

dear friends of girl scouts,

September 30, 2008 closed our first full year as Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin River Valleys. It truly has been a remarkable year – one filled with both successes and challenges. In a time of dramatic organizational change, we helped more than 45,000 girl members develop their leadership abilities, discover new skills, connect with others, and take action to make the world a better place.

Although we have a lot to celebrate, the past 12 months have not been without their challenges. One of the big challenges is that the decline in girl membership continues both nationally and locally. River Valleys currently serves one in seven girls. Our long-term goal is to serve one in three girls. In order to achieve this goal, we are looking at new ways to grow our membership by establishing a Girl Scout presence in communities and populations where we may not have had a presence before. To support this increased level of girl membership, we need to have a solid volunteer structure to support it. To this end, we are looking at our volunteer delivery system to better serve all volunteers and support our membership growth, resulting in a stronger Girl Scout Movement in River Valleys.

Another major challenge is the current U.S. economy. This year, the world witnessed Wall Street, the banking and automobile industries, and many other businesses take major financial hits, which has led the United States into a recession. As we head into what is being called the “toughest economy in decades,” we are taking active steps to restructure around our strongest programs, cut costs, and strengthen our balance sheet, while at the same time, we strategically plan for our future.

In this time of change and economic uncertainty, we have not, and will not, lose sight of the reason Girl Scouts exist – to serve girls. These girls are our future leaders – leaders of industry, leaders of business, leaders of arts, and leaders of government. Each one of our 45,000 Girl Scouts is unique. It is her individual background, culture, stories, experiences, and perspectives that makes Girl Scouting a rich experience for everyone. Although girls fondly talk about the fun and friendship they enjoy in Girl Scouts, they often do not immediately recognize, the lifelong skills and leadership experiences they have gained. We do. And as a Girl Scout supporter, we know you do too. This year’s annual report highlights a handful of Girl Scouts who will share “Leadership – a girl’s perspective” as these girls and thousands like them, are living examples of our mission to build girls of “courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.”

Thank you for your continued support of girls and Girl Scouting in our community.



Phyllis A. Willerscheidt

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Board Chair



Linda B. Keene

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Chief Executive Officer