helps girls become leaders in their own lives and as they grow. No matter where girls live or what their age or background, as Girl Scouts they are part of this powerful, national experience. As they build leadership skills, they also develop lifelong friendships and earn meaningful awards, two of many treasured traditions in the sisterhood of Girl Scouting.

Girls tell us that a leader is defined not only by her qualities and skills but also by how she makes a difference in the world. Girl Scouting engages girls in activities around three areas that Girl Scouting believes are essential to developing leadership:

- Discovering who they are and what they value
- Connecting with others
- Taking action to make the world a better place

These three areas are known as the three keys to leadership: discover, connect and take action.

Girl Scout activities also ask adult volunteers to engage girls in three ways that make Girl Scouting unique from school and other extracurricular activities:

- **Girl-led:** Girls of every grade level take an active role in determining what, where, when, why and how they'll structure activities. As part of the girl-adult partnership fostered by Girl Scouts, you use this process to strengthen and support girls' empowerment and decision-making role in activities. Your role is to provide grade-level-appropriate guidance while ensuring that girls lead as much as possible in the planning, organization, set-up and evaluation of their activities.
- **Learning by doing:** Girls use hands-on learning to engage in an ongoing cycle of action and reflection, deepening their understanding of concepts and mastering practical skills. As girls take part in meaningful activities—instead of simply watching them—and then later evaluate what they have learned, learning is far more meaningful, memorable and

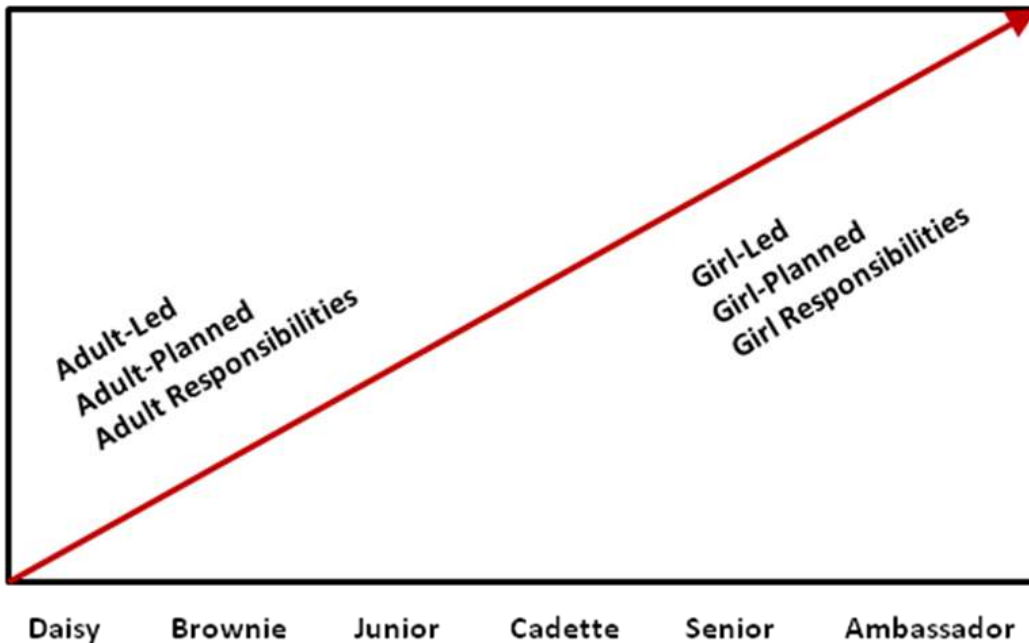
long-lasting. You assist girls in this process by facilitating grade-level-appropriate experiences through which girls can learn and also by leading discussions that reflect on those experiences. When girls learn by doing, they can better connect their experiences to their own lives both in and out of Girl Scouting.

- **Cooperative learning:** Girls share knowledge, skills, and experiences in an atmosphere of respect and cooperation, working together on a common goal that engages each individual girl's diverse talents. In cooperative learning environments, people learn faster, process information more efficiently and are better able to retain the information learned. This idea, also known as "positive interdependence," engages girls in meaningful ways, encourages and appreciates differences in outlook and skills and creates a sense of belonging. In your role as a volunteer, you want to structure cooperative-learning activities that will nurture healthy, diverse relationships and also give continuous feedback to girls on those learning experiences.

When used together, these processes ensure the quality and promote the fun and friendship that's so integral to Girl Scouting. The adult guide for each journey contains full definitions of these processes and examples of how to support their use in everything you and the girls do in Girl Scouting. And each girl's journey book has these processes built right into all its activities and discussions. So as you and the girls take part in a journey, you'll be using the processes without even knowing it—and you'll learn by doing, right along with the girls!

More details about the three Girl Scout processes can also be found in *Transforming Leadership Continued*, available online at [www.girlscouts.org/research/publications/qsoutcomes/transforming\\_leadership\\_continued.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/research/publications/qsoutcomes/transforming_leadership_continued.asp).

### Transitioning from Adult-Led to Girl-Led



## Leadership Journeys!

The best way to deliver the Girl Scout Leadership Experience is through leadership journeys. These powerful, fun, and multidisciplinary experiences, each spread over a set of gatherings, are the core of the Girl Scout program. Leadership journeys immerse Girl Scouts in specific themes that are detailed in each journey's resources: the girls' book and the adult guide. The adult guide for each journey also features sample session plans with enriching activities, discussions and reflections for a group of girls, along with corresponding coaching tips. You can customize these sample session plans to fit the needs of your group, whether you guide a troop, volunteer at a Girl Scout camp, mentor girls on a travel adventure or engage with girls in a series or at an event.

Leadership journeys ensure that girls in every Girl Scout Pathway receive a consistent, high-quality experience that engages girls in realizing specific leadership benefits. Each journey also offers opportunities to enjoy the longstanding traditions of Girl Scouting, from ceremonies and songs to earning awards and related skill badges. Here are a few tips for enjoying a great journey with your group of girls:

- **Customize!** Your journey's adult guide offers step-by-step activities, discussions, ceremonies and reflections. But no journey is meant to require hard-and-fast, unchangeable, lockstep sessions. Along with the girls, make the most of resources in your region to add trips, activities, guest speakers and other special items to the journey. You'll find plenty of tips for doing so in your adult guide, and the journey will be so much more fun and relevant as girls make it their own!
- **Take your time or speed things up.** Sample sessions in the journeys have been created to show how it is possible to have a Girl Scout Leadership Experience in a set number of gatherings. Many girls and adults quickly find there is more they want to do, which is why your adult guide is filled with tips for how to stretch out the experience. As their imaginations take hold, girls will have many more ideas about how to extend the journey. Conversely, you and the girls may decide you want to complete a journey in only four or five group gatherings. Do whatever works for you and the girls.
- **Harness the power of stories.** All Girl Scout Leadership Journeys engage girls in stories—real and fictional—of girls and women taking action in the world. Make use of these stories and expand upon them whenever you can in any way that you and the girls will enjoy. Stories, after all, capture the imagination and motivate. Ultimately, girls will create their own stories on the journey, meeting new people and taking action in the world. What other stories are going on in your region, and how can girls connect to them? What can girls find in stories—in art or life—that add to the feelings and ideas during this adventure?
- **Connect to the three keys.** As a volunteer in Girl Scouts, your experiences—and your view of leadership—will influence and inspire girls. Use the reflection exercises in the adult guide to think about the three keys to leadership (discover, connect, take action) and how you can best apply them as you team up with Girl Scouts on their leadership journey.
- **Remember, you don't need to do it on your own!** If you are leading a Girl Scout Daisy, Brownie or Junior troop, River Valleys has designed Program Essentials Meeting Plans that put it all together—an entire year's worth of troop meetings is already planned for you! The meeting plans for first-time troops are in the New Troop Welcome Kit, and

the meeting plans for second-time troops are on the River Valleys website at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org).

## ***It's Your World—Change It!***

This journey series invites girls to develop a deep understanding of themselves, understand how powerfully they can act when they team with others who share a vision, and make a difference in their communities by inspiring, educating and advocating. Grade-level journeys in this series are:

- *Welcome to the Daisy Flower Garden*
- *Brownie Quest*
- *Agent of Change* (for Girl Scout Juniors)
- *aMAZE!* (for Girl Scout Cadettes)
- *GIRLtopia* (for Girl Scout Seniors)
- *Your Voice Your World—The Power of Advocacy* (for Girl Scout Ambassadors)

## ***It's Your Planet—Love It!***

Girls are invited in this journey series to make sense of the wealth of environmental information available so that they can act for the betterment of Earth and its inhabitants. In this series, girls tackle issues like conservation, pollution and renewable and reusable resources—all while focusing on leadership development. Grade-level journeys in this series are:

- *Between Earth and Sky* (for Girl Scout Daisies)
- *WOW! Wonders of Water* (for Girl Scout Brownies)
- *GET MOVING!* (for Girl Scout Juniors)
- *BREATHE* (for Girl Scout Cadettes)
- *SOW WHAT?* (for Girl Scout Seniors)
- *JUSTICE* (for Girl Scout Ambassadors)

## ***It's Your Story—Tell It!***

This series of leadership journeys, made possible in part by a generous grant from Dove, is designed to strengthen a girl's sense of herself and boost her capacity to seek and meet challenges in the world—all by giving her the opportunity to hear, create and tell stories in a range of creative mediums.

- *5 Flowers, 4 Stories, 3 Cheers for Animals!* (for Girl Scout Daisies)
- *A World of Girls* (for Girl Scout Brownies)
- *aMUSE* (for Girl Scout Juniors)
- *MEdia* (for Girl Scout Cadettes)
- *MISSION: SISTERHOOD!* (for Girl Scout Seniors)

- *BLISS: Live It! Give It!* (for Girl Scout Ambassadors)

For a description of each book for each grade level, check out the following six tables.

<b>Girl Scout Daisies</b>	<b><i>Welcome to the Daisy Flower Garden</i></b>	<b><i>Between Earth and Sky</i></b>	<b><i>5 Flowers, 4 Stories, 3 Cheers for Animals!</i></b>
	<p>In this book, Girl Scout Daisies meet Amazing Daisy and the Flower Friends to explore the fun and curiosity of making things grow. The result is a storybook world of flowers and little girls who, together, do great things. Daisies especially enjoy meeting the colorful, global characters of the Flower Friends, who teach them to live the Girl Scout Law.</p>	<p>On this journey, Girl Scout Daisies join the Flower Friends for a cross-country trip in their special flower-powered car. As the Flower Friends travel the country living the values of the Girl Scout Law, Daisies join them in exploring the natural world, learning what's local and why that's important. Along the way, Daisies get to explore shapes in nature, learn the wisdom of women working to protect the planet and gain an understanding of what it takes to protect the environment.</p>	<p>As Girl Scout Daisies enjoy a fictional story about the Flower Friends, they learn just how much they can care for animals and for themselves—and just how confident that makes them feel.</p>
			

**Brownie Quest**

What are the most important keys for a Girl Scout to own?



This quest answers that question in a very special way. It has Girl Scout Brownies traveling along two colorful trails—one they can enjoy on their own and one they explore with their Girl Scout group. Along the quest, Brownies meet three new friends and a bright and shining elf—in a brand-new Brownie story meant to inspire their own take-action projects.

**WOW! Wonders of Water**

Girl Scout Brownies join the Brownie friends and Brownie Elf as



they enjoy some wonder-filled adventures. As they dive in, the Brownies try out new ways of working as a team, learn about the water cycle and enjoy making their own rainbows. As Brownies learn how precious water is, they can pledge to protect it and team up to advocate for water conservation.

**A World of Girls**

In *A World of Girls*, Brownies have fun learning that stories



contain clues and that they can use those clues to make the world better. A flip book, *A World of Girls* devotes one side to fictional stories that take the Brownie girl characters to diverse places in the world. The other side has the real-life Brownies exploring themselves and their world closer to home. Through the journey's many adventures, anecdotes and activities, the Brownies follow through on clues and enjoy a fun and challenging Girl Scout experience that strengthens their confidence and gives them a chance to better the world.

*Agent of Change*

A fashion-savvy spider named Dez shows Girl Scout Juniors how they can combine their own power into team power and use it to spark community power. When Juniors learn how the “power of one,” “power of team” and “power of community” work together, they not only make their own communities better but have impact around the globe.



*GET MOVING!*

This journey invites Girl Scout Juniors to engage their minds and hearts as they explore the many forms, uses and misuses of energy. From paper-making experiments to making beads from newspapers and magazines to forming a "perpetual human motion machine," Juniors will find that *GET MOVING!* is crammed full of energizing stuff to make and do! *GET MOVING!* challenges girls to safeguard Earth’s precious energy resources by using their leadership skills—their ability to energize themselves and others, and their ability to investigate and innovate.



*aMUSE*

In aMUSE, Girl Scout Juniors gain insight into just how limitless their potential can be as they fuse storytelling with the many roles—real and creative—that the world offers. They’ll have fun trying on roles and learning about people and the power of real-life action and leadership.



**aMAZE!**

Real life can be a maze of relationships and this journey has Girl Scout Cadettes maneuvering through all its twists and turns to find true friendships, plenty of confidence and maybe even peace. Girls can make “peacemaker kits,” learn about bullying behavior and complete a take-action project that thrives on these relationship skills.



**BREATHE**

Air is everywhere in *BREATHE*. And as Girl Scout Cadettes explore the air they’ll learn to assess air quality inside and out as they gain an aerial view of everything from cigarette smoking to noise to deforestation. Along the way, they’ll try some scientific experiments and meet scientists, engineers, writers and artists—all of them working for Earth’s air. Above all, *BREATHE* inspires Cadettes to create “breathing room” to be leaders who use their flair to make a difference in the world.



**MEdia**

Girl Scout Cadettes put the “me” in *MEdia* as this journey encourages them to explore the great big multimedia world around them and then remake media to better match the reality they know. Along the way, Cadettes become aware of the value of media, its limitations and effect and the power they have to lead and inspire others.



**GIRLtopia**

The world is not ideal and Girl Scout Seniors know that. This journey is their chance to imagine a perfect world—for girls. Seniors are invited to create their vision in any medium they choose. Then they'll take action to make their vision a reality. Leaders, after all, are visionaries! As Seniors learn to define the ideal environment, they learn a lot about their own values, attitudes, actions and leadership.



**SOW WHAT?**

In *Sow What?*, Girl Scout Seniors get the opportunity to ponder land use around the world (corn's a big issue!) and get down to the science and roots of complex and global food issues. Girls plan and conduct a local "food forage" to scope out their "food print" choices, and talk to scientists, local growers and business owners—and even global hunger experts. Using what they learn, girls consider their "leader prints" as they decide who and what they can cultivate enroute to a take-action project that positively impacts their food network. Along the way, Seniors take time to enjoy a "truly happy meal" together, experiment with new recipes and try out being "locavores" who know how to savor local bounty.



**MISSION: SISTERHOOD**

Girl Scout Seniors harness the magic of stories in *MISSION: SISTERHOOD* to widen their networks and ignite the energy of sisterhood to create real change in the world. As Seniors expand their friendship borders, they boost their own confidence and make the most of their leadership skills.



**Your Voice Your World—The Power of Advocacy**

How often have you seen something that really needed to be changed and wondered, "Why isn't someone doing something about that?" This journey gives Girl Scout Ambassadors a way to be that someone—an advocate with the power to start the first flutter of real and lasting change. While creating their own "butterfly effect," they'll gain an array of skills—such as networking, planning and learning to speak up for what they believe—that will benefit them as they prepare for life beyond high school.



**JUSTICE**

*Justice*—for Earth and all its inhabitants—we all know what it is. Why is it so hard to achieve? Girl Scout Ambassadors realize that maybe justice needs a brand-new equation—their equation. By "doing the math" with even the simplest of acts, deciphering how decisions get made and exploring how to use scientific evidence, Ambassadors create and then present their own unique equation for what justice asks of us. Along the way, Ambassadors find they are also networking and gathering ideas for college and careers. When they conclude this journey, Ambassadors may recognize themselves as the wise and healing leaders Earth years for!



**BLISS:  
Live It! Give It!**

In this journey, *BLISS: Live It! Give It!*, Girl Scout Ambassadors dream big, now and for the future, and assist others in dreaming big, too. They explore their values, strengths and passions as a way to open doors to wonderful, new adventures. Designed as a flip book, *Bliss: Live It! Give It!* inspires girls to pursue their dreams while *Bliss: Give It!* encourages girls to assist others in pursuing theirs.



**The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting**

In addition to the resources created for leadership journeys (the girls' book and the adult guide), girls at every program grade level have a *Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*. Through fun activities, girls can earn a variety of badges to build the skills and gain the confidence they'll use to change the world. They can even develop and complete activities to make their own badge—a great way to explore a topic of personal interest. (In addition, girls who make their own badge will learn *how* to learn, which is an important skill to have in school, on the job and in life!)

## Inside a *Girl's Guide*

The *Girl's Guide* is a binder that's designed to keep everything organized. Using a binder allows for maximum flexibility: outdated badges can be removed, while new badges based on girls' changing interests or funded opportunities can be added. All badges are called National Proficiency Badges and are grouped in the following categories: Legacy, Financial Literacy, Cookie Business, Skill-Building and Make Your Own. (Daisies continue to earn Petals, as well as four new Leaves.)

For Daisies, the *Girl's Guide* includes:

- **Handbook:** The handbook offers information about Girl Scout traditions and history, as well as the requirements for bridging to Brownies.
- **Awards:** Girl Scout Daisies earn 10 petals, one for each line of the Girl Scout Law, so this section includes 10 short stories starring the Flower Friends plus related activities that help girls learn the Law. This section also includes a chart of all Girl Scout earned awards for that grade level, and a chart showing all badges for all grade levels. Here, Daisies can also find the requirements for four new awards that they can now earn in addition to their petals. These awards, called "leaves," focus on skills related to financial literacy and the cookie business.
- **My Girl Scouts:** Scrapbook and journal pages allow each girl to customize her binder and keep a record of her Girl Scout experiences. Girl Scout Daisies have coloring pages, stickers and pages for photos, friends' autographs and other mementos.

For Brownies through Ambassadors, the *Girl's Guide* includes:

- **Handbook:** The handbook includes Girl Scout history and traditions, a chart of all Girl Scout earned awards for that grade level and a chart showing all badges for all grade levels. This section also includes a girl-friendly explanation of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, requirements for bridging to the next grade level and, at the appropriate grade level, the requirements for earning the Girl Scout Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards.
- **Badges:** This section includes badge requirements for the Legacy, Financial Literacy, Cookie Business and Make Your Own badges. The requirements for Skill-Building Badges are sold separately, giving each girl the ability to customize her *Girl's Guide* by adding badges that interest her.
- **My Girl Scouts:** Scrapbook and journal pages allow each girl to customize her binder and keep a record of her Girl Scout experiences. In addition to pages for photos, friends' autographs, and other mementos at all levels, Girl Scout Brownies and Juniors also have sticker pages.

The *Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* is designed to complement the leadership journeys at each grade level. This means that each Skill-Building Badge Set (there are currently three; each is sold separately from the *Girl's Guide*) is tied to one of the three journeys (as you can see in the following chart). You'll find that doing a journey and the related badge set at the same time will make it easy to offer the entire National Program Portfolio—journeys and badges—in a seamless way.

# How the National Girl Scout Program Portfolio Works

## The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting

- ▶ Handbook Section
  - ▶ My Girl Scouts Section
  - ▶ Awards Section
  - ▶ Legacy Badge: Topic Areas
    - Artist
    - The Girl Scout Way
    - Citizen
    - Cook
    - First Aid
    - Athlete
    - Naturalist
  - ▶ Financial Literacy Badges  
Girls can earn a different Financial Literacy Badge each year. (Daisies earn Financial Literacy "leaves.")
  - ▶ Cookie Business Badges  
Girls can earn a different Cookie Business Badge each year. (Daisies earn Cookie Business "leaves.")
  - ▶ Make Your Own
- PLUS**
- ▶ My Promise, My Faith Pin
  - ▶ Journey Summit Pin
- For Designated Levels**
- P.A., CIT, VIT
  - Bronze, Silver, Gold Awards

February 2010, 2011

## National Leadership Journeys

"Leadership Awards" for Girls

**It's Your World—Change It!**

**It's Your Planet—Love it!**

**It's Your Story—Tell It!**

## Skill Building Badge Sets

Girls choose a set to add into their Girl's Guide and enjoy along their Journey!

- ▶ Skill-Building Badge Set: Topic Areas
  - Performance
  - Healthy Living
  - Digital Arts
  - Storytelling
  - Science & Technology

- ▶ Skill-Building Badge Set: Topic Areas
  - Outdoors
  - Practical Life Skills
  - Do It Yourself
  - Craft
  - Investigation

- ▶ Skill-Building Badge Set: Topic Areas
  - Animals
  - Manners
  - Adventure
  - Creative Play
  - Innovation

- Brownies through Seniors will all have their own specific Badge in each of these topic areas.
- Initial Badge Sets – More can be added based on major funders or great ideas from girls or the field.

