

MULTICULTURAL GROUPS

Girl Scouts is for *all girls*. Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin River Valleys offers culturally specific groups and opportunities for girls to celebrate their heritage and experience all aspects of Girl Scouting, such as building courage, confidence, and character.

This past year, River Valleys started or continued several community initiatives and programs to reach more than 2,500 underrepresented girls through dozens of culturally specific Girl Scout groups including girls with African American, Hmong, Latina, Muslim, and Somali heritage.

Beta Gamma Girl Scouts (BGGs) is a Girl Scout sorority, based in the Twin Cities metro area, dedicated to the development of African American girls in grades 7-12. BGGs enhances unity and friendships among young African American women by living the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Young African American women participate in leadership and community service activities and pursue their interest in higher education with an annual Historical Black Colleges tour.

Girl Scouts also offers **Hmong Women's Circle (HWC)**, a character-building program that uses an inside-out model to address the needs, concerns, and talents of Hmong female adolescents, in grades 7-12.

Through the **Latinas Initiative** girls in grades K-8 are invited to join one of several conveniently located bilingual troops throughout the Twin Cities metro area, including a special *Chicas Bonitas* group that focuses on traditional Mexican dancing.

Girls in grades 9-12 can participate in a unique in-the-school-day program called **Latinas Unidas**. In Latinas Unidas, girls explore their cultural heritage together in the context of Girl Scouting programs in which they gain leadership skills, develop self-confidence, and build trust in each other. This girl-driven program also offers opportunities for college preparation and covers issues such as self-esteem, self-exploration, health, safety, and wellness.

The **Muslim Initiatives** program gives girls a way to celebrate their American citizenship and enjoy Girl Scouting while respecting their Muslim heritage.

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For instance, at the **Tarek Ibn Ziyad Academy** in the Twin Cities, girls enjoy traditional Girl Scout programs, learn about friendship, working on science and nature projects, and practicing teamwork with organized sports activities.

In southern Minnesota, **Somali Girl Scouts** have a unique opportunity to engage in sports, learn how to work as a team, and take on leadership roles as captains. Their first introduction to organized sports was the Lil' Kickers Jamboree, a non-competitive Girl Scout soccer program. Their uniforms are culturally appropriate dress length jerseys over long shirts and pants, which follows Muslim modesty practices. Respectful of heritage, when they recite the Girl Scout Promise, they substitute the word "God" with "Allah."

These multicultural troops also offer traditional Girl Scout leadership development activities such as camping, arts, science, career exploration, the Cookie Program Activity, badge work, and community service projects.

River Valleys partners with local schools and community-based organization to provide opportunities for multicultural Girl Scout troops to develop personal and leadership skills as they participate in programs and community service projects that improve the lives and environment in their local and global communities.

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