

## a girl's perspective – leadership is being an active participant in life

As a young girl, Brenda Compean had never heard of Girl Scouts. Intrigued by all of the fun that her friend was having with her Latinas Unidas troop – a Girl Scout group geared toward teenage Latinas – she attended a meeting, and has been hooked ever since. “It’s been a lot of fun,” said Brenda. “Girl Scouting isn’t what I expected at all.”

Since joining Girl Scouts as a freshman, Brenda has taken on leadership roles in Latinas Unidas and says she has seen a dramatic difference in herself. “Before I became a Girl Scout, I didn’t do much and I had no outside interests,” said Brenda. “After school, I’d just come home and watch television. My view of life was pretty narrow.”

With Girl Scouts, Brenda discovered that she learns more about herself the more active she becomes in what is happening around her. One of the defining experiences for Brenda was participating as a council delegate. She was chosen by her group to represent other girls and adults as a voting member at River Valleys’ first-ever annual meeting in 2008. One of the many prominent women leaders she met through her experience was Patricia Diaz-Dennis, the first Latina board chair of the National Girl Scout organization. “This was a huge honor for me,” said Brenda. “I realized I had a great Latina role model in Patricia.”

Brenda doesn’t sit back and let life pass her by. She likes to interact with the girls in her troop and the world around her. “In Girl Scouts I feel like I can discuss anything; we are very respectful towards each other,” said Brenda. “I feel like I can tell my Girl Scout friends anything. It’s a bond that I don’t have with my other friends who are not in Girl Scouts.”

She is on a roll. Brenda has set some exciting plans and goals for herself and her troop this year. “I want to go to camp this summer. It’s something I’ve always wanted to do, and now I have the chance with Girl Scouts.” She is also interested in getting more involved in her community. “Girl Scouts has given me the outlet I need to really help out in the community. I’ve always wanted to help out, but until now, I really didn’t know how.”

In addition to their immediate plans, Brenda and the Latinas Unidas members are already actively looking toward their bright futures. They have already toured a few colleges and plan to visit a few more. “College is definitely the path for me,” said Brenda.

Girl Scouts has helped Brenda discover a sense of confidence and belonging that comes from being open to new opportunities, trying new things, and being an active participant in the world around her. Life can be exhilarating. “Girl Scouts has opened my eyes to a whole new world; I can’t wait to get out there and live it.”



*“If it wasn’t for Girl Scouts, I wouldn’t even be looking at college as an option. Because of Girl Scouts, I realized that I can do anything, and I will make a difference.”*

- Girl Scout Brenda Compean  
*(pictured above)*