# Anatomy of a Badge

Each badge begins by stating the badge's **purpose**, that is, the skill girls will have learned when they've completed the badge. This program-with-a-purpose approach was tested with girls—and they loved it! Girls complete **five steps** to earn each badge. There are three choices for completing each step (girls have to choose only one to complete the step).

As you begin exploring the leadership journeys and the badges, you'll see that many steps to earn a badge can be worked naturally into activities that girls are doing on their journey. To help you and the girls see some of these connections, each badge also includes a tip for tying the badge into a specific journey.

Each badge ends with a few ideas about how girls can use their new skill to help others, plus a space for girls to jot down their own ideas. Although girls aren't required to help others to earn the badge, these ideas were offered to honor the standard that Juliette Gordon Low set for badge work 100 ago: "A badge is a symbol that you have done the thing it stands for often enough, thoroughly enough and well enough to *be prepared* to give service in it."

**girl scouts**

## Anatomy of a Badge

**Five Steps:** Each badge has five steps. Girls complete all five to earn the badge.

**Journey Tie-In:** Each badge includes a tip for tying the badge activities into a journey.

**Three Choices:** There are three choices for completing each step. Girls only need to do ONE.

**Giving Service:** This closing statement offers three ideas about how a girl can use her new skill to give service, plus room for girls to write or draw their own ideas.

**Purpose:** This opening statement tells girls what they'll be able to do once they've earned the badge.

February 29th, 2011

## Emblems and Patches

In addition to leadership journey awards and badges in the *Girl's Guide*, girls can commemorate their Girl Scout adventures with emblems and patches which can be worn on their vests or sashes.

- **Emblems** show membership in Girl Scouts, a particular council, a particular troop or in some other Girl Scout group. These can be worn on the front of a sash or vest (see the diagram in the handbook section of the *Girl's Guide* to Girl Scouting to see where these are placed).
- **Participation patches** are developed at the national or council level with a focus on participation. Some come with companion activity booklets while others are given out at events. These are worn on the back of the sash or vest since they are not emblems or earned awards.

You can purchase emblems and patches—along with badges and leadership awards—at River Valleys Shops or online at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org).

## Girl Scout Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards

The Girl Scout Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards are Girl Scouting's highest awards. These awards offer girls relevant, grade-level-appropriate challenges related to teamwork, goal setting and community networking and leadership. They engage girls in building networks that will not only support them in their award projects, but will also lead them to new educational and career opportunities.

Like everything girls do in Girl Scouting, the steps to earning these awards are rooted in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. This is why, to earn each of these awards, girls first complete a grade-level journey (two journeys for the Gold Award). With journeys, girls experience the keys to leadership and learn to identify community needs, work in partnership with their communities and carry out take-action projects that make a lasting difference. They can then use the skills they developed on a journey to develop and execute excellent projects for their Girl Scout Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards.

As a Girl Scout volunteer, encourage girls to go for it by earning these awards at the Junior through Ambassador levels. Check out some of the award projects girls in River Valleys are currently doing and talk to a few past recipients of the Girl Scout Gold Award. You'll be inspired when you see and hear what girls can accomplish as leaders—and by the confidence, values and team-building expertise they gain while doing so. And imagine the impact girls have on their communities, country and even the world as they identify problems they care about, team with others and act to make change happen!

The Girl Scout Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards offer incredible opportunities for personal development and community leadership. All this, of course, starts with you—a Girl Scout volunteer! Encourage your girls to go after the highest awards—information is available on the River Valleys website: [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org).

Did you know that a Girl Scout who earns her Gold Award immediately rises one rank in all four branches of the U.S. military? A number of college scholarships are also available to Gold Award recipients. A girl does not, however, have to earn a Bronze or Silver award before earning the Girl Scout Gold Award. She is eligible to earn any recognition at the grade level in which she is registered.

## A Tradition of Honoring Girls

From the beginning of Girl Scouts nearly 100 years ago, one prestigious award has recognized the girls who make a difference in their communities and in their own lives. The first, in 1916, was the Golden Eagle of Merit. In 1919, the name changed to The Golden Eaglet and in 1920, the requirements for The Golden Eaglet were updated. The First Class Award existed for only two years, from 1938–1940, and was replaced in 1940 with The Curved Bar Award, the requirements for which were updated in 1947. In 1963, GSUSA re-introduced the First Class Award for a girl who was an all-around person with skills in many fields and a proficiency in one. Today's highest award, the Girl Scout Gold Award, was introduced in 1980.

## Other Initiatives and Opportunities

Other opportunities support Program Essentials and the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Find out how to engage your group by visiting the program page on the River Valleys website at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org). You may also visit the GSUSA website and link directly to additional program information at [www.girlscouts.org/program/program\\_opportunities](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/program_opportunities).

## Girl Scout Traditions—Pass It On

Throughout the history of Girl Scouts, certain traditions remain meaningful and important and are still practiced today. This section describes annual celebrations in the Girl Scout year, as well as other revered Girl Scout traditions.

### Girl Scout Calendar

Girl Scouts celebrate three special birthdays each year that you're encouraged to include in your group activities.

- **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).
- **March 12:** The birthday of Girl Scouting in the USA when the first troop meeting was held in Savannah, Georgia. Note that 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).
- **Third week in April:** Volunteer Appreciation Week centers on the long-standing National Girl Scout Leaders' Day (April 22), but expands the definition of volunteers to include everyone who works in so many ways on behalf of Girl Scouts.
- **October 31:** Founder's Day (Juliette Gordon Low's birthday).

## World Thinking Day: February 22

World Thinking Day, first celebrated 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.

## Time-Honored Ceremonies

Ceremonies play an important part in Girl Scouts and are used not only to celebrate accomplishments, experience time-honored traditions and reinforce the values of the Girl Scout Promise and Law, but also to encourage girls to take a short pause in their busy lives and connect with fellow Girl Scouts in fun and meaningful ways. Many examples of ceremonies—for awards, meeting openings and closings, and so on—are sewn right into the journey, including ideas for new ceremonies girls can create!

Girls use ceremonies for all sorts of reasons—to open or close meetings, give out awards, welcome new members, renew memberships and honor special Girl Scout accomplishments. The most common Girl Scout ceremonies are listed below in alphabetical order:

- **Bridging** ceremonies mark a girl's move from one program grade level of Girl Scouting to another, such as from Junior to Cadette. (Note that "fly-up" is a special bridging ceremony for Girl Scout Brownies who are bridging to Juniors.)
- **Closing** ceremonies finalize the meeting and give expectations for the next. A closing ceremony may be as simple as a hand squeeze while standing in a circle.
- **Court of Awards** is a time to recognize girls' accomplishments during the Girl Scout year.
- **Flag** ceremonies can be part of any activity that honors the American flag.
- **Girl Scout Bronze, Silver or Gold Award** ceremonies honor Girl Scout Juniors who have earned the Girl Scout Bronze Award, Cadettes who have earned the Silver Award, or Seniors or Ambassadors who have earned the Gold Award. Each of these award ceremonies is usually held for a group or combined with council recognition.
- **Girl Scouts' Own** is a girl-led ceremony that allows girls to explore their feelings and beliefs around a topic, such as the importance of friendship or the personal meaning they get from the Girl Scout Promise and Law, using the spoken word, favorite songs, poetry or other methods of expression. It is never a religious ceremony.
- **Investiture** welcomes new members, girls or adults, into the Girl Scout family for the first time. Girls entering at every level receive a Girl Scout pin at this time.

- **Opening** ceremonies start troop meetings and can also begin other group meetings.
- **Pinning** ceremonies help celebrate when girls receive grade-level Girl Scout pins.
- **Rededication** ceremonies are opportunities for girls and adults to renew their commitment to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

For more information about ceremonies, visit

[http://www.girlscouts.org/\\_asset/lrb01a/Ceremonies-Support-Packet--full.pdf](http://www.girlscouts.org/_asset/lrb01a/Ceremonies-Support-Packet--full.pdf) as well as [www.girlscouts.org/programs/gs\\_central/ceremonies](http://www.girlscouts.org/programs/gs_central/ceremonies).

## Signs, Songs, Handshake and More!

Over time, organizations often create common signals that everyone recognizes. Such is the case with Girl Scouts, which has developed several unique ways to greet, acknowledge and communicate with each other. Some of these are listed here.

### Girl Scout Sign



The idea of the sign came from the days of chivalry when armed knights greeted friendly knights by raising the right hand, palm open, as a sign of friendship. To give the sign yourself, raise the three middle fingers of the right hand palm forward and shoulder high (the three extended fingers represent the three parts of the Girl Scout Promise). Girls give the sign when they:

- say the Promise or Law;
- are welcomed into Girl Scouts at an investiture ceremony that welcomes new members;
- receive an award, patch, pin or other recognition;
- greet other Girl Scouts and Girl Guides.

### Girl Scout Handshake



The handshake is a more formal way of greeting other Girl Scouts and is also an appropriate way to receive an award. To do the handshake, shake left hands and give the Girl Scout Sign with your right hand.

## Quiet Sign



The quiet sign can be extremely useful to you as a volunteer so teach it to girls during your first meeting. The sign is made by raising your right hand high with an open palm. As girls in the group see the sign, they stop talking and also raise their hands. Once everyone is silent, the meeting can begin.

## Girl Scout Slogan and Motto

The Girl Scout slogan is: “Do a good turn daily.” The Girl Scout motto is: “Be prepared.”

## Songs

Whether singing around a campfire or joining a chorus of voices on the Mall in Washington, D.C., Girl Scouts have always enjoyed the fun and fellowship that music creates. In fact, the first *Girl Scout Song Book*, a collection of songs put together by girl members, was published in 1925. Since then, the organization’s love of music has grown along with the girls it has empowered.

Songs can be used to open or close meetings, enhance ceremonies, lighten a load while hiking or share a special moment with other Girl Scouts. For tips on choosing and leading songs, go to [http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gs\\_central/activity\\_ideas/songleading.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_central/activity_ideas/songleading.asp). A variety of songbooks are also available to buy—visit River Valleys Shops or online at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org).

## Girl Scout Trips

A Girl Scout trip is a leadership opportunity for girls to:

### Discover:

- Girls gain new skills
- Girls grow in confidence and independence

### Connect:

- Girls cooperate and develop as a team
- Girls plan and research

### Take action:

- Girls experience adventure
- Girls are resourceful and flexible

Sometimes a trip is the culmination of a series of activities in which the girls are already engaged. Trips should have an immediate purpose, involve girl planning with adult guidance and be a progressive experience in Girl Scouting.

## Progressive Experience

Learning how to plan a trip should be a progressive experience for a Girl Scout. Start with planning a simple outing. When girls understand the planning process they can progress to longer trips. Extended (lasting more than three nights) overnight trips are not recommended for girls younger than sixth grade. International trips are not recommended for girls younger than ninth grade (with the exception of trips to Canada).

Below you will find definitions of the different types of Girl Scout trips. They are listed in order of appropriate progression. You can find more information on Girl Scout trips at [http://www.girlscoutsrv.org/activities\\_for\\_girls/trips\\_and\\_travel/](http://www.girlscoutsrv.org/activities_for_girls/trips_and_travel/).

### ***Meeting Time***

Trips to a point of interest within walking distance or a short ride by car/public transportation from the meeting place.

### ***Day***

Day-time excursion trips away from the group meeting place and outside the regular meeting time.

### ***Simple Overnight***

One or two nights away—at a Girl Scout facility/camp site, a nearby campground, hostel, motel or hotel.

### ***GSUSA Getaways***

Prepackaged travel opportunities located in different cities around the country. They are a good opportunity for troops looking to travel for the first time.

### ***Extended Overnight***

Lasting more than 3 nights—ranging from time spent at camping facilities to extensive travel within the continental United States.

### ***GSUSA Destinations***

Special coordinated Girl Scout activities that take place outside the group (i.e., girls traveling alone)—can be council, state, national or international experiences.

### ***International***

Trips to other countries are available to girls 14 years old and older who have successfully taken extended overnight trips.

## Required Approvals and Procedures

River Valleys recognizes that the progression of experiences in taking and planning trips is part of developing leadership skills. Approval may be required either at the service unit or council level as outlined below. Forms needed for trip approval can be found online at [http://www.girlscoutsrv.org/activities\\_for\\_girls/trips\\_and\\_travel/troop\\_trips/](http://www.girlscoutsrv.org/activities_for_girls/trips_and_travel/troop_trips/).

### **Procedures for all Girl Scout trips:**

- At least one participating adult has completed leader training (including GSUSA Volunteer Orientation, Fast Start Meeting and Leadership Essentials).
- At least one participating adult has completed the appropriate Beyond the Troop training (for example, Girls Travel—US, Girls Sleep Out), if applicable. (Refer to River Valleys' website for information.)
- At least one participating adult has the appropriate level of first-aid training, if applicable, and will be certified at the time of the trip (refer to [Chapter 4: Safety-Wise](#) for information on when first-aid training is required).
- All girls and adults participating in the trip are registered members of Girl Scouts of the USA.
- The trip must meet the following "Safety-Wise" guidelines:
  - recommended ratios of adults to girls for trips
  - applicable Planning Trips with Girl Scouts guidelines/checklists
  - applicable Girl Scout Program Standards
  - applicable Safety Activity Checkpoints
  - applicable Hotel Security and Safety Tips
- Review and follow all transportation information:
  - River Valleys "Vehicle Insurance" information
  - River Valleys "Group Transportation" information
- Trip leaders must carry the following documents throughout the duration of any and all trips:
  - Completed and signed Health History forms and Health Exam forms (if applicable)
  - A blank Mutual of Omaha/Girl Scouts of the USA claim form. To obtain this form, please contact the Registration Department or print it from [http://www.girlscoutsrv.org/forms\\_resources/health\\_and\\_safety/](http://www.girlscoutsrv.org/forms_resources/health_and_safety/) or at [www.mutualofomaha.com/gsusa](http://www.mutualofomaha.com/gsusa)
  - River Valleys Crisis Communication Plan/Emergency Procedures
  - Completed and signed Parent/Guardian Permission forms

### **Trips with no approval needed:**

- Meeting time trips
- Day trips less than 100 miles round-trip from the meeting place
- Exceptions include activities involving special equipment or those referred to below as referenced in the Safety Activity Checkpoints on the River Valleys website

### **Trips requiring service unit-level approval:**

In addition to the above procedures for all trips, you must also submit an Activity Approval for Trips Form to your service unit manager at least four weeks prior to your departure date.

- Day trips more than 100 miles round-trip
- Day trips longer than 10 hours
- Simple overnight trips (except for trips to council facilities/campsites, which go through the site rental process)

### **Trips requiring council-level approval:**

In addition to the above procedures for all trips, you will also need to adhere to the following procedure for council-approved trips. The council Program Department works with girls and

adults who are planning trips that require council approval. If you have questions, contact the River Valleys Program Department at 800-845-0787.

- Extended overnight trips (more than 3 nights)
- International trips (including Canada)
- Regional group trips (trips including Girl Scouts from two or more service units)
- Destinations
- Getaways
- Any and all trips involving:
  - Special equipment (i.e., climbing, horseback riding, rafting)
  - Activities not listed in the Safety Activity Checkpoints (i.e., ice fishing; see “Chapter 4: Safety-Wise”)
  - Activities with high risk (i.e., go-carting, those involving firearms; see “Chapter 4: Safety-Wise”)

### **Council approval process:**

1. Complete a Girl Scout Trip Request to Plan Form (under “Forms and Documents” on the River Valleys website) at least six months to three years (international) in advance of the trip.
2. Mail or fax your completed form to the Program Department assistant at the Brooklyn Center Service Center.
3. The Program Department will review the form and notify the troop leader of the council’s approval or disapproval. They will also provide feedback as needed on required trainings and assign a travel mentor if requested.
4. Upon approval, secure other necessary permissions and reservations.
5. Complete the required training prior to trip planning including, but not limited to: Sleep In, Sleep Out, Cook In, Cook Out, Girls Travel—US, Girls Travel International. Required training sessions depend on your travel destination and activities included on your trip.
6. Complete Activity Approval for Trips Form and secure final approval at least eight weeks in advance of the trip.
7. The Program Department will review the Activity Approval for Trips Form and notify the leader of approval or disapproval. They may request additional information if needed. Please be sure to include a detailed itinerary.
8. Redeem Cookie Credits (optional):
  - a. Only Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors (Girl Scouts in grades six through 12) may apply their Cookie Credits toward a trip.
  - b. Attach the Cookie Credits to your completed Activity Approval for Trips Form.
  - c. Allow three weeks for processing after River Valleys receives the form.
  - d. A check will be made payable to the troop and sent to the leader, except when the approved trip is a destinations/getaway. In that case, the check is sent directly to the sponsoring organization.
9. Purchase additional insurance. For any trip that lasts more than three nights, additional activity accident insurance is required.
  - a. Contact the Registration Department for information on purchasing additional insurance.
  - b. The forms can be found on the River Valleys website under “Forms and Resources.”

## Girl Scout Trips—Guidelines for Adults on Overnights

Adults helping girls plan and organize overnight camping trips accept 24-hour responsibility for the girls in their care. The adults need to arrange appropriate and discreet sleeping, bathroom and shower facilities for men and women accompanying the girls.

If there is a leadership team with a relationship (married, family, partnership) to a girl, a third, unrelated adult must be part of the leadership team.

- For example, a Girl Scout troop decided to tent at one of the day camp unit sites. The troop is led by a married couple and a single female. The girls will sleep three per tent, the married couple will share a tent and the single female will have her own tent. The satellite port-a-potty at the site locks from the inside, so bathroom arrangements should be comfortable for all.

No adult will sleep alone with a group of Girl Scouts. In a family overnight situation, a girl may sleep alone with her parent/guardian.

- For example, your Girl Scout Junior troop of 14 girls and two female adults is ready to try cabin camping in the unheated cabins at a camp. Each cabin sleeps nine people. You can make sleeping arrangements in two ways:
  - Option A: Cabin one will house two adults and six girls and cabin two will house eight girls.
  - Option B: Consider pitching a tent nearby for the adults so that all the girls can have the experience of being “just girls alone” in their cabin.

Whatever the arrangements, assign the girls into “buddy” pairs.

Male adults will sleep in a separate space from the girls.

- For example, your Girl Scout Brownie troop of 12 girls and three adults (two women and one man) has reserved a program room in a Girl Scout building. The two female leaders will sleep in the program room with the girls and the male will sleep in an alternate room. Another alternative would be a screened area for the male adult.

If a male leader is accompanying the group and available restrooms are in a group shower house, use “occupied” and “unoccupied” signs to ensure privacy.

Two girls or two adults may share the same bed as long as it is big enough for each to have their own sleeping space. A blanket or pillow down the middle of the bed may be used if needed.

### **Beyond the Troop Training for Girl Scout Volunteers**

River Valleys offers training sessions focused on working with girls to plan outdoor activities and trips. This training will provide you with skills for the activity as well as knowledge in how to incorporate girl led and encourage girl progression. This training should be taken as soon as the girls show an interest in an activity. This way you will be ready to support their interests! See the Training page on River Valleys’ website at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org) to find a session date that works for you or an online training PDF.

## Money Earning for Trips

While regular troop activities should be funded through the Girl Scout Cookie Program Activity, Fall Product Program and troop dues (troop dues are typically a first-year income source), extended trips are often important parts of the Girl Scout experience and present a unique financial challenge to the troop. River Valleys recommends long-range planning (both financial and logistical) to help girls and troop leaders plan realistic and achievable trips. The girl-adult partnership and good communication between girls are essential to this planning process. Planning should begin six months to three years ahead, depending on the type of extended trip.

## Money-Earning Project Approval

If girls and troops are participating in money-earning activities for a Girl Scout trip, a Troop Money-Earning Project Approval Form and a Girl Scout Trip Request to Plan Form should be submitted to the Program Department at the same time. Submit the Girl Scout Trip Request to Plan Form to the Brooklyn Center Service Center. Submit the Money-Earning Project Approval Form to the Rochester Service Center. Once the request to plan your troop trip has been approved, the Money-Earning Project Approval Form will be processed.

## Our Own Council's Curricula

River Valleys has published Our Own Council's Curricula to supplement that of Girl Scouts of the USA. This includes: program support packets on topics such as take-action projects, ceremonies, cultural awareness and higher awards; and patch programs on topics such as waste reduction, disability awareness and Girl Scout history. To find a complete list of Our Own Council's Curricula as well as procedures for purchasing, borrowing and/or downloading it, visit the River Valleys website at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org).

