



TAKING ON **MENTAL HEALTH AND LONELINESS** TOGETHER

Loneliness is a national public health epidemic, and it hits girls earliest and hardest. More than half of teen girls report persistent sadness or hopelessness, nearly double the rate of boys. By ages 5–7, 64% of girls already feel lonely.¹

But friendship changes things. More than half of girls ages 5–13 say a friend by their side encourages them to:

52%
try new
things²

52%
talk to a
new kid³

50%
join a new
group⁴

Connection is one of the most powerful protections a girl can have, and Girl Scouts is built to provide it consistently, at every stage of her development.

When girls are in community, everything shifts.

The Girl Scout Effect

Girl Scouts provides a supportive community with age-specific programming that builds friendship, trust, and community at every level:

Daisies (K–1) build emotional resilience and learn how to be part of a community through the Daisy Petal program.

Brownies (Grades 2–3) choose from a variety of programs designed for exploration including Fair Play, Making Friends, Space Science Adventurer, and more.

Juniors (Grades 4–5) build confidence, curiosity, self-care skills, and coping strategies through programs like Knowing My Emotions, Finding My Voice, and Uniquely Us.

To join Girl Scouts or to get involved, visit girlscouts.org

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¹ Girl Scouts of the USA, “Girls as Young as Age Five Feel Lonely and It Takes a Toll on Their Confidence, According to New Research from Girl Scouts of the USA,” news release, May 1, 2024, <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/footer/press-room/2024-press-announcements/mental-health-awareness-month-2024.html>.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.



TAKING ON **PHYSICAL WELLNESS AND BODY IMAGE** TOGETHER

Body image pressure takes root strikingly early. Research finds dissatisfaction emerging in girls as young as five,¹ and from there it compounds.

By ages 8–10,

52%

of girls say they hear negative messages about their bodies from the women in their lives.²

By ages 11–13,

50%

already wish they could change something about themselves.³

Most organizations start too late.

Body image programming typically begins in the tween and teen years, long after the pressure has already taken hold.

When girls learn to appreciate their bodies early, it shifts how they see themselves.

The Girl Scout Effect

Girl Scouts starts early with body image education. In 2025, Girl Scouts launched its Body Appreciation Program for grades K–12, co-developed with leading mental health and youth development organizations. The program helps girls appreciate their bodies for what they can do, set healthy boundaries, and respond to pressure from society, media, and peers.

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¹ Girl Scouts of the USA, "Girl Scouts of the USA and Flamingo Launch Body Appreciation Program as New Research Reveals Body Image Pressures Girls Are Facing at a Young Age," news release, August 12, 2025, <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/footer/press-room/2025-press-announcements/girl-scouts-flamingo-body-appreciation-partnership.html>.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.



TAKING ON **THE VANISHING THIRD SPACE** TOGETHER

Friendship is the number one reason girls join activities.¹

51%

say they join to make new friends.²

45%

say it's to spend time with friends they already have.³

Girl Scouts is where that happens.

The everyday places where girls used to build friendships are disappearing. Afterschool care hasn't returned to pre-pandemic levels, leaving many girls with fewer consistent, supervised spaces to build confidence and friendship.

Lower-income girls have lost the most, with shrinking access to:

afterschool programs

community organizations

library programs

informal neighborhood play

The best way to proactively support girls' growth and confidence is to support them from within their communities.

The Girl Scout Effect

Girl Scouts is one of the few spaces designed specifically for girls' safety, growth, and self-discovery, and one that's accessible in every community. The programming is built for exactly the kind of regular, joyful connection that afterschool spaces used to provide, giving girls trusted adults and the freedom to make real friendships outside the classroom.

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¹ Known, 2024 National Non-Member Survey (internal report, Girl Scouts of the USA, 2024). Unpublished.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.



TAKING ON **DIGITAL LIFE AND FAMILY PRESENCE** TOGETHER

Even at home, girls are competing with a screen for their parents' attention.

64%

of girls ages 8–10 say they have trouble getting a parent's attention because the parent is on their phone.¹

Parents want more help connecting with their daughters beyond screen-time management.

They want more family time together.

*When time together is intentional,
it strengthens the relationships
between girls and parents.*

The Girl Scout Effect

Everything girls do in Girl Scouts, from troop meetings to outings to earning badges, creates structured time where they have the full, undivided attention of trusted adults. These moments give girls and parents a shared reason to put the phones down and reconnect.

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¹ Girl Scouts of the USA, "New Research from Girl Scouts of the USA Finds Girls Turn to Screens Out of Boredom and Fear of Missing Out," news release, December 9, 2025, <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/footer/press-room/2025-press-announcements/girl-scout-screentime-research.html>.



TAKING ON **COMMUNITY, SISTERHOOD, AND BELONGING** TOGETHER

A girl's confidence is shaped by the people around her.

More than

52%

of girls say a friend by their side gives them the courage to try something new, talk to someone new, or join a new group.¹

78%

of girls ages 12–17 say at least one adult outside their household makes a positive difference in their lives.²

Belonging is built over time in the company of people who celebrate girls' unique selves. Community serves as an accelerator for her confidence.

When a girl feels she belongs, she develops the courage to try anything.

The Girl Scout Effect

Girl Scouts provides a sisterhood girls can count on. At the troop level, girls build trust and familiarity with the same peers and adult volunteers over time. At the Movement level, they join a national community over two million strong, with more than 50 million alums across generations. In that model, belonging is the foundation that helps girls feel seen, supported, and connected to something larger than themselves.

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1 Girl Scouts of the USA, "Girls as Young as Age Five Feel Lonely and It Takes a Toll on Their Confidence, According to New Research from Girl Scouts of the USA," news release, May 1, 2024, <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/footer/press-room/2024-press-announcements/mental-health-awareness-month-2024.html>.

2 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "NHIS Child and Teen Data Query," National Health Interview Survey, accessed 2025, https://www.n.cdc.gov/NHISDataQuery-Tool/NHIS_teen/index.html.



TAKING ON **VOICE AND SELF-CONFIDENCE** TOGETHER

36%

of girls want to be described as smart, more than double the 16% who pick pretty.¹

Yet,
58%

of high school girls do not believe they are smart enough for their dream job.²

Girls have no shortage of ambition.

What erodes over time is their trust that the world will take it seriously. Self-confidence is strengthened when girls are heard, respected, and expected to lead.

When a girl believes her voice matters, she leads with it.

The Girl Scout Effect

Girl Scouts build confidence in using their voices through repeated practice. In a girl-led troop model, girls speak up, make decisions, and lead alongside their peers and supportive adults. Through badges, Take Action projects, and Highest Awards, girls get hands-on experience leading change in areas that they care about.

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¹ Girl Scouts of the USA, "Girl Scouts of the USA and Flamingo Launch Body Appreciation Program as New Research Reveals Body Image Pressures Girls Are Facing at a Young Age," news release, August 12, 2025, <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/footer/press-room/2025-press-announcements/girl-scouts-flamingo-body-appreciation-partnership.html>.

² Ruling Our Experiences, The 2024 Girls' Index: Girls & STEM Impact Report (Ruling Our Experiences, 2024), <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62f55ec3c3784d0f3ec88011/t/67d833c6d7b3e4164fda828d/1742222280132/The+2024+Girls%27+Index%E2%84%A2+Girls+%26+STEM+Impact+Report.pdf>.