## Council-Sponsored Program Events

Council-sponsored program events are opportunities planned by River Valleys staff and run by volunteers, staff and community partners. They are open to currently registered Girl Scout members (non-members can register as Girl Scouts to attend). Girls can attend as a troop, group or an individual with a chaperone when needed. These events allow girls to interact with others from throughout the council and to experience activities they may not get to try in troops, service units or on their own. The grade-differentiated activities engage girls in the three keys to leadership—discover, connect and take action.

Council-sponsored program events focus on:

- Outdoor Awareness
- Healthy Living
- Leadership Progression
- STEM (science, technology, engineering, math)

- Literacy (career, cultural and financial)
- To find a complete list of available council-sponsored program events and learn how to register for them, visit the River Valleys website. Registrations are processed by staff on a first-come, first-served basis.

## Council-Sponsored Summer Camps

### Resident Camp

River Valleys offers a wide variety of resident camp opportunities at several different council camp facilities. Visit the River Valleys website for camp facilities, programs, dates and rates. Group living and hands-on program activities experienced in a natural outdoor environment create camp communities that nurture girls' successful, healthy development. Girls discover, connect and take action as they build leadership skills.

Resident camp activities include, but are not limited to: archery, arts and crafts, biking, climbing, dance, drama, fishing, horseback riding, nature, outdoor cooking, science, sports, swimming, wilderness tripping and watercraft.

Girl Scout resident camps are open to currently registered Girl Scout members (non-members can register as Girl Scouts to attend) who will be entering grades one through 12 in the upcoming school year. There are opportunities for individual girls, "buddies," girl-adult pairs, troops and even families to attend summer camp together. Sessions range from one to 20 days. To find a complete list of available resident camps and registration procedures, refer to the camp brochure published/mailed by River Valleys during the winter or visit [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org). Registrations are processed by staff on a first-come, first-served basis.

### Day Camp

Volunteer-led day camp opportunities are offered throughout our council and are held at different community locations including Girl Scout camps and local parks. They are open to currently registered Girl Scout members (non-members can register as Girl Scouts to attend), and are typically open to girls who will be entering grades one through 12 the following school year. Girls register for day camp sessions as individuals and are placed into camper units by grade groups. Sessions run between three and five days (and may include some evening or weekend activities). To find out if there is a volunteer-led day camp available in your area, contact your Girl Scout service unit or local membership specialist. Registrations are processed by service unit volunteers.

## Council Site and Equipment Rental

### Site Rental

River Valleys owns and maintains several facilities and campsites that are available for rent by troops and service units to enhance their program experience. Facilities are generally available for rent between Labor Day and Memorial Day, and some are available for rent during the summer as well. Facilities offer both indoor and outdoor options, are available for both daytime

and overnight use and range from modern to rustic. Depending upon the facility, amenities may include but are not limited to tables, benches/chairs, mattresses/bunk beds, kitchens and basic kitchen appliances/supplies, firewood and fireplace, showers, etc. To find a complete list of available council facilities as well as rental procedures, refer to the River Valleys website. Rentals are processed by staff.

## Equipment Rental

River Valleys has purchased and developed a number of resources that volunteers can use with girls to enhance their activities, including program kits that contain outlines and supplies for earning different awards and patches, audio/visual equipment, flags, games, equipment for parades, camp and sports, videos, DVDs, books, vintage uniforms and more. For a complete list of equipment available, as well as reservation and checkout procedures, please visit the River Valleys website. Reservations are processed by staff. All requests are on a first-come, first-served basis. Equipment and other resources may be reserved up to 18 months in advance.

# Volunteer Essentials 2011-2012

## Chapter 3: Engaging Girls at All Grade Levels

As a Girl Scout volunteer, you'll be working with girls of all backgrounds, behaviors, skills and abilities. No matter what a girl's grade level or background, you have the opportunity to engage her in meaningful ways and help her develop leadership skills she can use now and as she grows—all in a safe and accepting environment. This chapter gives you tips for doing just that.

Information found in this chapter:

[Arranging a Time and Space for Girl-Led Meetings](#)

[Understanding Healthy Development in Girls](#)

[Creating a Safe Space for Girls](#)

[Arranging Meetings with Parents/Guardians or a Friends-and-Family Network](#)

### Arranging a Time and Place for Girl-Led Meetings

When to meet is at your troop committee's discretion. What day and times work best for the girls, for you, for your co-volunteer(s) and for other adults who will be presenting or mentoring? Once a week throughout the school year is common, but so is once or twice a month. Is after school best? Can your co-volunteers meet at that time, or will meetings work better in the evenings or on the weekends? If so, which day of the week? At what time?

Where to meet can be a bit trickier. A meeting place needs to provide a safe, clean and secure environment that allows for the participation of all girls. You might consider using meeting rooms at schools, libraries, houses of worship, community buildings, childcare facilities and local businesses. For teens, you can also rotate meetings at coffee shops, bookstores and other places girls enjoy spending time.

Perhaps the following tips go without saying, but in case you're looking for some guidance on choosing a space, consider the following:

**Cost:** The space should be free to use.

**Size:** Make sure the space is large enough to hold all the girls in the group while engaged in a variety of activities.

**Availability:** Be sure the space is available at the time and day you want to meet, for the entire length of time you plan to use the space.

**Resources:** Determine what types of furnishings (table? chairs?) come with the room and ensure that the lighting is adequate. A bonus would be a cubby of some sort where you can store supplies.

**Safety:** Ensure that the space is safe, secure, clean, properly ventilated, heated (or cooled, depending on your location), free from hazards and has at least two exits that are well-marked and fully functional. Also be sure first-aid equipment is on hand and that girls and adults with disabilities can safely enter and exit the space.

**Facilities:** Sanitary and accessible toilets are critical.

**Communication-friendly:** Be sure your cell phone works in the meeting space.

**Allergen-free:** Ensure that pet dander and other common allergens won't bother susceptible girls during meetings.

**Accessibility:** Be sure the space can accommodate girls with disabilities, as well as parents with disabilities who may come to meetings.

If this is your first time asking for a Girl Scout meeting place, here are a few speaking points to get you started: "I'm a Girl Scout volunteer, with a group of \_\_\_\_\_ girls. We're doing lots of great things for girls and for the community, like \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. We're all about leadership—the kind that girls use in their daily lives and the kind that makes our community better. We'd love to hold our meetings here because \_\_\_\_\_."

### **Girl-Adult Partnership**

Since the group meets for the enjoyment and benefit of the girls, meetings are built around the girls' ideas. When you put the girl first, you're helping develop a team relationship, making space for the development of leadership skills and allowing girls to benefit from the guidance, mentoring and coaching of caring adults.

The three leadership processes of girl-led, learning by doing and cooperative learning are key to the foundation of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and are integral to the girl-adult partnership. Take time to read over the description of these processes and think about how to incorporate them into your group's experiences.

### **Extra! Extra! for Girl Scout Volunteers**

River Valleys offers Girl Scout grade-level-focused enrichment sessions that help Girl Scout leaders discover new ways to keep girls excited, entertained and engaged at troop meetings. These two-hour, interactive training sessions are not required for being a Girl Scout leader, but will provide an opportunity for you to network with other Girl Scout leaders while learning about the developmental characteristics of the grade levels you're working with, behavior and conflict management skills, democratic and girl-led planning techniques and earned awards. You should complete Leadership Essentials or have an understanding of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience before attending your grade-level Extra! Extra! training session. See the Training page on River Valleys' website at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org) to find a session date that works for you.

## Understanding Healthy Development in Girls

Just being attentive to what girls are experiencing as they mature is a big help to girls. So take some time to understand the likes, needs and abilities of girls at different ages.

As you listen and learn along with girls, you may find it useful to review the highlights of their development. What follows are the developmental abilities and needs of girls at various grade levels. You'll also find these listed in the adult guide that accompanies each leadership journey, along with tips for how to make the most of them as you guide and partner with girls. Of course, each girl is an individual, so these are only guidelines that help you get to know the girls.

<i>Girl Scout Daisies</i>	
<b>At the Girl Scout Daisy level (kindergarten and first grade), girls . . .</b>	<b>This means . . .</b>
Have loads of energy and need to run, walk and play outside.	<i>They'll enjoy going on nature walks and outdoor scavenger hunts.</i>
Are great builders and budding artists, though they are still developing their fine motor skills.	<i>Encourage them to express themselves and their creativity by making things with their hands. Girls may need assistance holding scissors, cutting in a straight line and so on.</i>
Love to move and dance.	<i>They might especially enjoy marching like a penguin, dancing like a dolphin or acting out how they might care for animals in the jungle.</i>
Are concrete thinkers and focused on the here and now.	<i>Showing instead of telling, for example, about how animals are cared for. Plan visits to animal shelters, farms or zoos, meet care providers or make a creative bird feeder.</i>
Are only beginning to learn about basic number concepts, time and money.	<i>You'll want to take opportunities to count out supplies together—and, perhaps, the legs on a caterpillar!</i>
Are just beginning to write and spell, and they don't always have the words for what they're thinking or feeling.	<i>That having girls draw a picture of something they are trying to communicate is easier and more meaningful for them.</i>
Know how to follow simple directions and respond well to recognition for doing so.	<i>Being specific and offering only one direction at a time. Acknowledge when girls have followed directions well to increase their motivation to listen and follow again.</i>

## Girl Scout Brownies



At the Girl Scout Brownie level (second and third grade), girls . . .	This means . . .
Have lots of energy and need to run, walk and play outside.	<i>Taking your session activities outside whenever possible.</i>
Are social and enjoy working in groups.	<i>Allowing girls to team up in small or large groups for art projects and performances.</i>
Want to help others and appreciate being given individual responsibilities for a task.	<i>Letting girls lead, direct and help out in activities whenever possible. Allow girls as a group to make decisions about individual roles and responsibilities.</i>
Are concrete thinkers and focused on the here and now.	<i>Doing more than just reading to girls about the Brownie Elf's adventures. Ask girls questions to gauge their understanding and allow them to role play their own pretend visit to a new country.</i>
Need clear directions and structure and like knowing what to expect.	<i>Offering only one direction at a time. Also, have girls create the schedule and flow of your get-togethers and share it at the start.</i>
Are becoming comfortable with basic number concepts, time, money and distance.	<i>Offering support only when needed. Allow girls to set schedules for meetings or performances, count out money for a trip, and so on.</i>
Are continuing to develop their fine motor skills and can tie shoes, use basic tools, begin to sew, etc.	<i>Encouraging girls to express themselves and their creativity by making things with their hands. Girls may need some assistance, however, holding scissors, threading needles, and so on.</i>
Love to act in plays, create music and dance.	<i>That girls might like to create a play about welcoming a new girl to their school, or tell a story through dance or creative movement.</i>
Know how to follow rules, listen well and appreciate recognition of a job done well.	<i>Acknowledging when the girls have listened or followed the directions well, which will increase their motivation for listening and following again!</i>

## Girl Scout Juniors



At the Girl Scout Junior level (fourth and fifth grades), girls . . .	This means . . .
Want to make decisions and express their opinions.	<i>Whenever possible, allowing girls to make decisions and express their opinions through guided discussion and active reflection activities. Also, have girls set rules for listening to others' opinions and offering assistance in decision making.</i>
Are social and enjoy doing things in groups.	<i>Allowing girls to team up in small or large groups for art projects, performances and written activities.</i>
Are aware of expectations and sensitive to the judgments of others.	<i>That although it's OK to have expectations, the expectation is not perfection! Share your own mistakes and what you learned from them, and be sure to create an environment where girls can be comfortable sharing theirs.</i>
Are concerned about equity and fairness.	<i>Not shying away from discussing why rules are in place and having girls develop their own rules for their group.</i>
Are beginning to think abstractly and critically and are capable of flexible thought. Juniors can consider more than one perspective, as well as the feelings and attitudes of another.	<i>Asking girls to explain why they made a decision, share their visions of their roles in the future and challenge their own and others' perspectives.</i>
Have strong fine and gross motor skills and coordination.	<i>Engaging girls in moving their minds and their bodies. Allow girls to express themselves through written word, choreography and so on.</i>
Love to act in plays, create music and dance.	<i>That girls might like to tell a story through playwriting, playing an instrument or choreographing a dance.</i>
May be starting puberty, which means beginning breast development, skin and weight changes. Some may be getting their periods.	<i>Being sensitive to girls' changing bodies, possible discomfort over these changes and their desire for more information. Create an environment that acknowledges and celebrates this transition as healthy and normal for girls.</i>

## Girl Scout Cadettes



At the Girl Scout Cadette level (sixth, seventh and eighth grades), girls . . .	This means . . .
<p>Are going through puberty, including changes in their skin, body-shape and weight. They're also starting their menstrual cycles and have occasional shifts in mood.</p>	<p><i>Being sensitive to the many changes Cadettes are undergoing—and acknowledging that these changes are as normal as growing taller! Girls need time to adapt to their changing bodies, and their feelings about their bodies may not keep up. Reinforce that, as with everything else, people go through puberty in different ways and at different times.</i></p>
<p>Are starting to spend more time in peer groups than with their families and are very concerned about friends and relationships with others their age.</p>	<p><i>That girls will enjoy teaming up in small or large groups for art projects, performances and written activities, as well as tackling relationship issues through both artistic endeavors and take-action projects.</i></p>
<p>Can be very self-conscious—wanting to be like everyone else, but fearing they are unique in their thoughts and feelings.</p>	<p><i>Encouraging girls to share, but only when they are comfortable. At this age, they may be more comfortable sharing a piece of artwork or a fictional story than their own words. Throughout the activities, highlight and discuss differences as positive, interesting and beautiful.</i></p>
<p>Are beginning to navigate their increasing independence and expectations from adults—at school and at home.</p>	<p><i>Trusting girls to plan and make key decisions and allowing them to experience what's known as "fun failure," in which girls learn from trying something new and making mistakes.</i></p>

## Girl Scout Seniors



At the Girl Scout Senior level (ninth and tenth grades), girls . . .	This means . . .
Are beginning to clarify their own values, consider alternative points of view on controversial issues, and see multiple aspects of a situation.	<i>Asking girls to explain the reasoning behind their decisions. Engage girls in role-play and performances where others can watch and offer alternative solutions.</i>
Have strong problem-solving and critical thinking skills and are able to plan and reflect on their own learning experiences.	<i>That girls are more than able to go beyond community service to develop projects that will create sustainable solutions in their communities. Be sure to have girls plan and follow up on these experiences through written and discussion-based reflective activities.</i>
Spend more time in peer groups than with their families and are very concerned about friends and relationships with others their age.	<i>That girls will enjoy teaming up in small or large groups for art projects, performances and written activities. They'll also want to tackle relationship issues through both artistic endeavors and take-action projects. Alter the makeup of groups with each activity so that girls interact with those they might not usually pair up with.</i>
Frequently enjoy expressing their individuality.	<i>Encouraging girls to express their individuality in their dress, creative expression and thinking. Remind girls frequently that there isn't just one way to look, feel, think or act. Assist girls in coming up with new ways of expressing their individuality.</i>
Feel they have lots of responsibilities and pressures—from home, school, peers, work and so on.	<i>Acknowledging girls' pressures and sharing how stress can limit health, creativity and productivity. Help girls release stress through creative expression, movement and more traditional stress-reduction techniques.</i>
Are continuing to navigate their increasing independence and expectations from adults—at school and at home.	<i>Trusting girls to plan and make key decisions and allowing them to experience what's known as "fun failure," in which girls learn from trying something new and making mistakes.</i>

## Girl Scout Ambassadors



At the Girl Scout Ambassador level (eleventh and twelfth grades), girls . . .	This means . . .
Can see the complexity of situations and controversial issues—they understand that problems often have no clear solution and that varying points of view may each have merit.	<i>Inviting girls to develop stories as a group and then individually create endings that they later discuss and share.</i>
Have strong problem-solving and critical-thinking skills and can adapt logical thinking to real-life situations. Ambassadors recognize and incorporate practical limitations to solutions.	<i>That girls are more than able to go beyond community service to develop projects that will create sustainable solutions in their communities. Be sure to have girls plan and follow up on these experiences through written and discussion-based reflective activities.</i>
Spend more time with peers than with their families and are very concerned about friends and relationships with others their age.	<i>That girls will enjoy teaming up in small or large groups for art projects, performances and written activities. They'll also want to tackle relationship issues through both artistic endeavors and take-action projects. Alter the makeup of groups with each activity so that girls interact with those they might not usually pair up with.</i>
Frequently enjoy expressing their individuality.	<i>Encouraging girls to express their individuality in their dress, creative expression and thinking. Remind girls frequently that there isn't just one way to look, feel, think or act. Assist girls in coming up with new ways of expressing their individuality.</i>
Feel they have lots of responsibilities and pressures—from home, school, peers, work, etc.	<i>Acknowledging girls' pressures and sharing how stress can limit health, creativity and productivity. Help girls release stress through creative expression, movement and more traditional stress-reduction techniques.</i>
Are continuing to navigate their increasing independence and expectations from adults—at school and at home—and are looking to their futures.	<i>Trusting girls to plan and make key decisions and allowing them to experience what's known as "fun failure," in which girls learn from trying something new and making mistakes.</i>

## Advocating For Girls

The Girl Scouts Public Policy and Advocacy Office in Washington, D.C., builds relationships with members of Congress, White House officials and other federal departments and agencies, and continuously inform and educate them about issues important to girls and Girl Scouting. These advocacy efforts help demonstrate to lawmakers that Girl Scouts is a resource and an authority on issues affecting girls. Visit the Advocacy office at [http://www.girlscouts.org/who\\_we\\_are/advocacy](http://www.girlscouts.org/who_we_are/advocacy).

## Creating a Safe Space for Girls

A safe space is one in which girls feel as though they can be themselves, without explanation, judgment or ridicule. Girl Scout research shows that girls are looking for an emotionally safe environment where confidentiality is respected and they can express themselves without fear.

The environment you create, therefore, is key to developing the sort of group that girls want to be part of. The following sections share some tips on creating a warm, safe environment for girls.

## Recognizing and Supporting Each Girl

Girls look up to their volunteers. They need to know you consider each of them an important person. They can survive a poor meeting place or an activity that flops, but they cannot endure being ignored or rejected. Recognize acts of trying as well as instances of clear success. Emphasize the positive qualities that make each girl worthy and unique. Be generous with praise and stingy with rebuke. Help girls find ways to show acceptance and support for one another.

## Promoting Fairness

Girls are sensitive to injustice. They forgive mistakes if they are sure you are trying to be fair. They look for fairness in the way responsibilities are shared, in the handling of disagreements and in responses to performance and accomplishment. When possible, consult girls about what they think is fair before decisions are made. Explain your reasoning and show why you did something. Be willing to apologize if needed. Try to ensure that the chances for feeling important, as well as the responsibilities, are equally divided among the girls. Help girls explore and decide for themselves the fair ways of solving problems, carrying out activities and looking at behavior and accomplishments.

## Building Trust

Girls need your belief in them and your support when they try new things. They must be sure you will not betray a confidence. Show girls you trust them to think for themselves and use their own judgment. Help them make important decisions in the group. Help them correct their own mistakes. Help girls give and show trust toward one another. Help them see how trust can be built, lost and strengthened.

## Managing Conflict

Conflicts and disagreements are an inevitable part of life, and when handled constructively, can actually enhance communication and relationships. At the very least, Girl Scouts need to practice self-control and diplomacy so that conflicts do not erupt into regrettable incidents. (Shouting, verbal abuse or physical confrontations are never warranted and cannot be tolerated in the Girl Scout environment.)

When a conflict arises between girls or a girl and a volunteer, get those involved to sit down together and talk in a calm and nonjudgmental manner. (Each party may need some time—even a few days or a week—to calm down before being able to do this.) Although talking in this way can be uncomfortable and difficult, it does lay the groundwork for working well together in the future. Whatever you do, don't spread your complaint around to others—gossip does not help the situation and causes only embarrassment and anger.

If a conflict persists, be sure you explain the matter to your volunteer support team. If the supervisor cannot resolve the issues satisfactorily (or if the problem involves the supervisor), the issue can be taken to the next level of supervision. Ultimately, contact River Valleys if you need extra help.

## Inspiring Open Communication

Girls want someone who will listen seriously to what they think, feel and want to do. They like someone they can talk to about important things, including some things that might not seem important to adults. Listen to girls. Respond with words and actions. Speak your mind openly when you are happy or concerned about something and encourage girls to do this, too. Leave the door open for girls to seek advice, share ideas and feelings and propose plans for improvements. Help girls see how open communication can result in action, discovery, better understanding of self and others and a more comfortable climate for fun and accomplishment.

## Communicating Effectively with Girls of Any Age

When communicating with girls, consider the following tips:

**Listen:** Listening to girls, as opposed to telling them what to think, feel or do (no “you shoulds”) is the first step in helping them take ownership of their program.

**Be honest:** If you're not comfortable with a topic or activity, say so. No one expects you to be an expert on every topic. Ask for alternatives or seek out volunteers with the required expertise. (Owning up to mistakes—and apologizing for them—goes a long way with girls.)

**Be open to real issues:** For girls, important topics are things such as relationships, peer pressure, school, money, drugs and other serious issues. (You'll also have plenty of time to discuss less weighty subjects.) When you don't know, listen. Also seek help from River Valleys if you need assistance or more information.

**Show respect:** Girls often say that their best experiences were the ones where adults treated them as equal partners. Being spoken to as a young adult helps them grow.

**Offer options:** Providing flexibility to meet changing needs and interests shows that you respect the girls and their busy lives. But whatever option is chosen, girls at every grade level also want guidance and parameters.

**Stay current:** Be aware of the TV shows girls watch, the movies they like, the books and magazines they read and the music they listen to—not to pretend you have the same interests, but to show you're interested in their world. One easy way to check in with girls is to visit [Let Me](#)

[Know](#), an interactive website for girls from Microsoft Windows and Girl Scouts. You might also want to direct parents to this site, which includes information about online safety, cyber-bullying and social networking, among other topics.

One way to communicate with girls is through the LUTE method—listen, understand, tolerate and empathize. Here is a breakdown of the acronym LUTE to remind you of how to respond when a girl is upset, angry or confused.

**L = Listen:** Hear her out and ask for details with questions such as, “What happened next?” or “What did she say?”

**U = Understand:** Try to be understanding of her feelings and reflect back what you hear. Use comments such as, “So what I hear you saying is . . .,” “I’m sure that upset you,” “I understand why you’re unhappy,” and “Your feelings are hurt. Mine would be, too.”

**T = Tolerate:** You can tolerate the feelings she just can’t handle right now on her own. This doesn’t mean that you necessarily agree with her idea, but it signifies that you can listen and accept how she is feeling about the situation. Suggestions: “Try talking to me about it. I’ll listen,” “I know you’re mad—talking it out helps,” and “I can handle it—say whatever you want to.”

**E = Empathize:** Let her know you can imagine feeling what she’s feeling, with comments such as, “I’m sure that really hurts” or “I can imagine how painful this is for you.”

## Addressing the Needs of Older Girls

Consider the following tips when working with teenage girls:

- Think of yourself as a partner (not a “leader”) and as a coach or mentor when needed.
- Ask girls what rules they need for safety and what group agreements they need to be a good team.
- Understand that girls need time to talk, unwind and have fun together.
- Ask what they think and what they want to do.
- Encourage girls to speak their minds.
- Provide structure, but don’t micromanage.
- Give everyone a voice in the group.
- Treat girls like partners.
- Don’t repeat what’s said in the group to anyone outside of it (unless necessary for the girl’s safety).

## Girl Scout Research Institute

It's amazing what you can learn when you listen to girls.

Since its founding in 2000, the Girl Scout Research Institute (GSRI) has become an internationally recognized center for research and public policy information on the development and well-being of girls. Not just Girl Scouts, but *all* girls.

In addition to research staff, the GSRI draws on experts in child development, education, business, government and the not-for-profit sector. GSRI provides the youth development field with definitive research reviews that consolidate existing studies. And, by most measures, GSRI is now the leading source of original research into the issues that girls face and the social trends that affect their lives. Visit [www.girlscouts.org/research](http://www.girlscouts.org/research).

## Discussing Sensitive Topics

According to “Feeling Safe: What Girls Say,” a 2003 Girl Scout Research Institute study, girls are looking for groups that allow connection and a sense of intimacy and closeness. They want volunteers who are teen savvy and can help them with issues they face such as bullying and other conflicts (online and offline), peer pressure, dating, sexual harassment (online and offline), academic or athletic performance, eating disorders, alcohol and drug abuse, depression and more. When Girl Scout activities involve sensitive issues, your role is that of caring adult who can help girls acquire their own skills and knowledge in a supportive atmosphere, not someone who advocates any particular position. Check with River Valleys about which sensitive issues may require additional council support to present and discuss, as well as whether parent/guardian permission is required.

**Listen and ask:** As the preceding sections suggest, you can help most just by being an empathetic listener. That’s right—just by listening, you’re helping! Sometimes, you may also find that by asking questions, you can help girls figure out how to get more information and guidance at school or at home. You don’t have to solve their issues, but you can put them on the trail toward understanding them.

**Arrange for education:** Don’t feel that you have to solve everything. River Valleys offers a variety of council programs which help girls develop healthy living skills. Your role is to help girls get information about and to register for these programs.

**Report concerns:** There may be times when you worry about the health and well-being of girls in your group. There are a variety of obstacles that girls may encounter throughout their Girl Scout career. If you believe a girl is at risk of hurting herself or others, your role is to communicate with the girl’s family or the local authorities. Refer to “Chapter 4: Safety-Wise” for specific guidelines regarding the reporting of suspected concerns.

## When a Girl Needs Expert Help

Here are a few signs that could indicate a girl needs expert help:

- Marked changes in behavior or personality (for example, unusual moodiness, aggressiveness or sensitivity)
- Declining academic performance and/or inability to concentrate

- Withdrawal from school, family activities or friendships
- Fatigue, apathy or loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities
- Sleep disturbances
- Increased secretiveness
- Deterioration in appearance and personal hygiene
- Eating extremes, unexplained weight loss, distorted body image
- Tendency toward perfectionism
- Giving away prized possessions; preoccupation with the subject of death
- Unexplained injuries such as bruises, burns or fractures
- Avoidance of eye contact or physical contact
- Excessive fearfulness or distrust of adults
- Abusive behavior toward other children, especially younger ones

## Working with Parents and Guardians

Most parents and guardians are helpful and supportive and sincerely appreciate your time and effort on behalf of their daughters. And you almost always have the same goal, which is to make Girl Scouting an enriching experience for their girls. Encourage them to check out [www.girlscouts4girls.org](http://www.girlscouts4girls.org) to find out how to expand their roles as advocates for their daughters.

## Using “I” Statements

As you know, families today are terribly busy—parents and guardians may want to be involved but sometimes need a reminder or specific guidelines. Perhaps the most important tip for communicating with parents/guardians is for you to use “I” statements instead of “you” statements, which are detailed in the *aMAZE* journey for Girl Scout Cadettes. “I” statements tell a parent what you need from her or him, while “you” statements may make a parent/guardian feel defensive.

Here are examples of “you” statements:

“Your daughter just isn’t responsible.”

“You’re not doing your share.”

Now look at “I” statements:

“I’d really like to help your daughter learn to take more responsibility.”

“I’d really appreciate your help with registration.”

If you need help with specific scenarios involving parents/guardians, try the following:

If a parent or guardian . . .	You can say . . .
Is uninvolved and asks how she can help but seems to have no idea of how to follow through or take leadership of even the smallest activity,	“I do need your help. Here are some written guidelines on how to prepare for our camping trip.”
Constantly talks about all the ways you could make the group better,	“I need your leadership. Project ideas you would like to develop and lead can fit in well with our plan. Please put your ideas in writing, and perhaps I can help you carry them out.”
Tells you things like, “Denise’s mother is on welfare, and Denise really doesn’t belong in this group,”	“I need your sensitivity. Girl Scouting is for all girls, and by teaching your daughter to be sensitive to others’ feelings you help teach the whole group sensitivity.”
Shifts parental responsibilities to you and is so busy with her own life that she allows no time to help,	“I love volunteering for Girl Scouts and want to make a difference. If you could take a few moments from your busy schedule to let me know what you value about what we’re doing, I’d appreciate it. It would keep me going for another year.”

## Arranging Meetings with Parents/Guardians or a Friends-and-Family Network

Note: You will receive additional information on parent/guardian meetings during your Fast Start Meeting.

A parent/guardian meeting, or a meeting of your friends-and-family network (as encouraged in many of the leadership journeys), is a chance for you to get to know the families of the girls in your group. Before the meeting, be sure you and/or your co-volunteers have done the following:

- For younger girls, arranged for a parent, another volunteer or a group of older girls to lead activities with the girls in your group while you talk with their parents/guardians (if girls will attend the meeting, too).
- Practiced a discussion on the following: Girl Scout Mission, Promise and Law, benefits of Girl Scouting for their daughters including how the Girl Scout Leadership Experience is a world-class system for developing girl leaders; all the fun the girls are going to have, expectations for girls and their parents/guardians and ideas of how parents and other guardians can participate in and enrich their daughters’ Girl Scout experiences.
- Determined when product programs (including the Girl Scout Cookie Program Activity and Fall Product Program) will happen in River Valleys. Parents/guardians will absolutely want to know!
- Determined what information parents should bring to the meeting.

- Used the Friends and Family pages provided in the adult guides for many of the journeys, or created your own one-page information sheet that gives your contact information, contact information of co-volunteers and helpers, the day and time of each meeting, location of and directions to the meeting place, what to bring with them and information on how to get a journey's resources (books, awards and keepsakes) and other merchandise such as sashes, vests, T-shirts and so on.
- Gathered or created supplies, including a sign-in sheet, an information sheet, permission forms for parents/guardians (available at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org)), health history forms (as required by River Valleys) and Girl Scouts of the USA registration forms.
- Prepared yourself to ask parents and guardians for help, being as specific as you can about the kind of help you will need (the journey's Friends and Family pages will come in handy here).

### **Registering the Girls in Girl Scouting**

Every participant (girl or adult) in Girl Scouting must register and become a member of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA). GSUSA membership dues are valid for one year. Membership dues (currently \$12) are sent by River Valleys to GSUSA—no portion of the dues stays with River Valleys. Membership dues may not be transferred to another member and are not refundable.

Pre-registration for the upcoming membership year occurs in the spring. Girls are encouraged to register early to avoid the fall rush. Early registration gets girls excited about all the great stuff they want to do as Girl Scouts next year, helps ensure uninterrupted receipt of forms and materials from River Valleys and helps girls and River Valleys plan ahead. The Girl Scout grade level is determined by the current membership year, which begins October 1.

Lifetime membership is available at a reduced rate. A lifetime member must be at least 18 years old (or a 17-year-old high-school graduate) and agree to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

### **Structuring the Parent/Guardian Meeting**

You're free to structure the parent/guardian meeting in whatever way works for you, but the following structure works for many volunteers:

As the girls and adults arrive, ask them to sign in. Hand out registration forms and any other paperwork, including a one-page information sheet.

Open the meeting by welcoming the girls and adults. Introduce yourself and other co-volunteers or helpers. Have adults and girls introduce themselves, discuss whether anyone in their families has been a Girl Scout and talk about what Girl Scouting means to them. Welcome everyone, regardless of experience, and let them know they will be learning about Girl Scouts today. (If you're new to Girl Scouting, don't worry—just let everyone know you'll be learning about Girl Scouting together.)

Ask the girls to go with the adult or teen in charge of their activity and begin the discussion.

Discuss the information you prepared for this meeting such as:

- All the fun girls are going to have!
- When and where the group will meet and some examples of activities the girls might choose to do.
- That a parent/guardian permission form is used for activities outside the group's usual meeting place and the importance of completing and returning it as indicated.
- How you plan to keep in touch with parents/guardians (some ideas are e-mail, text messaging, a phone tree, fliers the girls take home, and/or posting on an invitation-only group on Facebook).
- The Girl Scout Mission, Promise and Law.
- The Girl Scout Leadership Experience and what the program does for their daughters.
- When Girl Scout Cookies (and other products) will go on sale and how participation in product sales teaches life skills and helps fund group activities.
- The cost of membership (which includes annual GSUSA dues), any group payments, optional uniforms and any resources parents/guardians will need to buy (such as a journey book).
- The availability of financial assistance and how the Girl Scout Cookie Program Activity and Fall Product Program generate funds for the group treasury.
- That families can also make monetary donations to the council and why they might want to do that.
- That you may be looking for additional volunteers, and in which areas you are looking (be as specific as possible!).
- Collect the completed registration forms.
- Remind the group about the next meeting (if you'll have one) and thank everyone for attending. Hold the next meeting when it makes sense for you and your co-volunteers—that may be in two months if face-to-face meetings are best or not at all if you're diligent about keeping in touch with parents/guardians via e-mail, phone calls or some other form of communication.
- After the meeting, follow up with any parents/guardians who did not attend, connect them with the group, inform them of decisions and discuss how they can best help the girls.

As you think about where, when and how often to meet with your group, you will find yourself considering the needs, resources, safety and beliefs of all members and potential members. As you do this, include the accommodation needs of any members who have disabilities, or whose parents or guardians have disabilities. But please don't rely on visual cues to inform you of a disability—approximately 20 percent of the U.S. population has a disability. That's one in five people of every socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity and religion.

As a volunteer, your interactions present an opportunity to improve the way society views girls (and their parents/guardians) with disabilities. Historically, disabilities have been looked at from a deficit viewpoint with a focus on how people with disabilities could be fixed. Today, the focus is on a person's abilities—on what she *can* do rather than what she cannot.

If you want to find out what a girl with a disability needs to make her Girl Scout experience successful, simply ask her or her parent/guardian. If you are frank and accessible, it's likely they will respond in kind, creating an atmosphere that enriches everyone.

It's important for all girls to be rewarded based on their best efforts—not on the completion of a task. Give any girl the opportunity to do her best and she will. Sometimes that means changing a few rules or approaching an activity in a more creative way.

Here are some examples of ways to modify activities:

- Invite a girl to complete an activity after she has observed others doing it.
- If you are visiting a museum to view sculpture, find out if a girl who has limited vision might be given permission to touch the pieces.
- If an activity requires running, a girl who is unable to run could be asked to walk or do another physical movement.

In addition, note that people-first language puts the person before the disability.

<i>Say . . .</i>	<i>Instead of . . .</i>
She has a learning disability.	She is learning disabled.
She has a developmental delay.	She is mentally retarded; she is slow.
She uses a wheelchair.	She is wheelchair-bound.

When interacting with a girl (or parent/guardian) with a disability, consider these final tips:

When talking to a girl with a disability, speak directly to her, not through a parent/guardian or friend.

It's okay to offer assistance to a girl with a disability, but wait until your offer is accepted before you begin to help. Listen closely to any instructions the person may have.

Leaning on a girl's wheelchair is invading her space and is considered annoying and rude.

When speaking to a girl who is deaf and using an interpreter, speak to the girl, not to her interpreter.

When speaking for more than a few minutes to a girl who uses a wheelchair, place yourself at eye level.

When greeting a girl with a visual disability, always identify yourself and others. You might say, "Hi, it's Sheryl. Tara is on my right and Chris is on my left."

## Registering Girls with Cognitive Disabilities

Girls with cognitive disabilities can be registered as closely as possible to their chronological ages and they should wear the uniform of that grade level. Make any adaptations for the girl to participate in ongoing activities of the grade level in which the group belongs. Young women with cognitive disorders may choose to retain their girl membership through their 21st year and then move into an adult membership category.

## Girl Scouts is for All Girls

Girl Scouts embraces girls of every ability level, background and heritage, with a specific and positive philosophy of inclusion that benefits everyone. Each girl—without regard to socioeconomic status, race, physical or cognitive ability, ethnicity, primary language or religion—is an equal and valued member of the group, and groups reflect the diversity of the community.

“Inclusion” is an approach and an attitude, rather than a set of guidelines. Inclusion is about belonging, about all girls being offered the same opportunities, about respect and dignity and about honoring the uniqueness in all of us. You’re being accepting and inclusive when you:

- Welcome every girl and focus on building community
- Emphasize cooperation instead of competition
- Provide a safe and socially comfortable environment for girls
- Teach respect for, understanding of and dignity toward all girls and their families
- Actively reach out to girls and families who are traditionally excluded or marginalized
- Foster a sense of belonging to community as a respected and valued peer
- Honor the intrinsic value of each person’s life

## A Variety of Formats for Publications

The Latino population is the largest-growing in the United States, which is why Girl Scouts has translated many of its publications into Spanish. Over time, Girl Scouts will continue to identify members’ needs and produce resources to support those needs, including translating publications into additional languages and formats.

# Volunteer Essentials 2011-2012

## Chapter 4: Safety-Wise

In Girl Scouting, the emotional and physical safety and well-being of girls are always top priorities. Here's what you need to know.

Information found in this chapter:

### [Knowing Your Responsibilities](#)

[Responsibilities of the Volunteer: Girl Scout Safety Guidelines](#)

[Responsibilities of Parents and Guardians](#)

[Responsibilities of Girls](#)

### [Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need](#)

[Transporting Girls](#) (includes information on renting cars and buses)

### [Approaching Activities](#)

[Health Histories \(including Examinations and Immunizations\)](#)

[Girl Scout Activity Insurance](#)

### [Providing Emergency Care](#)

[First Aid/CPR](#)

[Procedure for Accidents](#)

Also included in this document:

Sleeping arrangements for troops and service unit events

Information on using Safety Activity Checkpoints

List of activities that need council approval

List of activities that are not permitted Girl Scout activities

List of Safety Activity Checkpoints

Certificates of Insurance

# Knowing Your Responsibilities

You, the parents/guardians of the girls in your group, and the girls themselves share the responsibility for staying safe. The next three sections explain who's responsible for what.

## Responsibilities of the Volunteer: Girl Scout Safety Guidelines

Every adult in Girl Scouting is responsible for the physical and emotional safety of girls, and we all demonstrate that by agreeing to follow these guidelines at all times.

1. **Follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints.** Instructions for staying safe while participating in activities are detailed in the Safety Activity Checkpoints, which are available on the River Valleys website at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org) under “Forms and Resources” and then “Health and Safety.” Read the checkpoints, follow them and share them with other volunteers, parents/guardians and girls before engaging in activities with girls.
2. **Arrange for proper adult supervision of girls.** Your group must have at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers present at all times. Additional adults might be necessary, depending on the size of the group and the ages and abilities of girls. Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old (or the age of majority defined by the state, if it is older than 18) and must be screened by River Valleys before volunteering. One lead volunteer in every group must be female.
3. **Get parent/guardian permission.** When an activity takes place that is outside the normal time and place, advise each parent/guardian of the details of the activity and obtain permission for girls to participate. Permission forms can be found at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org) under “Forms and Resources.”
4. **Report abuse.** Sexual advances, improper touching and sexual activity of any kind with girl members are forbidden. Physical, verbal and emotional abuse of girls is also forbidden. Follow River Valleys guidelines (in “Chapter 6: Volunteer Policies, Standards and Practices” in this handbook) for reporting concerns about abuse or neglect that may be occurring inside or outside of Girl Scouting.
5. **Be prepared for emergencies.** Work with girls and other adults to establish and practice procedures for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost girls/adults and site security. Always keep handy a well-stocked first-aid kit, girl health histories and contact information for girls’ families.
6. **Travel safely.** When transporting girls to planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities that are outside the normal time and place, every driver must be an approved adult volunteer and have a good driving record, a valid license and a registered/insured vehicle. Insist that everyone is in a legal seat, wears a seat belt at all times and adheres to state laws regarding booster seats and requirements for children in rear seats.
7. **Ensure safe overnight outings.** Prepare girls to be away from home by involving them in planning so they know what to expect. Avoid having men sleep in the same space as girls and women. During family or parent/guardian-daughter overnights, one family unit may sleep in the same sleeping quarters in program areas. When parents are staffing events, daughters should remain in quarters with other girls rather than in staff areas.
8. **Role-model the right behavior.** Never use illegal drugs. Don’t consume alcohol, smoke or use foul language in the presence of girls. Do not carry ammunition or firearms in the presence of girls unless given special permission by River Valleys for group marksmanship activities.
9. **Create an emotionally safe space.** Adults are responsible for making Girl Scouting a place where girls are as safe emotionally as they are physically. Protect the emotional safety of girls

by creating a team agreement and coaching girls to honor it. Agreements typically encourage behaviors like respecting a diversity of feelings and opinions, resolving conflicts constructively and avoiding physical and verbal bullying, clique behavior and discrimination.

10. **Ensure that no girl is treated differently.** Girl Scouts welcomes all members, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, culture, background, sexual orientation, gender, ability, family structure, religious beliefs, education or socioeconomic status. When scheduling, helping plan and carrying out activities, carefully consider the needs of all girls involved, including school schedules, family needs, financial constraints, religious holidays and the accessibility of appropriate transportation and meeting places. When planning food, consider the dietary needs and preferences of all girls involved. Be sure to provide inclusive food options that take into account dietary, allergy, cultural and religious needs. The goal is that all girls feel included in all food-related activities and experiences.
11. **Promote online safety.** Instruct girls never to put their full names or contact information online, engage in virtual conversation with strangers or arrange in-person meetings with online contacts. On group websites, publish girls' first names only and never divulge their contact information. Teach girls the [Girl Scout Online Safety Pledge](#) and have them commit to it.
12. **Keep girls safe during money-earning activities.** The Girl Scout Cookie Program Activity and other council-sponsored product sales are an integral part of Girl Scouting. During Girl Scout product sales, you are responsible for the safety of girls, money and products. In addition, a wide variety of organizations, causes and fundraisers may appeal to Girl Scouts to be their labor force. When representing Girl Scouts, girls cannot participate in money-earning activities that represent partisan politics or that are not Girl Scout-approved product sales and efforts. Refer to "Chapter 5: Managing Group Finances" in this handbook or the River Valleys website at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org) for more details.

## Responsibilities of Parents and Guardians

You want to engage each parent/guardian to help you work toward ensuring the health, safety and well-being of girls. Clearly communicate to parents/guardians that they are expected to:

- Provide permission for their girls to participate in Girl Scouting as well as provide additional consent for activities that take place outside the scheduled meeting place, involve overnight travel, involve the use of special equipment and/or cover sensitive issues.
- Make provisions for their girls to get to and from meeting places or other designated sites in a safe and timely manner and inform you if someone other than the parent/guardian will drop off or pick up the child.
- Provide their girls with appropriate clothing and equipment for activities, or contact you before the activity to find sources for the necessary clothing and equipment.
- Follow Girl Scout safety guidelines and encourage their children to do the same.
- Assist you in planning and carrying out program activities as safely as possible.
- Participate in parent/guardian meetings.
- Be aware of appropriate behavior expected of their girls as determined by River Valleys and you.
- Assist volunteers if their girls have special needs or abilities.

## Responsibilities of Girls

Girls who learn about and practice safe and healthy behaviors are likely to establish lifelong habits of safety consciousness. For that reason, each Girl Scout is expected to:

- Assist you and other volunteers in safety planning
- Listen to and follow your instructions and suggestions
- Learn and practice safety skills
- Learn to “think safety” at all times and to be prepared
- Identify and evaluate an unsafe situation
- Know how, when and where to get help when needed

## Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need

Girl Scouts adult-to-girl ratios show the *minimum* number of adults needed to supervise a specific number of girls. (Councils may also establish *maximums* due to size or cost restrictions.) These supervision ratios were devised to ensure the safety and health of girls. For example, if one adult has to respond to an emergency, a second adult is always on hand for the rest of the girls. It may take you a minute to get used to the layout of this chart, but once you start to use it, you’ll find the chart extremely helpful.

	Group Meetings		Events, Travel and Camping	
	<i>Two</i> unrelated adults (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	Plus <i>one</i> additional adult for each additional number of this many girls:	<i>Two</i> unrelated adults (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	Plus <i>one</i> additional adult for each additional number of this many girls:
<b>Girl Scout Daisies (K–grade 1)</b>	12	6	6	4
<b>Girl Scout Brownies (grades 2–3)</b>	20	8	12	6
<b>Girl Scout Juniors (grades 4–5)</b>	25	10	16	8
<b>Girl Scout Cadettes (grades 6–8)</b>	25	12	20	10
<b>Girl Scout Seniors (grades 9–10)</b>	30	15	24	12
<b>Girl Scout Ambassadors (grades 11–12)</b>	30	15	24	12

Here are some examples: If you're meeting with 17 Girl Scout Daisies, you'll need three unrelated adults (in other words, not your sister, spouse, parent or child), at least one of whom is female. (If this isn't making sense to you, follow the chart: you need two adults for 12 Girl Scout Daisies and one more adult for up to six more girls. You have 17, so you need three adults.) If, however, you have 17 Girl Scout Cadettes attending a group meeting, you need only two unrelated adults, at least one of whom is female (because, on the chart, two adults can manage up to 25 Girl Scout Cadettes).

In addition to the adult-to-girl ratios, please remember that adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old or at the age of majority defined by the state if it is older than 18.

## Transporting Girls

How parents decide to transport girls between their homes and Girl Scout meeting places is each parent's/guardian's individual decision and responsibility.

For planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities—outside the normal time and place—in which a group will be transported in private vehicles:

- Every driver must be an approved adult\* volunteer and have a good driving record, a valid license and a registered/insured vehicle (preferred 5 years of driving experience).
- Girls never drive other girls.
- If a group is traveling in one vehicle, there must be at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers in the vehicle, one of whom is female, and the girl-volunteer ratios listed in this chapter must be followed.
- If a group is traveling in more than one vehicle, the entire group must consist of at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers, one of whom is female, and the girl-volunteer ratios in this handbook must be followed. Care should be taken so that a single car (with a single adult driver) is not separated from the group for an extended length of time.

\*"Adult" is defined by the age of majority in each state.

## Public Transportation

Public transportation includes trains, subways, buses, ferries and airplanes. Public transportation is regulated, which makes it preferable to chartered vehicles, but this mode of transportation is not without challenges. The biggest challenge with any public transportation is staying together as a group, so be sure everyone has directions and a map, and always designate a meet-up area if anyone gets separated. Girls also need to be vigilant for criminals, both those who might do them bodily harm and those who are interested in stealing their money, jewelry and electronic devices. As long as you prepare them for their exciting journeys on public transportation, they'll have an adventure they'll remember for years.

## Private Transportation

Private transportation includes private passenger vehicles, rental cars, privately owned or rented recreational vehicles and campers, chartered buses, chartered boats and chartered flights. Each driver of motorized private transportation must hold a valid operator's license appropriate to the vehicle. State laws must be followed even if they are more stringent than the guidelines here. Anyone who is driving a vehicle with more than 15 passengers must also be a professional driver who possesses a commercial driver's license.

Please keep in mind the following non-negotiable points regarding private transportation:

- Even though written agreements are always required when renting or chartering, you are *not* authorized to sign an agreement or contract—even if there is no cost associated with the rental. Such an agreement must instead be signed by the person designated by River Valleys.
- When renting a vehicle, read all rental agreements to be sure you comply with their terms and avoid surprises. Note the minimum age of drivers (often 25), as well as the maximum age (often under 70). Be sure the car is adequately insured and know who is responsible for damage to or the loss of the vehicle itself. Also, ensure you have a good paper trail to provide evidence that the vehicle rental is Girl Scout related.
- Obtain parent/guardian permission for any use of transportation outside of the meeting place.

## River Valleys Bus and Motor Coach Use Standard

For rental of school buses and motor coaches used for transportation and travel, River Valleys will adhere to Girl Scouts of the USA “Risk Management Practice,” which requires: (a) adequate insurance coverage, and (b) a council-provided list of transportation providers to use when planning Girl Scout activities. This list, called “Appendix A,” is located on the River Valleys website at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org) under “Forms and Resources” then “Health and Safety.”

The transportation service is to be requested through the most appropriate carrier as listed in Appendix A. The list is restricted to private carriers as the use of school district-owned buses is either (a) no longer allowed, or (b) carries a high level of liability for River Valleys. Most of these private carriers provide both school buses and motor coaches. In addition, they have been evaluated and found to be compliant with Minnesota and Wisconsin statutes for use of school buses for non-school purposes.

Any school bus requirements that cannot be accommodated from the list of transportation providers on Appendix A must be reviewed and approved by the River Valleys purchasing manager.

## Checklist for Drivers

When driving a car, RV or camper, take the following precautions and ask any other drivers to do the same:

- Ensure all drivers are adults—girls should not be transporting other girls.
- Never transport girls in flatbed or panel trucks, in the bed of a pickup or in a camper-trailer.
- Keep directions and a road map in the car along with a first-aid kit and flashlight.
- Check your lights, signals, tires, windshield wipers, horns and fluid levels before each trip and check them periodically on long trips.
- Keep all necessary papers up to date, such as your driver’s license, vehicle registration, any state or local inspections, insurance coverage, etc.
- Wear your seat belt at all times and insist that all passengers do the same. Keep girls under 12 in the back seats.
- According to Minnesota and Wisconsin state law, a child who is both under age eight and shorter than 4 feet 9 inches is required to be fastened in a child safety seat that meets federal safety standards. It is recommended to keep a child in a booster seat based on their height rather than age.

- Follow all the established rules of the road in your state (following the speed limit, keeping a two-car length between you and the car ahead of you, not talking or texting on a cell phone or other personal electronic device, not using earbuds or headphones, driving with your headlights on, etc.).
- Avoid driving for extended periods at night, when tired or taking medication that makes you drowsy. River Valleys policy states that drivers should limit their time on the road without a half-hour break to four hours. When driving a 15-passenger van, drivers are limited to driving 250 miles per day. Another authorized van driver must drive the van if the mileage exceeds this limit. If driving with others, prearrange stopping places along the way. When planning longer trips, arrange for relief drivers.

Remember that every time a group meets at a location different from the regular group meeting, you must use a permission form—even if the girls are responsible for getting to that location on their own. Permission forms give parents/guardians the “who, what, when, where and why” so that they can decide whether their girl can participate in an event or go on a trip. A signed permission form permits you to include the girl in the activity and also provides you with up-to-date emergency contact information.

## Approaching Activities

How can you, as a Girl Scout volunteer, determine whether an activity is safe and appropriate? Good judgment and common sense often dictate the answer. What's safe in one circumstance may not be safe in another. An incoming storm, for example, might force you to assess or discontinue an activity. If you are uncertain about the safety of an activity, call River Valleys staff with full details. Don't proceed without approval. Err on the side of caution and make the safety of girls your most important consideration. Prior to any activity, read the specific Safety Activity Checkpoints (available on the River Valleys website at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org) or from your support team in some other format) related to any activity you plan to do with girls.

When planning activities with girls, note the abilities of each girl and carefully consider the progression of skills from the easiest part to the most difficult. Make sure the complexity of the activity does not exceed girls' individual skills—bear in mind that skill levels decline when people are tired, hungry or under stress. Also use activities as opportunities for building teamwork, which is one of the outcomes for the connect key in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

## Health Histories (including Examinations and Immunizations)

Each council handles health histories differently. The staff at River Valleys typically does not take care of obtaining and storing girls' health histories—which may include a physician's examination and a list of immunizations—as needed (Adult Development does ask participants in overnight training classes to fill out a health history form which is then held over the weekend and shredded). Troop leaders must collect and keep copies of the health histories for troop use. Keep in mind that information from a health examination is confidential and may be shared only with people who must know this information (such as the girl herself, her parent/guardian and a health practitioner).

**River Valleys practice:** Volunteers who collect health histories are responsible for storing these forms in a way that keeps the information confidential. When forms are outdated and no longer needed, the volunteer should shred the form.

For various reasons, some parents/guardians may object to immunizations or medical examinations. River Valleys must attempt to make provisions for these girls to attend Girl Scout functions in a way that accommodates these concerns.

It is important for you to also be aware of any medications a girl may take or allergies she may have.

- Medication, including over-the-counter products, must never be dispensed without prior written permission from a girl's custodial parent or guardian. A form can be found on the River Valleys website under "Forms and Resources." Some girls may need to carry and administer their own medications, such as bronchial inhalers, an EpiPen or diabetes medication.
- Common food allergies include dairy products, eggs, soy, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts and seafood. This means that, before serving any food (such as peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, cookies or chips), ask whether anyone is allergic to peanuts, dairy product or wheat! Even Girl Scout Daisies and Girl Scout Brownies should be aware of their allergies, but double-checking with their parents/guardians is always a good idea.

## Girl Scout Activity Insurance

A portion of the individual annual membership dues pays for supplementary insurance for the member only. This insurance provides up to a specified maximum for medical expenses incurred as a result of an accident while a member is participating in an approved, supervised Girl Scout activity, after the individual's primary insurance pays out. This is one reason that all adults and girls should be registered members. Non-registered parents, tagalongs (brothers, sisters, friends) and other persons are not covered by basic coverage.

This insurance coverage is *not* intended to diminish the need for or replace family health insurance. And it does not duplicate medical-expense benefits collected under other programs, so after approximately \$100 in benefits have been paid under this plan, the family's medical insurance takes over. If there is no family insurance or healthcare program, a specified maximum of medical benefits is available.

An optional plan of activity insurance is available for Girl Scouts taking extended trips and for non-members who participate in Girl Scout activities. These plans are secondary insurance that individuals are entitled to receive while participating in any approved, supervised Girl Scout activity. Optional insurance coverage is available for any Girl Scout activity that involves non-Girl Scouts or lasts longer than four days and three nights.

Please note that for the River Valleys council, these plans are required.

### How to purchase activity insurance for non-members and extended trips:

- Fill out the appropriate Mutual of Omaha enrollment form. The forms can be found at [http://www.girlscoutsrv.org/forms\\_resources/health\\_and\\_safety/](http://www.girlscoutsrv.org/forms_resources/health_and_safety/).
- Send the form with a Girl Scout (troop or service unit) check or money order payable to Mutual of Omaha to the St. Paul Service Center, Attention: Business Services, 400 Robert Street South, St. Paul, MN 55107. **This must be sent at least one week prior to the first day of the event or trip.** The insurance company will not accept cash, credit cards or personal checks.
- To calculate the cost for non-member insurance, use this equation: number of non-members x number of calendar days x \$0.11 = cost of insurance. The check must be made for \$5 minimum or the exact amount when over \$5.
- To calculate the cost of extended trip insurance, refer to the instructions found on the River Valleys website: <http://www.girlscoutsrv.org/asset/fbj1q2/United-of-Omaha-Instructions.doc>.
- Include the service unit name, event coordinator's or activity leader's name, event or activity date, time, location and number of non-members you wish to insure. You may attach an event or activity flyer if you have one.

- The site registrar will return your payment if:
  - It is not a troop or service unit check or money order
  - The information about the event or trip is incomplete
  - The payment is not received at the St. Paul Service Center at least one week prior to the event or trip
- A River Valleys registration specialist can complete the Mutual of Omaha enrollment form for you upon request with the information provided.
- Print out a claim form to take to the event. The claim form and more information about non-member insurance can be found on the Mutual of Omaha website, [www.mutualofomaha.com/gsusu](http://www.mutualofomaha.com/gsusu). If injury occurs at the event, please refer to Mutual of Omaha's website for information on how to submit a claim.

The claim form can also be found at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org) under "Health and Safety" in the "Forms and Resources" section.

## Providing Emergency Care

As you know, emergencies can happen. Girls need to receive proper instruction in how to care for themselves and others in emergencies. They also need to learn the importance of reporting to adults any accidents, illnesses or unusual behaviors during Girl Scout activities. To this end, you can help girls:

- **Know what to report.** See the "Procedures for Accidents" section later in this chapter.
- **Establish and practice procedures for weather emergencies.** Certain extreme-weather conditions may occur in your area. Please consult with River Valleys for the most relevant information for you to share with girls.
- **Establish and practice procedures for such circumstances as fire evacuation, lost persons and building security responses.** Every girl and adult must know how to act in these situations. For example, you and the girls, with the help of a fire department representative, should design a fire evacuation plan for meeting places used by the group.
- **Assemble a well-stocked first-aid kit that is always accessible.** First aid administered in the first few minutes can mean the difference between life and death. In an emergency, obtain professional medical assistance as soon as possible, normally by calling 911.
- River Valleys requires that an Accident Incident Report be filled out within 24 hours. This form can be found in the "Forms and Resources" section of the River Valleys website.

## First Aid/CPR

Emergencies require prompt action and quick judgment. For many activities, Girl Scouts recommends that at least one adult volunteer be first aid/CPR-certified. For that reason, if you have the opportunity to get trained in council-approved first aid/CPR, do it! You can take advantage of first-aid/CPR training offered by chapters of the American Red Cross, National Safety Council, EMP America, American Heart Association or other sponsoring organizations approved by River Valleys. Try to take age-specific CPR training, too—that is, take child CPR if you're working with younger girls and adult CPR when working with older girls and adults.

**Caution:** First-aid/CPR training that is available entirely online does not satisfy Girl Scouts' requirements. Such courses do not offer enough opportunities to practice and receive feedback on your technique. If you're taking a course not offered by one of the organizations listed in the previous paragraph, or any course that has online components, get approval from your support team or River Valleys.

## *First-Aider*

A first-aider is an adult volunteer who has taken Girl Scout-approved first-aid and CPR training that includes specific instructions for child CPR. If, through the American Red Cross, National Safety Council, EMP America or American Heart Association, you have a chance to be fully trained in first aid and CPR, doing so may make your activity planning go a little more smoothly. The Safety Activity Checkpoints always tell you when a first-aider needs to be present.

There are two categories of first-aiders:

- **First-aider (level 1):** The presence of a first-aider (level 1) is required for many group activities. The course required to be a first-aider (level 1) is one that offers standard first aid and CPR, preferably with a focus on children.
- **First-aider (level 2):** The presence of a first-aider (level 2) is required at resident camp and at any camp activity with more than 200 participants. In addition, some activities require a first-aider (level 2). The Safety Activity Checkpoints state clearly whether a first-aider (level 2) is needed. First-aiders (level 2) pass the same course as first-aiders (level 1), and also have emergency response/first response, sports safety, wilderness first aid and/or advanced first aid and CPR training. Each organization has a different name for its training, so be sure to ask before you take the course whether a training course fulfills the level-2 requirements.

**Note:** The following healthcare providers may also serve as first-aiders (level 1 or 2): physician, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, paramedic, military medic and emergency medical technician.

## *First-Aid Kit*

Make sure a general first-aid kit is available at your group meeting place and accompanies girls on any activity (including transportation to and from the activity). Please be aware that you may need to provide this kit if one is not available at your meeting place. You can purchase a Girl Scout first-aid kit, you can buy a commercial kit or you and the girls can assemble a kit yourselves. The Red Cross offers a list of potential items in its [Anatomy of a First-Aid Kit](#). (Note that the Red Cross suggested list includes aspirin, which you will not be at liberty to give to girls without direct parent/guardian permission.) You can also customize a kit to cover your specific needs, including flares, treatments for frostbite or snake bites, and the like.

In addition to standard materials, all kits should contain River Valleys and emergency telephone numbers (which you can get from your River Valleys contact). Girl Scout activity insurance forms, parent consent forms and health histories may be included as well.

## Procedures for Accidents

Although you hope the worst never happens, you must observe River Valleys procedures for handling accidents and fatalities. At the scene of an accident, first provide all possible care for the sick or injured person. Follow established River Valleys procedures for obtaining medical assistance and immediately reporting the emergency. To do this, you must always have on hand the names and telephone numbers of River Valleys staff, parents/guardians and emergency services such as the police, fire department or hospital emergency technicians. River Valleys emergency contact information is: 651-227-8835 during regular business hours and 800-845-0787 24 hours per day, seven days per week, 365 days of the year. Follow the telephone prompts when calling in on the 800 phone number after regular business hours.

After receiving a report of an accident, River Valleys staff will immediately arrange for additional assistance, if needed, at the scene, and will notify parents/guardians as appropriate. If a child needs emergency medical care as the result of an accident or injury, first contact emergency medical services and then follow River Valleys procedures for accidents and incidents. Your adherence to

these procedures is critical, especially with regard to notifying parents/guardians. If the media is involved, let a River Valleys-designated staff discuss the incident with the media representatives.

In the event of a fatality or other serious accident, notify the police. A responsible adult must remain at the scene at all times. In the case of a fatality, do not disturb the victim or surroundings. Follow police instructions. Do not share information about the accident with anyone but the police, River Valleys and, if applicable, insurance representatives or legal counsel.

For more information, refer to the **Crisis and Safety Management Report** found on the River Valleys website at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org).

## Sleeping Arrangements for Troop and Service Unit Events

Sleep time can be a time when girls and adults can feel vulnerable and uncomfortable with their surroundings due to changing into sleepwear and sleeping in areas with people they may not be familiar with.

Also, through our association with the American Camp Association (ACA), Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin River Valleys has become more aware of the increase in camper-to-camper abuse.

Stated in an article in the ACA Fall 2008 issue of The CampLine concerning camper-to-camper abuse: “Unfortunately, the incidents of children abusing other children — whether sexually, physically, or emotionally — continue to grow in this country. Prevention of situations when campers are alone without staff is CRITICAL — we cannot stress that enough. The most vulnerable time when camper-to-camper abuse can happen is when staff are engaged elsewhere. Sleeping time, overnights in tents, trips to the bathroom, and times when campers are changing clothes for the pool are clearly the times when camps need to be ever more attuned for the possibilities of camper-to-camper inappropriate activities. Provide training and policies that do not allow campers to be alone without staff supervision — ever.”

The following guidelines are to help minimize any unwanted behavior or uncomfortable feelings from happening.

### Adult Chaperones

- All adults chaperoning a Girl Scout overnight must be registered members and must have completed a volunteer application and criminal background screening process. Non-members should not be supervising sleeping areas unless the group is sleeping in family units.
- The supervision ratio of adult to girls should follow the guidelines found in Safety-Wise, with at least two unrelated registered adult volunteers (at least one must be female) present at all times.

### Supervision of Sleeping Areas

- Only female adult registered volunteers supervise girl sleeping area.
- When possible, two unrelated female adults sleep in the sleep area with the girls. If this is not possible adults should:
  - Let girls know who to go to and what to do if they are not feeling comfortable
  - Work with girls to set ground rules for what is appropriate behavior
  - Remain present until girls are in their beds sleeping; i.e. be able to check on girls from time to time and always be in hearing distance

- Adults always remain in close proximity to girl sleeping area to monitor what is happening.
- For hotel or hostel stays requiring separate, unconnected rooms use the following guidelines:
  - Helpful tactics for hotel stays, as well as all overnight situations, are to work with the girls to set up ground rules, provide check in time, let girls know who to go to and what to do if they are not feeling comfortable, and give girls permission to seek help from an adult leader
  - All participants should know how to contact the adult volunteers whether through the room phone numbers and/or extensions or cell phone
  - Each participants should have contact information for all the participants, especially the adults (list of room and/or cell phone numbers)
  - If girls need to leave their room to go to a leader's room, go as buddies
  - Have clear guidelines as to where the girls can and cannot travel within the hotel facilities.
  - When using hostels or hotel rooms, the rooms should not be shared with non-Girl Scout groups

### **Adult Male Chaperone Guidelines**

- Adult males do not supervise sleeping areas
- Adult males should have separate sleeping quarters and bathrooms whenever possible
  - In circumstances where only one large sleeping space is available, such as at museum and mall sleepovers, there should be a separate designated area for adult males
  - If there is only one bathroom available, assign times to use the bathroom, as well as have a sign that can be turned over to designate whether it is being used by a male or female

### **Family or Parent-Daughter Event Guidelines**

During a family or parent-daughter overnight where both male and female parents are participating, either:

- Have three areas: one for girls, one for female adults and one for male adults, with at least two of the female adults registered volunteers supervising the girl sleep area; or
- Sleep in family units, with each family unit having their own separate space; or
- Have girls and female adults sleep in one area and the male adults sleep in a separate area with at least two of the female adults registered volunteers supervising the girl sleep area

### **Bed Space Guidelines**

- Each participant has her own bed or sleeping space. Parent/guardian permission must be obtained if girls are to share a double bed, such as in the case of staying in a hotel or home-stay.
- Girls and adults do not share a bed, with the exception of mothers and daughters. The bed should be a double bed or larger.

# Using the Safety Activity Checkpoints



When preparing for any activity with girls, start by reading the Girl Scout Safety Activity Checkpoints for that particular activity. You can find these on the River Valleys website under “Forms and Resources.”

Each Safety Activity Checkpoint offers you information on:

- Where to do this activity
- How to include girls with disabilities
- Where to find both basic and specialized gear required for the activity
- How to prepare yourselves in advance of the activity
- What specific steps to follow on the day of the activity and so on

In addition to reading these checkpoints yourself, you can e-mail or print them for co-volunteers, parents/guardians and the girls themselves. The checkpoints are formatted as checklists so that you, your co-volunteers and the girls can check off each step that has been accomplished.

In keeping with the three processes of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, be sure that

- **All activities are girl-led**, taking into account the age and abilities of the girls. Older girls can take the bulk of the responsibility for carefully planning and executing activities while younger girls will require more of your guidance but should still be deeply involved in making decisions about their activities.
- **Girls have the chance to learn cooperatively** by having girls teach each other new skills they may need for activities rather than hearing all that from you.
- **Girls learn by doing.** If research or special equipment is needed, they'll learn better doing that research themselves rather than by having you do the legwork and report back to them. Even Girl Scout Daisies can do basic research and give reports or do show-and-tell for each other. And Girl Scout Ambassadors may need you only for moral support as they research, teach each other and plan every detail of their excursions.

If Safety Activity Checkpoints do not exist for an activity you and the girls are interested in, check with River Valleys *before* making any definite plans with the girls. See information on next page for more information.

## Activities needing Council Approval

A few activities are allowed only with written pre-approval from River Valleys and only for girls 12 and over while some are off-limits completely:

**Caution:** You must get written pre-approval from River Valleys for girls ages 12 and older who will:

- Operate motorized vehicles, such as go-carts and personal watercraft
- Use firearms
- Take trips on waterways that are highly changeable or uncontrollable

## Activities that are never allowed

**Warning:** The following activities are never allowed for any girl:

- Potentially uncontrolled free-falling (bungee jumping, hang gliding, parachuting, parasailing and trampolining)
- Creating extreme variations of approved activities (such as high-altitude climbing and aerial tricks on bicycles, skis, snowboards, skateboards, water-skis and wakeboards)
- Hunting or shooting a projectile at another person (such as paintball)
- Riding all-terrain vehicles and motor bikes
- Taking watercraft trips in Class V or higher
- Simulated skydiving and zero-gravity rooms
- Flying in noncommercial aircraft, such as small private planes, helicopters, sailplanes, untethered hot-air balloons and blimps

**One additional note:** What may seem benign to one person could be a sensitive issue for another, so when you or the girls wish to participate in anything that could be considered controversial (health or education in human sexuality, advocacy projects, work with religious groups or anything that could yield a political/social debate), put the topic on hold until you've obtained written parental/guardian permission on forms available from River Valleys. Included on the permission form should be the topic of the activity, any specific content that might create controversy and any action steps the girls are to do when the activity is complete. Be sure to have a form for each girl, and keep them on hand in case a problem arises. For non-Girl Scout activities, find out in advance (from organizers or other volunteers who may be familiar with the content) what will be presented and follow River Valleys guidelines for obtaining written permission.

## List of Safety Activity Checkpoints and Where to Locate Them

Safety-Wise and the 45 specific Safety Activity Checkpoints are available for download as PDFs on the River Valleys website at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org). Go to the "Forms and Resources" section under "Health and Safety." If you are unable to download Safety-Wise documents and need a printed copy, please contact River Valleys for assistance.

Safety Activity Checkpoints are updated when necessary with specific information about River Valleys process and procedures. When a checkpoint has been updated, the date of the update will be noted at the end of the checkpoint. Example: Updated for River Valleys 8/9/11

<p><b>Water Sports</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Canoeing</li> <li>Fishing</li> <li>Ice Fishing</li> <li>Kayaking</li> <li>Rowboating</li> <li>Sailing</li> <li>Scuba Diving</li> <li>Snorkeling</li> <li>Surfing</li> <li>Swimming</li> <li>Tubing</li> <li>Waterskiing and Wakeboarding</li> <li>White-Water Rafting</li> <li>Windsurfing</li> </ul>	<p><b>Camping Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Backpacking</li> <li>Group Camping</li> <li>Hiking</li> <li>Orienteering</li> <li>Outdoor Cooking</li> <li>Trip/Travel Camping</li> </ul>
<p><b>Land Sports</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Archery</li> <li>Bicycling</li> <li>Caving</li> <li>Challenge Courses</li> <li>Climbing and Rappelling</li> <li>Cross-Country Skiing</li> <li>Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding</li> <li>Fencing</li> <li>Geocaching</li> <li>Horseback Riding</li> <li>Ice Skating</li> <li>In-Line Skating and Roller Skating</li> <li>Other Land Sports</li> <li>Segway</li> <li>Skateboarding</li> <li>Sledding, Tobogganing and Snow Tubing</li> <li>Snowshoeing</li> </ul>	<p><b>Other Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arts and Crafts</li> <li>Computer/Online Use</li> <li>Girl Scout Cookies/Council-Sponsored Product Sales</li> <li>Hayrides</li> <li>Parades and Other Large Group Gatherings</li> <li>Playgrounds</li> <li>STEM (Science, Engineering, Technology, Math)</li> <li>Theme Park</li> </ul>

## Certificates of Insurance

When River Valleys works with a program vendor such as a horseback riding stable or a water park, we request that they provide us with a certificate of insurance (COI) for our files. The COI is an indicator that they are a business in good standing and have risk management practices in place. It is generally requested from program vendors that offer high adventure activities and/or staff to lead the activity.

If you are planning an activity, check the applicable Safety Activity Checkpoint to determine if a COI is needed and if there is already one on file. If you are unclear as to the need for a certificate of insurance, or if the checkpoint does not indicate that one is on file for the program vendor you plan to use, please contact Pam Wurster ([pamela.wurster@girlscoutsrv.org](mailto:pamela.wurster@girlscoutsrv.org) or by calling 800-845-0787). Please note that River Valleys staff will request the certificate of insurance and that it is best to allow two weeks for the certificate to arrive in our office.

# Volunteer Essentials 2011-2012

## Chapter 5: Managing Group Finances

Helping girls earn and manage money is an integral part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Your Girl Scout group is responsible for planning and financing its own activities with your guidance. This puts girls in charge, giving them the opportunity to cooperatively set goals, manage a budget, spend responsibly, maintain records, learn social skills and develop good marketing, entrepreneurial, math and financial skills.

Girl Scout groups are funded by a share of money earned through the River Valleys Girl Scout Cookie Program Activity and Fall Product Program, approved group money-earning activities and any dues your group may charge. (This is in addition to the \$12 annual membership dues that go to the national organization.) This chapter gives you the ins and outs of establishing a group account, helping girls manage their finances, practice successful sales techniques, review the safety requirements around product sales and understand how to collaborate with sponsors and causes.

Information found in this chapter:

[Establishing an Account](#)

[Helping Girls Reach Their Financial Goals](#)

[Money-Earning Basics](#)

[Collaborating with Sponsors and Other Organizations](#)

[Financial and Sales Abilities by Grade Level](#)

[Understanding the Girl Scout Cookie Program Activity](#)

[Product Sales: Financial Literacy and the Girl Scout Leadership Experience](#)

### Establishing an Account

If your group is earning and spending money, you need to set up a bank account. If you're taking over an existing group, you may inherit a checking account. This usually happens when there is money to deposit, such as from group dues, product sales or group money-earning activities. Consider these tips when working with a group account:

- Keep group funds in the bank before an activity or trip and pay for as many items as possible in advance of your departure.
- Use debit cards during the activity or trip.
- Make one person responsible for group funds and for keeping a daily account of expenditures.
- Have one or more back-up people also carry debit cards in case the main card is lost.

Follow River Valleys financial policies and procedures for setting up an account. Information will be provided in the Fast Start Meeting for new leaders and a Troop Finance Packet is available at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org).

## Closing a Bank Account

Unused Girl Scout money left in accounts when groups disband becomes the property of River Valleys. Prior to disbanding, the group may decide to donate any unused funds to a worthwhile organization, to another group or for girl activities. As when closing a personal account, be sure all checks and other debits have cleared the account before you close it. You may have to close the account in person. Turn remaining funds over to a council staff member.

## Helping Girls Reach Their Financial Goals

One of your opportunities as a volunteer is to facilitate girl-led financial planning, which may include the following steps:

1. **Set goals for money-earning activities.** What do girls hope to accomplish through this activity? In addition to earning money, what skills do they hope to build? What leadership opportunities will be presented?
2. **Create a budget.** Use a budget worksheet that includes both expenses (the cost of supplies, admission to events, travel, etc.) and available income (the group's account balance, projected cookie proceeds, etc.).
3. **Determine how much the group needs to earn.** Subtract expenses from available income to determine how much money your group needs to earn.
4. **Make a plan.** The group can brainstorm and make decisions about its financial plans. Will participating in the Girl Scout Cookie Program Activity and Fall Product Program—if approached proactively and energetically—earn enough money to meet the group's goals? If not, which group money-earning activities might offset the difference in anticipated expense and anticipated income? Will more than one group money-earning activity be necessary to achieve the group's financial goals? In this planning stage, engage the girls through the Girl Scout processes—girl-led, learning by doing and cooperative learning—and consider the value of any potential activity. Have them weigh feasibility, implementation and safety factors.
5. **Write it out.** Once the group has decided on its financial plan, describe it in writing. If the plan involves a group money-earning activity, fill out a Troop Money-Earning Project Approval form (available at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org)) and submit it along with the budget worksheet your girls created.

**Remember:** It's great for girls to have opportunities, such as the River Valleys Girl Scout Cookie Program Activity and Fall Product Program, to earn funds that help fulfill their goals as part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. As a volunteer, try to help girls balance the money earning they do with opportunities to enjoy other activities that have less emphasis on earning and spending money.

## Money-Earning Basics

Girls earn money in two distinct ways:

- Council-sponsored product program activities are council-wide sales of Girl Scout authorized products—such as Girl Scout Cookies, magazines and nut/chocolate items—in which members participate as part of the Girl Scout program.
- Group money earning refers to activities organized by the group (not by River Valleys) that are planned and carried out by girls (in partnership with adults) and that earn money for the group. These activities must be approved by River Valleys in writing.

Girls' participation in both council-sponsored product program activities and group money-earning projects is based on the following:

- Voluntary participation
- Written permission of each girl's parent/guardian
- An understanding of (and ability to explain clearly to others) why the money is needed
- An understanding that money earning should not exceed what the group needs to support its activities
- Observance of local ordinances related to involvement of children in money-earning activities as well as health and safety laws
- Vigilance in protecting the personal safety of each girl
- Arrangements for safeguarding the money

## Money-Earning Project Guidelines

To ensure the safety of girls and protect River Valleys' nonprofit and GSUSA charter status, groups must adhere to the following policies when implementing money-earning projects:

- Obtain written approval from River Valleys before a group money-earning event and submit a Troop Money-Earning Project Approval form.
- Girl Scout Daisies (kindergarten and first grade) may be involved in council-sponsored product program activities, but they cannot raise or collect money in any other way except through group dues or parental contributions.
- Group money-earning activities must be girl-led, suited to the age and abilities of the girls and consistent with the principles of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.
- Money raised is for Girl Scout activities and is not to be retained by individuals. Girls can, however, be awarded incentives and/or may earn credits from their Girl Scout product sales.
- Girl Scouts forbids use of games of chance, the direct solicitation of cash and product-demonstration parties.
- Funds acquired through group money-earning projects must be reported and accounted for by the group in accordance with River Valleys procedures.
- River Valleys offers two council-approved product program activities—the Girl Scout Cookie Program Activity and the Fall Product Program. These programs feature

supporting materials, volunteer training, an established calendar and program materials to help girls/troops develop five essential skills—goal setting, decision making, money management, people skills and business ethics. From there, your group may decide to earn additional funds on its own.

- Groups are encouraged to participate in council product program activities as their primary money-earning activity. Troop money-earning projects cannot take place during the entire Girl Scout Cookie Program Activity, the order-taking period of the Fall Product Program or in conjunction with your service unit's Family Fundraising Campaign.
- Service units cannot host or conduct money-earning projects but can assist troops in developing and implementing the projects (proceeds must go back to troops).
- Troops may not take orders for or sell a commercial product of any kind. This includes selling tickets for a business, prepackaged fundraisers, taste testing, test driving, coupon booklets (e.g., Herberger's, Panera Bread), home product demonstration parties (e.g., Avon, Tupperware) or selling any commercially branded items. Girls are allowed to sell wholesale/non-branded items (e.g., holiday wreaths) and must be responsible for the purchase, ordering and delivery of the items they are selling.
- Troops cannot raise money on behalf of or for another organization or charity. However, girls may donate a portion of the proceeds they earn to a charity of their choice.
- Troop money-earning projects, except the Girl Scout Cookie Program Activity, must not be conducted on a door-to-door basis.
- Charging a fee to show a copyrighted movie is not an approved money-earning project.
- Girls implementing babysitting projects must sign a council contract to follow guidelines surrounding child safety. You can request a contract by e-mailing [moneyearning@girlscoutsrv.org](mailto:moneyearning@girlscoutsrv.org).
- Troops may not receive a percentage of sales for any money-earning project. Troops must receive 100 percent of profits and this includes funds raised at community dinners and concession stands. Partnerships with restaurants such as Culver's and Applebee's are not approved money-earning activities.
- A business or organization may not advertise a troop's money-earning project and paid advertising is prohibited. A troop can advertise its project with signs, word of mouth or flyers.
- Girls can *market* cookies and other products by sending e-mails to friends, family members and former customers, as long as they use a group e-mail address, the address of a parent/guardian or adult volunteer, a blind e-mail address (in which the recipients cannot see the sender's e-mail address), or the online e-mail tools provided by cookie vendors. Girls **13 years and older** can also use a parent's/guardian's or adult volunteer's social networking site (such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and LinkedIn) to do the same.
- Sales may not be *transacted* on the Internet (for example, through a site that has an electronic shopping cart) except for magazine sales. Girls can, however, receive order commitments for cookie sales via e-mail or the Internet.
- Advertising or promoting for money-earning projects must not link the name "Girl Scouts" to another organization or product in any way that implies endorsement. When working

with supporting organizations, you may use language such as, “Come to a spaghetti dinner to support Girl Scout Troop 98765 hosted at the American Legion.”

- Money-earning projects that involve the participation of non-Girl Scout members may require purchasing non-member event insurance through River Valleys.
- For any money-earning project involving the sale of food, a troop must contact one or more of the following agencies for information on appropriate licensing:

**Minnesota Department of Health:** [www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us) 651-201-5000  
(food stand/community dinner)

**Minnesota Department of Agriculture:** 651-201-6622 (bake sales)

**Iowa Department of Public Health:** [www.idph.state.ia.us](http://www.idph.state.ia.us) (food stand/community dinner)

**Wisconsin Department of Health Services:** [www.dhs.wisconsin.gov](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov)  
(food stand/community dinner)

## Money Earning for Troop Trips

If girls and troops are participating in money-earning activities for a Girl Scout trip, the troop must submit the Girl Scout Trip Request to Plan form to the Brooklyn Center Service Center and submit the Troop Money-Earning Project Approval form to the Rochester Service Center. Once the request to plan your troop trip has been approved, the Troop Money-Earning Project Approval form will be processed.

## Money Earning and the Internet

Before conducting any marketing on the Internet, girls must complete the online safety pledge. To download the pledge, go online to: [http://www.girlscouts.org/help/internet\\_safety\\_pledge.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/help/internet_safety_pledge.asp)

Girls can market cookies and other products by sending e-mails to friends, family members and former customers, as long as they use a group e-mail address, the address of a parent/guardian or adult volunteer, a blind e-mail address (in which the recipients cannot see the sender's e-mail address), or the online e-mail tools provided by cookie vendors. Girls **13 years and older** can also use a parent's/guardian's or adult volunteer's social networking site (such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and LinkedIn) to do the same.

Actual sales may not be transacted on the Internet.

## Additional Group Money Earning

Most program and activity plans within Girl Scouting should, and can be, supported through troop participation in the Girl Scout Cookie Program Activity, Fall Product Program and troop dues. If the budget goal for a specific program or activity plan has not been met, girls are allowed to participate in money-earning projects. All projects \$100 or more require the submission of a Troop Money-Earning Project Approval form for River Valleys' approval prior to beginning the money-earning project. You may find the Troop Money-Earning Project Approval form on the River Valleys website at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org).

Troop money-earning projects should be planned and implemented by girls in partnership with volunteers/parents/guardians. Planning and participating in money-earning projects should be

carried out to maximize girls' skill development in areas such as goal setting, budgeting, good business practices, customer service and customer relations.

Building upon the following list of ideas, facilitate a group brainstorming session to determine how your group will earn money.

**Troop money-earning project ideas:**

- Calendar sale
- Garage sale
- Childcare at special events (with an adult who is certified in first aid and CPR)
- Recycling drive (e.g., cans, paper or ink cartridges)
- Themed car wash
- Talent show
- Troop cookbook
- Craft sale (jewelry, artwork, scarves, cards, bookmarks, candles or other homemade goods)
- Handmade bird feeder or bird house sale
- Wreath, flower, plant or tree sale (items must be wholesale/non-branded)
- Sock hop or dance in the community (for the general public)
- Raking lawns/shoveling sidewalks
- Dog-walking service
- Holiday photos
- Haunted house
- Bagging groceries or gift wrapping for donations (cannot replace a paid employee's regular position)
- Tutoring
- Refereeing sporting events
- Clown activities or face painting at community or school events
- Organizing a fall or international festival (accept donations or charge a small fee)
- Community dinner or breakfast (must have appropriate food license and follow promotion guidelines)
- Concession stand (must have appropriate food license and receive 100 percent of the profits)
- Facilitate badge/patch workshops for younger troops
- Cookie or cocoa mix in a jar

## Collaborating with Sponsors and Other Organizations

Sponsors help Girl Scout councils ensure that all girls in the community have an opportunity to participate in Girl Scouting. Community organizations, businesses, religious organizations and individuals may be sponsors and may provide group meeting places, volunteer their time, provide activity materials or loan equipment. The sponsor's contribution can then be recognized by arranging for the girls to send thank-you cards, inviting the sponsor to a meeting or ceremony or working together on a take-action project.

For information on working with a sponsor, consult River Valleys staff who can give you guidance on the availability of sponsors, recruiting responsibility and any council policies or practices that must be followed. River Valleys already has relationships with some organizations and may know of reasons *not* to collaborate with certain other organizations.

When collaborating with any other organization, keep these additional guidelines in mind:

- **Avoid fundraising for other organizations.** Girl Scouts are not allowed, when identifying themselves as Girl Scouts (such as wearing a uniform, a sash or vest, official pins, etc.), to solicit money on behalf of another organization. This includes participating in a walkathon or telethon while in uniform. You and your group can, however, support another organization through take-action projects or by making a donation from your group's account. As individuals, Girl Scouts are free to participate in whatever events they choose, so long as they're not wearing anything that officially identifies them as Girl Scouts.
- **Steer clear of political fundraisers.** When in an official Girl Scout capacity or in any way identifying yourselves as Girl Scouts, your group may not participate (directly or indirectly) in any political campaign or work on behalf of or in opposition to a candidate for public office. Letter-writing campaigns are not allowed, nor are participating in a political rally, circulating a petition or carrying a political banner.
- **Be respectful when collaborating with religious organizations.** Girl Scout groups must respect the opinions and practices of religious partners, but no girl should be required to take part in any religious observance or practice of the sponsoring group.
- **Avoid selling or endorsing commercial products.** Commercial products are any product sold at retail. Since 1939, girls and volunteers have not been allowed to endorse, provide a testimonial for or sell such products.

## Financial and Sales Abilities by Grade Level

As with other activities, girls progress in their financial and sales abilities as they get older. This section gives you some examples of the abilities of girls at each grade level.

### Girl Scout Daisies



The group volunteer handles money, keeps financial records and does all group budgeting.

Parents/guardians may decide if they will contribute to the cost of activities.

Girls can participate in Girl Scout Cookie sales and other council-sponsored product sales.

Girl Scout Daisies are always paired with an adult when selling anything. Girls do the asking and deliver the product, but adults handle the money and keep the girls secure.

### Girl Scout Brownies



The group volunteer handles money, keeps financial records and shares some of the group-budgeting responsibilities.

Girls discuss the cost of activities (supplies, fees, transportation, rentals, and so on).

Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product sales.

Girls may decide to pay dues.

### Girl Scout Juniors



The group volunteer retains overall responsibility for long-term budgeting and record keeping, but shares or delegates all other financial responsibilities.

Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product sales.

Girls decide on group dues, if any. Dues are collected by girls and recorded by a group treasurer (selected by the girls).

Girls budget for the short-term needs of the group, on the basis of plans and income from the group dues.

Girls budget for more long-term activities, such as overnight trips, group camping and special events.

Girls budget for take-action projects, including the Girl Scout Bronze Award, if they are pursuing it.

## Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors



Girls estimate costs based on plans.

Girls determine the amount of group dues (if any) and the scope of money-earning projects.

Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product sales.

Girls carry out budgeting, planning and group money-earning projects.

Girls budget for extended travel, take-action projects and leadership projects.

Girls may be involved in seeking donations for take-action projects with council approval.

Girls keep their own financial records and give reports to parents and group volunteers.

Girls budget for take-action projects, including the Girl Scout Silver or Gold Awards if they are pursuing them.

One critical task for each group, no matter what their grade level, is to keep excellent records and establish a clear accounting system for all money earned and spent. As the group's volunteer, you're in charge of making sure that money is spent wisely, that excellent records are maintained (keeping copies of all receipts in a binder or folder), and that tracking of all income is complete. With older girls, your job is to oversee their work as *they* learn to keep impeccable records.

## The Girl Scout Cookie Program Activity

Did you know that the Girl Scout Cookie Program Activity is the largest girl-led business in the country, with sales of over \$700 million per year for girls and their communities nationwide?

That's right. The Girl Scout Cookie Program Activity is the leading entrepreneurial program for girls: No university has produced as many female business owners as the Girl Scout Cookie Program Activity.

If you have a moment, watch the latest Girl Scout [What Can a Cookie Do?](#) video for an inspiring look into just how powerful those treats—and the girls who sell them—can be.

Girl Scout Cookies and other council-sponsored products are an integral part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. With every season of cookies, another generation of girls learn five important skills:

- Goal setting
- Decision making
- Money management
- People skills
- Business ethics

And most of all, girls gain a tremendous amount of confidence. It's not easy to ask people to buy something—you have to speak up, look them in the eye and believe in what you're doing—all skills that help a girl succeed now and throughout the rest of her life.

## A Sweet Tradition

It has been more than 90 years since Girl Scouts began selling home-baked cookies to raise money. The idea was so popular that, in 1936, Girl Scouts enlisted bakers to handle the growing demand.

Two commercial bakers are currently licensed by Girl Scouts of the USA to produce Girl Scout Cookies—Little Brownie Bakers and ABC/Interbake Foods—and each council selects the baker of its choice. Each baker gets to name its own cookies, which is why some cookies have two names, and gets to decide which flavors it will offer in a given year. For additional information on cookie varieties, including nutritional details, visit [www.girlscoutcookies.org](http://www.girlscoutcookies.org).

River Valleys' partner for the 2011–2012 Girl Scout Cookie Program Activity is Little Brownie Bakers. Up to eight varieties of Girl Scout cookies are offered each year, including three mandatory flavors:

- **Thin Mints:** Round, dark-chocolate, mint-flavored cookies
- **Do-Si-Dos®/Peanut Butter Sandwich:** Two oatmeal cookies with a layer of peanut butter sandwiched in between
- **Trefoils/Shortbread:** Shortbread cookies shaped like the Girl Scout trefoil

Other varieties offered by Little Brownie Bakers include:

- **Samoas®:** Tender vanilla cookies, covered with caramel, rolled in toasted coconut and striped with a rich, chocolaty coating
- **Tagalongs®:** Tasty cookies topped with creamy peanut butter and covered with a luscious chocolaty coating
- **Dulce de Leche:** Inspired by the classic confections of Latin America, these sweet, bite-size cookies are rich with milk caramel chips
- **Lemon Chalet Cremes:** Uniquely designed to feature Our Chalet, this delicious vanilla sandwich has a hint of cinnamon-ginger spice and a refreshing zesty lemon crème filling
- **Thank U Berry Munch:** Real premium cranberries provide a delightful tartness in these hearty cookies sweetened with creamy, white fudge chips. Crispy rice delivers a satisfying crunch

**Note:** All cookies are kosher and have zero trans fat per serving (at the minimum serving, based on FDA guidelines). Several varieties are also nut-free. Complete nutritional information and descriptions of each year's varieties are available online at [www.girlscoutcookies.org](http://www.girlscoutcookies.org) and on River Valleys' baker's website.

In addition, River Valleys also offers girls/troops the opportunity to participate in the Fall Product Program where magazines and nut/chocolate items are offered to friends and family.

## Product Sales: Financial Literacy and the Girl Scout Leadership Experience

Selling Girl Scout Cookies and other products (which may include nuts, candies and magazines) gives girls a chance to run a business and practice leadership skills they can use in their lives. Girls will enjoy all the benefits this important component of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience has to offer: They'll engage in planning and goal setting (aiming to achieve their personal best), teamwork, marketing, money management (including the importance of saving for future needs) and the enduring skill of customer service. As girls grow, they will get to know their products (ingredients and calories, for example), and they will design innovative and creative marketing strategies and tools. Girls will also be encouraged to share with customers how product sales help their council and their community. Volunteers can help girls develop leadership skills while they engage in Girl Scout Cookie activities by using the Girl Scout processes of girl-led, learning by doing and cooperative learning. And as they participate in product sales, girls will:

- **Discover** a strong sense of self and gain practical life skills when they create personal goals, deliver presentations and find ways to customize a marketing plan. A girl can discover a lot about herself and her values as she makes decisions about money earning, customer management, and so on.
- **Connect** with their group members as they set group goals and develop a list of positions related to cookie activities such as accounting manager, event planner, public relations specialist and graphic designer. Girls can learn about their communities as they meet families, mentors and business owners who have worked in these roles. Girls can also use the Girl Scout Cookie Program Activity as an opportunity to talk to customers about ways to improve the community or to solicit ideas for a local take-action idea bank.
- **Take action** as they learn to map neighborhood businesses and other resources that can help them consider community service needs. Girls use product-sale money to make a difference in their communities, whether through a take-action project or a philanthropic donation. And don't forget: money that goes to the council from product sales allows councils to take action by serving all Girl Scouts.

## Determining Who Can Participate

All girl members, including Girl Scout Daisies, are eligible to participate in council-sponsored product program activities under volunteer supervision. River Valleys provides learning opportunities (through a cascading staff and volunteer effort) on the procedures to follow during each product program activity. River Valleys also establishes guidelines and procedures for conducting the product program and determines how the proceeds and Awards and Recognition program will be managed.

## Knowing Where Proceeds Go

River Valleys provides a breakdown of "how the cookie crumbles" in the Girl Scout Cookie Program Activity materials and also on the River Valleys website. The price of a package of cookies in River Valleys for 2011–2012 will be \$3.50. Of that total package price, 18 percent is used for troop proceeds, 4 percent goes to girl award and recognition items and 24 percent represents the cost of the product from the baker. The remaining 54 percent is used by River

Valleys to provide council-sponsored program events for girls, maintain River Valleys properties (including River Valleys camp facilities) and provide volunteer training and services.

The income from product program activities does not become the property of individual girl members. Girls, however, may be eligible for incentives and credits that they put toward Girl Scout activities, such as camp, travel and Girl Scout membership dues for the next year.

Girls may earn official Girl Scout grade-appropriate awards related to product program activities. River Valleys also offers an Awards and Recognition program that provides items such as patches, other award items and credits to be redeemed for council-sponsored program events, camp fees, council-approved extended troop trips, membership dues and other options outlined in the credit. River Valleys' plan for awards and recognition applies equally to all girls participating in the product program activities. Whenever possible, River Valleys involves girls in the selection of awards and recognition items and the administration of money given to girls from product program proceeds.

## Steps to Cookie Success

Here are several steps that can help ensure a successful Girl Scout Cookie Program Activity:

- √ Participate in the Fall Product Program. Research shows girls/troops enjoy even more success in their Girl Scout Cookie Program Activity when they participate in the Fall Product Program.
- √ Register all girls and select an adult (or more than one adult) to serve as volunteer troop cookie manager early in the Girl Scout program year.
- √ Utilize the Girl Scout Cookie Program Activity Kit provided to the troop with meeting ideas and other fun activities to create excitement before Cookie Go Day.
- √ Complete the online self-study training found on the River Valleys website and connect with your service unit cookie manager for materials and additional support in November/December (if you are the troop cookie manager).
- √ Ensure the troop/girls are properly entered into eBUDDE (the online cookie management tool from Little Brownie Bakers) by January and have utilized the online resources to become familiar with the system.
- √ Participate in a Cookie Rally.
- √ Conduct a parent/family meeting to share troop and individual goals, planned participation and use of earned troop proceeds.
- √ Look for additional River Valleys Girl Scout Cookie Program Activity information in Program Essentials and other River Valleys communications.

## Using Online Resources to Market Cookies and Other Products

Girls are texting, calling, e-mailing, Tweeting, and Facebooking—all effective ways for girls **13 and older** to promote their product program activities. The following sections detail how girls can use electronic marketing, social networking and group websites to gather order commitments from family, friends and previous customers. But first, please keep in mind that girls:

- *Can* market to and collect indications of interest from customers within River Valleys' ZIP codes. Refer prospects that come from outside council jurisdiction to the council finder at [www.girlscoutcookies.org](http://www.girlscoutcookies.org). Family members are the exception to this rule.

- *Cannot* have customers pay online (such as through a shopping cart function on a website the girls create). Girl Scout magazine sales are the exception to this rule.
- *Must* sign the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge (available at [www.gsusa.org](http://www.gsusa.org)) before doing any online activities, and all online activities must be under the supervision of adults.
- *Cannot* expose their e-mail address, physical address or phone number to the public. When writing e-mail messages or online announcements, girls should sign with their first name only, along with their group number or name and their council name.

For girls in fifth grade and above, have your group visit [Let Me Know](#), a site addressing Internet safety for teens and tweens. Girls can even earn an online award for completing site activities.

## Girl Scout Daisies: Stay Especially Safe!

Girl Scout Daisies are too young to be marketing online through their group, parent or guardian websites, or social networking sites. For this reason, Girl Scout Daisies are allowed to send out e-mails only when working directly with an adult. Girl Scout Daisies and their adult volunteers use only blind e-mails or the online marketing tools provided by GSUSA product vendors on their websites.

## Contacting Prospects Electronically

Girls may use phone calls, text messages, IMs and e-mails as online marketing tools to let family, friends and former customers know about the product program activity and collect indications of interest. Product-related e-mail is not intended to be spam (unwanted texts or e-mails) but rather simply a reminder for girls to be sure that their messages will be welcomed by the receiver.

When girls are marketing a product program online, remind them to always use a group e-mail address (such as [troop457@yahoo.com](mailto:troop457@yahoo.com)), an adult's personal e-mail address or a blind address (one that does not reveal the address to the recipient). In addition, be sure to discuss with girls the need to treat customer e-mail addresses from current and past years—as well as phone numbers, IM addresses, Facebook accounts and mail addresses—with respect.

## Utilizing Social Networks

A girl (or group of girls) **over the age of 13** may work in partnership with an adult to market cookies and other products online, using social networking sites (such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace or LinkedIn) of the adult. Social networking sites are fun and fast ways to get out an urgent message, such as, "It's Girl Scout Cookie time!" Posting or tweeting such a message will get the attention of friends and family.

Before girls use social networks as a marketing tool, keep the following in mind:

- Girls must have parental/guardian permission to use social networks.

- Girls must meet age limits set by the provider, which is 13 and above in most cases, as per the United States Child Online Privacy and Protection Act and the Child Online Protection Act.
- Any use of photos requires a photo-release form signed by parents/guardians of all the girls pictured and the signature of any adults pictured. You may find this form on the River Valleys website at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org).
- Any use of online video sharing sites (such as YouTube) where the video is representing Girl Scouts or Girl Scout products must follow specific requirements for that site, as well as council guidelines. Girl Scout photo-release forms must also be signed by parents/guardians and any adults pictured. (In other words, this is not an easy venture, but if you and the girls are willing, it's worth the investment.)

## Setting Up a Group Website

Groups whose girls meet age criteria (**13 years or older**) and have parental/guardian permission may set up a group website or social networking site. This site must be approved by River Valleys and can be a fantastic way for girls to share information, market their Girl Scout product program activities and talk about their take-action projects.

Before you and the girls design a website, do remember that the Internet is an open forum for anyone, including potential predators. Documented instances of cyberstalkers make it imperative that any information that could jeopardize the safety and security of girls and adults is not disclosed on a website.

To ensure the girls' safety:

- Use girls' first names only.
- Never post girls' addresses, phone numbers or e-mail addresses.
- Never post addresses of group meeting places or dates and times of meetings, events or trips. (An adult volunteer who wishes to communicate upcoming events with families of girls should use e-mail instead of posting details on a website, unless that site is password protected.)
- Always have a parent's/guardian's signature on a photo-release form before using pictures of girls on a website.
- Make yours a static website that does not allow outsiders to post messages, or make sure all postings (such as message boards or guest books) have adult oversight and are screened prior to posting live.
- Don't violate copyright laws by using designs, text from magazines or books, poetry, music, lyrics, videos, graphics or trademarked symbols without specific permission from the copyright or trademark holder (and generally, this permission is pretty tough to get). Girl Scout trademarks (such as the trefoil shape, Girl Scout pins and badges and patches) can be used only in accordance with guidelines. (The Girl Scout trefoil, for example, may not be animated or used as wallpaper for a website.) Check the River Valleys website for complete graphics guidelines and approvals.

## Safely Selling Girl Scout Cookies, Other Products

A few other considerations will help keep girls safe:

- Volunteers and Girl Scout council staff do not sell cookies and other products—girls sell them.
- Parents/guardians must grant permission for girls to participate and are informed about the girls' whereabouts when they are engaged in product-sale activities. Specific permission must be obtained when a girl intends to use the Internet for product marketing. A parent, guardian or other adult must know each girl's whereabouts when she is engaged in a product program, and if and when she is involved on the Internet.
- Girls should be identifiable as Girl Scouts by wearing a membership pin, official uniform, tunic, sash, vest or other Girl Scout clothing.
- Adult volunteers must monitor, supervise and guide the product program activities of all age levels.
- Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies and Juniors must be accompanied by an adult at all times. Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors who participate in sales must be supervised by (but do not need to be directly accompanied by) an adult. Girls must always use the buddy system.
- Money due for sold products is collected when the products are delivered to the customer. Magazine money is the only exception to this policy; magazine money is due at the time the customer places the order (in person or online). Review River Valleys' Product Program Activity materials for details on River Valleys' check acceptance policy and other money-related issues.
- Personal customer information should remain private. Customer credit card information should not be collected by girls and should not be asked for on any form collected by girls.
- Girls can participate in no more than two council-sponsored product program activities each year, and only one of these may be the Girl Scout Cookie Program Activity.
- A girl's physical address, social networking page address, IM name, Skype name or number, or phone number should never be revealed to anyone outside her immediate circle of family and friends.
- Girls can market cookies and other products by sending e-mails to friends, family members and former customers as long as they use a group e-mail address, the address of a parent/guardian or adult volunteer, a blind e-mail address (in which the recipients cannot see the sender's e-mail address), or the online e-mail tools provided by cookie vendors. Girls **13 and older** can also use a parent's/guardian's or adult volunteer's social networking site (such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and LinkedIn) to do the same.
- Sales may not be transacted on the Internet (for example, through a site that has an electronic shopping cart), except for magazine sales. Girls can, however, receive order commitments for cookies sales via e-mail or the Internet. In other words, potential customers can relay (via e-mail or a Facebook post, for example) that, "Yes! I'd like four boxes of Thin Mints and three boxes of Shortbread cookies."
- Before beginning any cookie sales or other product program activities with your group, refer to the cookies section of [Girl Scout Central](#) and [www.girlscoutcookies.org](http://www.girlscoutcookies.org).

# Volunteer Essentials 2011-2012

## Chapter 6: Volunteer Policies, Standards and Practices

Although girls and adults work as partners to encourage the development of leadership and decision-making skills by girls, it is the adult volunteers who make Girl Scouting a reality in the majority of communities. Adult volunteers are fundamental to Girl Scouting as role models and for the direct delivery of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

The River Valleys Board of Directors has established volunteer policies based on the principle that knowledgeable, well-trained and motivated volunteers are essential for Girl Scouting to accomplish its goals and objectives. If volunteers are to consistently perform to a high standard, it is necessary that they understand the policies directly affecting their pivotal role in Girl Scouting. This chapter presents the basic policies concerning volunteering with Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin River Valleys and identifies what is expected from board members, other volunteers and staff.

River Valleys volunteers are expected to welcome, embrace and appreciate people of every race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin or culture, age, ability, educational and economic background and to create an inclusive environment where all girls and adults feel safe, secure and welcome.

Information found in this chapter:

[Definition of a Volunteer](#)

[Volunteers' Rights and Responsibilities](#)

- [Confidentiality](#)
- [Dress Code](#)
- [Equal Opportunity and Volunteer Management](#)
- [Representation of River Valleys](#)
- [Training](#)

[Climate and Safety](#)

- [Working with Children](#)
- [Safety Standards](#)
- [Background Check Policy Statement](#)
- [Criminal Background Check Procedure](#)
- [Disqualification from Volunteer Participation](#)

[Volunteer Grievance](#)

[Discriminatory Harassment Policy](#)

[Sexual Harassment Policy](#)

[Conflict Management Policy](#)

[Conflict of Interest](#)

## Definition of a Volunteer

River Valleys is a membership organization. The membership policy states that adults participating in the Girl Scout Movement as volunteers must be registered as members with Girls Scouts of the USA. Membership as a Girl Scout is granted to any person who:

- meets GSUSA membership standards;
- has paid annual membership dues for the membership year (financial assistance is available through River Valleys), which is October 1 to September 30, or is a Lifetime Member; and
- abides by GSUSA policies, standards and guidelines, River Valleys policies and operational procedures, governmental and affiliated organization regulations and standards, and the Constitution of GSUSA.

Although female role models are essential for carrying out the purpose of Girl Scouting, men are welcome to serve as board and committee members and in other volunteer capacities. Girl Scouts also requires that at least one of a troop's leaders be an adult female not related to other adult leaders.

An adult volunteer is defined as anyone who contributes his or her time to River Valleys without compensation or the expectation of compensation beyond reasonable reimbursement for allowance for expenses, or any other thing of value in lieu of compensation. Volunteers typically give their time as troop leaders, coaches, mentors, facilitators, board members, delegates or provide assistance to girls on projects in their area of expertise.

## Volunteers' Rights and Responsibilities

Girl Scout volunteers are expected to serve as appropriate role models for girls and for other adults. Any behavior that violates the law or Girl Scout policy or standards, or that compromises the image of Girl Scouting as well as the individual involved, can be grounds for termination or failure to be re-appointed to a volunteer position. In performing their assignments, volunteers must exercise common sense and sound judgment and be courteous and respectful to council employees and other Girl Scouts.

### **While functioning in the capacity of a Girl Scout volunteer, adults must:**

- Promote the positive image, goals and standards of Girl Scouts at all times.
- Use council property and the personal property of other volunteers, employees and girls with care.
- Make an effort to be punctual for Girl Scout events and keep absences to a minimum.
- Adhere to River Valleys' financial policies and use Girl Scout funds responsibly for Girl Scout purposes only.
- Follow Girl Scout safety and program standards.

### **In addition, volunteers must NOT:**

- Use tobacco in the presence of girls at Girl Scout programs, activities and events, including travel to and from.
- Consume alcohol while they are responsible for girl members or when present at girl activities or events.

- Possess, sell or use illegal drugs or misuse prescribed drugs.
- Perform volunteer duties or drive to or from Girl Scout events while under the influence of alcohol or prescription drugs that impair alertness or judgment.
- Promote religious preferences during Girl Scout activities, except as permitted in the context of Girl Scouts' Faith-Based Initiatives Programs.
- Promote political preferences during Girl Scout activities.
- Promote an individual opinion or philosophy inconsistent with the Girl Scout Mission during Girl Scout activities.

## Confidentiality

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary, privileged or sensitive information (Confidential Information) to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer—whether this information involves a staff person, volunteer, girl or River Valleys business in general. Volunteers are prohibited from discussing or sharing Confidential Information with River Valleys employees or volunteers who do not have a need to know such information, or with individuals or organizations outside of River Valleys, including family members. Failure to protect Confidential Information may result in termination of the volunteer's relationship with River Valleys.

## Dress Code

Girl Scouts of the USA is a uniformed organization in which the uniform is a symbol and mark of distinction. Although a uniform is encouraged, it is not required for participation in Girl Scout activities. The uniform may be worn when appropriate at Girl Scout activities and is recommended for River Valleys functions. (A limited number of adult uniforms are available for loan through River Valleys.) Proper placement of the insignia is required.

Volunteers are representatives of River Valleys in their communities. Personal appearance, public conduct and attitude should exemplify the best in Girl Scouting.

## Equal Opportunity and Volunteer Management

River Valleys provides equal opportunities to all volunteers and applicants for volunteer positions without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, pregnancy, age, ability, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, or status as a covered veteran in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws. River Valleys complies with applicable state and local laws governing non-discrimination in its provision of services in every location in which River Valleys volunteers perform their assignments. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of the volunteer program, including but not limited to, selection, placement, supervision, training, recognition, evaluation, release and volunteer career development. Program activities and educational materials for both girls and adults will respect and reflect the nature of a global society.

## Representation of River Valleys

Volunteers are not agents of River Valleys. Unless authorized to do so by River Valleys management, volunteers must not take any action or make any statement which might obligate River Valleys with respect to third persons or the general public, including statements to the media, coalition or lobbying efforts with other organizations, or any agreements involving

contractual or other financial obligations. Volunteers are only authorized to act as representatives of River Valleys as specifically indicated within their position descriptions.

## Training

Training is offered to help volunteers gain the skills and knowledge to provide exemplary Girl Scout programming. All volunteers are required to complete the GSUSA Volunteer Orientation to Girl Scouting. Adult volunteers working directly with girls are required to complete a Fast Start Meeting (one adult per troop) and Leadership Essentials. Detailed information on adult learning requirements can be found on the River Valleys website at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org). Training is developed to accommodate adult learners and is offered through various approaches: facilitated learning sessions, online or self-studies. Volunteers who work directly with girls should complete the required adult learning sessions within four months after the first day of appointment. Additional training is available to volunteers working with girls on particular activities such as outdoor cooking, camping, and archery. Detailed information can be found at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org).

## Climate and Safety

River Valleys is committed to an environment and climate in which all relationships are characterized by dignity, respect, courtesy and equitable treatment, including relationships between volunteers, volunteers and staff members, volunteers and parents/guardians and volunteers and girls. River Valleys also maintains environments that are free of child abuse and neglect. Under these basic tenets, the policy is divided into six sections: working with children, safety standards, background check, discriminatory harassment, sexual harassment and conflict management.

## Working with Children

### **Prohibition of maltreatment of minors:**

River Valleys provides an environment for all girls that is free of child abuse, exploitation and neglect, and safeguards the health and well-being of girls. River Valleys will not tolerate any behavior that may physically, emotionally or sexually abuse, exploit or neglect girls, or put girls' safety at risk. Conduct prohibited by this policy includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexual advances toward girls
- Touching girls in a sexual way
- Any display or demonstration of sexual activity in the presence of girls, including but not limited to kissing, etc.
- Exhibitionism or voyeurism in the presence of girls
- Involvement of girls in sexual activities
- Use of sexual materials or objects in the presence of girls except as part of an approved education curriculum (to be approved by each girl's parent/guardian)
- Infliction of physical injury on a girl other than by accidental means
- Use of physical restraint or force on a girl that exceeds the amount necessary to prevent harm to the girl or others
- Threatening to inflict physical injury or use excessive restraint or force on a girl
- Intentional, reckless or negligent failure to provide adequate safety measures, care and supervision of girls during Girl Scout activities

- Emotional maltreatment of girls including, but not limited to, verbal abuse or verbal attacks such as comments that berate, belittle or demean; comments that tend to stigmatize or victimize; and name-calling

### **Reporting child abuse or neglect:**

As a matter of River Valleys policy, any volunteer who has reason to believe that a Girl Scout is being abused physically or sexually, or neglected, must immediately report the information to the following:

- Minnesota: Local child protection, police department or county sheriff's office
- Wisconsin: The county Department of Health and Family Services, the sheriff or police department
- Iowa: The Iowa Department of Human Services, county attorney or law enforcement agency

## **Safety Standards**

The Girl Scout program largely rests with River Valleys volunteers. All volunteers must be thoroughly familiar with the information in "Chapter 4: Safety-Wise" and be responsible for ensuring that all Girl Scout activities meet required safety standards.

No animals, including service dogs, may be brought onto River Valleys properties by a service unit, troop or non-Girl Scout group/organization without prior council authorization.

No weapons may be brought onto River Valleys properties by a service unit, troop or non-Girl Scout group/organization without prior council authorization.

## **Background Check Policy Statement**

In order to ensure the safety and well-being of the girl members of River Valleys, River Valleys has the right to disqualify or restrict the duties of any person who has been convicted of certain crimes, who has pleaded guilty or no contest to certain crimes, who has been placed on probation or deferred adjudication for certain crimes, and/or who resides on the same premises as a registered sex offender.

The criminal background search is one component of the River Valleys volunteer screening procedure, the goal of which is to screen prospective adult volunteers and place capable and qualified adults in all operational positions. Prospective River Valleys volunteers must complete and sign the volunteer application authorizing River Valleys to conduct a criminal background search. Without a completed and signed volunteer application, a person cannot serve in or be appointed to a volunteer position with River Valleys.

River Valleys will conduct a criminal background search on new volunteers every year and on all volunteers every three years.

For the 2011-2012 membership year, ALL volunteers will be required to complete the background check process.

The primary concern of River Valleys is to safeguard the safety and best interests of its girl members. Below is a list of criminal offenses that will disqualify a person from volunteer participation in River Valleys, as well as the process used to determine disqualification of a person from volunteer participation.

## Criminal Background Check Procedure

**Application and authorization form:** Volunteers must complete and sign a volunteer application which provides reference information and authorization for River Valleys to verify information provided on the volunteer application.

**Online background check:** Volunteers must complete an online background check to process a criminal history and sex offender record check. The background check will determine eligibility to volunteer with the Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin River Valleys. It is free and accessed through a third-party vendor on the River Valleys website at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org). The user name is GIRLSCOUTS and password is SCOUTS999. Both are case sensitive.

**Accuracy of application and authorization form:** Providing false information on the application, including driver's license number, Social Security number or date of birth, is grounds for automatic exclusion from participation in River Valleys regardless of the result of the criminal background search.

## Disqualification from Volunteer Participation

The following rules shall apply if River Valleys learns (via a criminal background search or otherwise) that a prospective volunteer has been convicted of, has pleaded guilty to, has received adjudication for, or has pleaded no contest to one of the following crimes.

### **Automatic disqualification:**

- Crimes against children
- Felony offenses against persons
- Felony offenses against a family member
- Crimes defined as public indecency
- Crimes involving the use of weapons
- Any violent crime
- Any felony drug-related offense
- Any offense involving driving under the influence, driving while intoxicated or equivalent within the five (5) year period preceding the background check
- Any felony conviction within the five (5) year period preceding the background check
- Residing on the same premises as a registered sex offender\*

*\*Registered sex offenders are not eligible for membership in Girl Scouts of the USA and may not participate in any capacity with Girl Scouts. Any adult living on the premises with a registered sex offender may participate only as a parent/guardian.*

### **Possible disqualification:**

For all other criminal offenses, or felony convictions older than the five-year period preceding the background check, River Valleys shall review the applicant's situation on a case-by-case basis. The decision whether to allow service shall be within the discretion of River Valleys. Factors to be considered by River Valleys in making such determinations include, but are not limited to, the nature and severity of the criminal conduct, the position for which the person seeks to volunteer, the length of time since the criminal conduct occurred, the circumstances

under which the crime was committed, the degree of rehabilitation, the likelihood that the person will commit the crime again, and the number of crimes committed by the prospective volunteer.

### **Confidentiality:**

River Valleys will maintain the confidentiality of all criminal background search information, including information regarding disqualification decisions.

## **Volunteer Grievance**

A grievance is a complaint that policies and/or procedures related to a volunteer's position are not being administered properly. If a volunteer feels that the policies and/or procedures related to a volunteer's position are not being administered properly, she/he may use the council's volunteer grievance procedure.

**Procedure:** While serious conflicts are rare among positively motivated volunteers in Girl Scouting, disagreements can result in uncomfortable relationships. We encourage people in conflict to talk to each other openly and calmly. If an individual feels the need for help resolving a conflict, the circumstances should be discussed with the immediate supervisor and all parties involved. If a solution is not reached by this group, the unresolved conflict should be taken to the next level.

## **Discriminatory Harassment Policy**

It is the policy of River Valleys that our volunteers enjoy an environment free of discrimination and discriminatory harassment. Accordingly, all forms of discriminatory harassment are strictly prohibited. Anyone found to have violated this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

This policy refers to discriminatory harassment. Discriminatory harassment is harassment based on race, color, creed, religion, age, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, status regarding public assistance, or membership or activity in a local commission.

Any discriminatory harassment action based on the above criteria by an employee or volunteer toward another that has the effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's volunteer performance and creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment will not be tolerated. It could include, for example:

- The display of written materials or pictures that are offensive to gender or to racial, ethnic or religious groups, or to persons who have a different sexual orientation.
- Verbal abuse, jokes or insults directed at members of the opposite sex, members of a particular racial, ethnic or religious group, or people who have a different sexual orientation.

## **Responding to Discriminatory Harassment**

Any volunteer who believes that she/he has been subject to discriminatory harassment should make her/his concerns known by:

1. Telling the person engaging in the harassing conduct or communication that the conduct or communication is offensive, is against this policy, and must stop.
2. Advising her/his supervisor, the CEO, or any other member of River Valleys' management of the incident(s). This option should be used if an individual does not wish to communicate directly with the person whose conduct or communication is offensive, or if direct communication has been unsuccessful.

All complaints of prohibited harassment are investigated promptly and impartially. If it is determined that a violation of this policy has occurred, appropriate action up to and including discharge or other disciplinary action will be taken. The type of action taken will be determined by the severity, frequency and nature of the offense, as well as other relevant considerations.

## Retaliation

No retaliation will occur because a volunteer has, in good faith, reported an incident of suspected discriminatory harassment.

If any volunteer is found to have violated this policy, she or he will be terminated from her or his assignment immediately and may be reported to the appropriate authorities.

## Sexual Harassment Policy

One particular category of discriminatory harassment is sexual harassment. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct or communication that is sexual in nature when:

- Submission to such conduct or communication is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of volunteer service
- Submission to or rejection of that conduct or communication by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting such individual's volunteer service and/or that the conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's volunteer service, or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

**Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:**

- Sex-oriented verbal "kidding," abuse or joking
- Subtle or overt pressure for sexual activity
- Intentionally brushing against another's body
- Demands for sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment or threats concerning an individual's volunteer status

Sexual harassment can be perpetrated by both men and women and may be directed at the same or opposite sex.

## Conflict Management Policy

River Valleys staff members will work to resolve conflicts between volunteers and staff members in an equitable manner consistent with its policies and procedures. Additionally, River Valleys is committed to the timely resolution of conflicts between volunteers and between volunteers and Girl Scout adult family members. Girls' welfare is River Valleys' highest priority in resolving conflicts among adults, and River Valleys will resolve such conflicts in the context of the values, traditions and purposes of Girl Scouting as stated in the Constitution of GSUSA.

## Conflict of Interest

At times, volunteers may be faced with situations where the decisions they make in their volunteer capacity may conflict with their own personal or family interests. An actual or potential conflict of interest occurs when a volunteer is in a position to influence a decision involving River Valleys which may result in a personal gain or benefit to the volunteer or the volunteer's relatives or in a gain or benefit to a business or other organization which is owned or managed by the volunteer or the volunteer's relatives.

If a volunteer is in a position to influence a decision involving River Valleys which may result in an actual or potential conflict of interest, the volunteer must report the actual or potential conflict of interest to a member of River Valleys management and must not participate in or influence the decision without prior written consent of a member of River Valleys management.

# Volunteer Essentials 2011–2012 Chapter 7: Girl Scout Shops and Camp Locations

Come and visit one of our many River Valleys Girl Scout Shop locations! We carry a complete selection of Girl Scout official insignia—uniforms, patches and pins, books and other Girl Scout merchandise. In addition, we have River Valleys’ own line of apparel and gift items for girls, leaders, families and Girl Scout alumnae. The River Valleys Shops are pleased to stock a fabulous selection of gift items and books for both girls and adults, as well as merchandise that supports the themes and mission of Girl Scouts.

Stop in, browse and get acquainted with the friendly helpful staff. To purchase Basics in a Bag, River Valleys’ starter kits for every girl, shop online 24/7 at [GirlScoutsRV.org](http://GirlScoutsRV.org) or stop into one of our convenient shops listed below.

For pick-up orders, allow two (2) business days after your order is placed. You may also fax in your order to any of our locations. Order forms are also available on our website.

## Girl Scout Shop Locations and Shop Hours

<p><b>St. Paul Service Center (headquarters)</b>            400 Robert Street South            St. Paul, MN 55107            800-845-0787            Fax: 651-227-7533            8:30 a.m.–5 p.m.            Shop: September–May            Mondays, 9:30 a.m.–7 p.m.            Tuesday–Friday, 9:30 a.m.–5 p.m.            First Saturday of the month, 9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.            Shop: June 4–September 4            Tuesday–Friday, 9:30 a.m.–5 p.m.  <a href="#">View in larger map</a></p>	<p><b>Mankato Satellite Store*</b>            1872 Madison Avenue            Suite A            Mankato, MN 56001            800-845-0787            8:30 a.m.–5 p.m.            Shop: September–June            Tuesday, call by noon Monday to order            Hours to be announced            Closed June 4–September 4  <a href="#">View in larger map</a></p> <p>*New Satellite Store opened in 2011</p>
<p><b>Brooklyn Center Service Center</b>            5601 Brooklyn Boulevard            Brooklyn Center, MN 55429            800-845-0787            Fax: 763-535-7524            8:30 a.m.–5 p.m.            Shop: September–May            Mondays, 9:30 a.m.–7 p.m.            Tuesday–Friday, 9:30 a.m.–5 p.m.            Second Saturday of the month, 9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.            Shop: June 4–September 4            Tuesday–Friday, 9:30 a.m.–5 p.m.</p>	<p><b>Northfield Service Center</b>            1025 North Highway 3            Northfield, MN 55057            800-845-0787            Fax: 507-645-6605            8:30 a.m.–5 p.m.            Shop: Wednesday, call by noon Tuesday to order            September–June            9 a.m.–5 p.m.            Closed June 4–September 4  <a href="#">View in larger map</a></p>

<a href="#">View in larger map</a>	
<p><b>Burnsville Satellite Store</b>  Wood Park Office Building  1000 East 146th Street, Suite 119  Burnsville, MN 55337  651-251-1206  Fax: 651-227-7533  8:30 a.m.–5 p.m.  Shop: Wednesday, call by noon Tuesday to order  10 a.m.–5 p.m.  Closed June 4–September 4  <a href="#">View in larger map</a></p>	<p><b>Redwood Falls Service Center</b>  809 East Bridge Street  Redwood Falls, MN 56283  800-845-0787  8:30–5 p.m.  Shop: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday  9 a.m.–5 p.m.  (Closed Tuesdays)  <a href="#">View in larger map</a></p>
<p><b>Chanhassen Satellite Store</b>  Klein Bank Building  600 West 78th Street, Suite 10D  Chanhassen, MN 55317  763-971-4101 or 800-845-0787  Fax: 763-535-7524  8:30 a.m.–5 p.m.  Shop: Tuesday, call by noon Monday to order  10 a.m.–5 p.m.  Closed June 4–September 4  <a href="#">View in larger map</a></p>	<p><b>Rochester Service Center</b>  4228 8 th Street Southwest  Rochester, MN 55902  800-845-0787  Fax: 507-288-7702  8:30 a.m.–5 p.m.  Shop: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday  9 a.m.–5 p.m.  (Closed Wednesdays)  <a href="#">View in larger map</a></p>

## Service Centers and Shops Holiday Observances

All shops and service centers will be closed on the following dates in observance of holidays and council all-staff meetings:

- Labor Day**—Monday, September 5, 2011
- Council All-Staff Meeting**—October or November, 2011, (to be announced)
- Thanksgiving**—November 24 and 25, 2011
- Christmas**—December 23–25, 2011 (Council and Shops will close at 3 p.m. December 23; Shops will remain closed through January 2, 2012)
- New Year’s Day**—Monday, January 2, 2012
- Martin Luther King Day**—Monday, January 16, 2012
- President’s Day**—Monday, February 20, 2012
- Council All-Staff Meeting**—Thursday, May 24, 2012
- Council Staff Centennial Celebration**—Friday, May 25, 2012
- Memorial Day**—Monday, May 28, 2012
- Independence Day**—Wednesday, July 4, 2012

## Girl Scout Camp Locations

Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin River Valleys’ camp programs are designed for girl choice and flexibility for families. To meet the interest and needs of girls and parents/guardians, River Valleys will:

- Implement the Girl Scouts of the USA leadership program model
- Make signing up for camp flexible and easy to understand
- Give girls a consistent high quality experience at each Girl Scout camp
- Have girls choose the activities that best fit their interests while at camp

**All girls welcome.** River Valleys' camps and programs are for girls of all abilities! Girls with disabilities or health concerns who can participate in camp activities with some assistance, are welcomed and encouraged to register.

<p><b>Camp Elk River</b>          10775 237th Avenue          Zimmerman, MN 55398          763-441-0169          Open year-round by appointment  <a href="#">View in larger map</a></p>	<p><b>Camp Singing Hills</b>          49496 193rd Avenue          Waterville, MN 56096          507-645-6603  <a href="#">View in larger map</a></p>
<p><b>Camp Lakamaga</b>          12303 Lakamaga Trail North          Marine on St. Croix, MN 55047          651-433-4690          Open year-round by appointment  <a href="#">View in larger map</a></p>	<p><b>Camp Whispering Hills</b>          10655 Resident Camp Road          Houston, MN 55493          507-896-3173  <a href="#">View in larger map</a></p>
<p><b>Camp Lockeslea</b>          6900 East River Road          Fridley, MN 55432  <a href="#">View in larger map</a></p>	<p><b>Sagata</b>          402 Lake Street South          Bayport, MN 55003  <a href="#">View in larger map</a></p>
<p><b>Camp Northwoods</b>          63275 Camp One Road          Mason, WI 54856          715-372-8820  <a href="#">View in larger map</a></p>	<p><b>More Camp Information</b>          For more information on Girl Scout Camps, visit the River Valleys' website: <a href="http://GirlScoutsRV.org">GirlScoutsRV.org</a>.</p>