

Chapter 1: Sharing Your Unique Gifts

No matter how you volunteer with Girl Scouts, your investment of time and energy will pay back tenfold. With your help, girls will be able to identify issues they care about and work with one another to resolve them. Your interests and life experiences make you the perfect person to be a new kind of partner for girls, someone who creates a safe environment where they can work together and each girl feels free to work toward her highest aspirations. Have no doubt: You, and nearly one million other volunteers like you, are helping girls make a lasting impact on the world.

Understanding 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 help girls succeed, 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 volunteering at a camp, 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, because 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 only in cases of emergency is a girl to be alone with only one volunteer. Remember to also check the adult-to-girl ratios in the Quick-Start Guide and the "Safety-Wise" chapter of this handbook.

In *More than 'Smores: Success and Surprises in Girl Scouts Outdoor Experiences*, the Girl Scout Research Institute (GSRI) has described the role of Adult Volunteers:

"Because everything girls do outdoors in Girl Scouts must be supported by an adult, these results speak indirectly to adult volunteers and their preparation. To get girls outdoors more regularly, Girl Scouts need adult volunteers who encourage and promote outdoor experiences. Communicating to volunteers and parents that casual outdoor experiences are effective ways of giving girls opportunities to build competencies and try new things may be the key to opening the gateway for all Girl Scouts to participate in the outdoors on a more regular basis." (2014, p.27)

The *Blue Book of Basic Documents*

A must read for all volunteers is the *Blue Book of basic documents 2015*. This is a quick referral to those parts of the official documents, policies and procedures of the Girl Scout organization that you need to know about in your role as a Girl Scout volunteer. The *Blue Book of basic documents 2015* can be found under the **Volunteers** section of the council website.

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 a partnership with girls so that their activities are girl-led, allow them to learn by doing, and allow 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 with girls' parents or guardians on a regular and ongoing basis through a variety of tools, including email, 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 group
- 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 Scouts of the USA makes no attempt to define or interpret the word "God" in the Girl Scout Promise. It looks to individual members to establish for themselves the nature of their spiritual beliefs. When making the Girl Scout Promise, individuals may substitute wording appropriate to their own spiritual beliefs for the word "God." **Note:** This disclaimer appears in the National Leadership Journey adult guides, but not in the girls' books. It is included here as a reminder to you, as a volunteer, that it's your responsibility to be sensitive to the spiritual beliefs of the girls in your group and to make sure that everyone in the group feels comfortable and included in Girl Scouting. Please feel free to share this information with girls' families.

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 Volunteer 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 of each Journey gives you tips and guidance for creating a friends-and-family network to support you all along the way.

Each troop needs at least two, non-related adult volunteers registered with a **position code of 01 or 02**. At least one adult volunteer must be registered with the 01 code. They will have access to all troop records using the online troop management tool in personify eBiz. Most troops operate with a team of volunteers, who are registered with the 01/02 code. Adult volunteers decide among themselves which duties and responsibilities they are assuming in the management of the troop. Volunteers should work together and frequently evaluate how the division of responsibilities is working. Other members of your volunteer support team may want to register with the **03 position code**.

The other volunteers on 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
- Building girls outdoor skills and experiences
- Managing group records

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. You might also discuss:

- When important milestones will happen (Girl Scout cookie activities, field trips, travel plans, events, dates for other opportunities) and how long the planning process will take
- When and where to meet as a group of volunteers, 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

Remember to call on your volunteer support team. This team can help you observe a meeting, assign you a buddy, help with registration forms, assist you with opening a bank account, plan your first meeting, and so on. Also plan to attend support meetings—usually held several times throughout the year—that provide excellent opportunities to learn from other volunteers. Members of your volunteer support team may want to register with the **03 position code**. Please remember that all adults volunteering with girls—including providing transportation, assisting with troop activities, handling of troop funds or chaperoning field trips—must have a completed volunteer application on file and complete an updated background check every three years. This can be done online at gswise.org.

Taking Advantage of Learning Opportunities

Girl Scouts strives to provide you with the necessary information to successfully manage your group of girls and to let you know how and where you can get additional information on certain topics when you want to learn more. Volunteer learning is offered in a variety of ways to best meet your unique learning styles: written resources, face-to-face learning, interactive online learning—and additional methods are being developed and tested all the time.

Learn about Girl Scouts online

There's a good chance you've already logged on to <http://training.girlscouts.org> to watch Girl Scouting 101 or Volunteering for Girl Scout Series and Events, a self-paced, online orientations to Girl Scouting from GSUSA. Those online sessions and *Volunteer Essentials* are designed to give you the information you need to start working with girls. They're always available; think of them as references you can use whenever you need them.

GSWISE has developed online trainings to better support our busy volunteers.

Courses available online are:

- *Council 101 – Welcome to GSWISE*
- *Daisy Leadership Essentials*
- *Brownie Leadership Essentials*
- *Junior Leadership Essentials*
- *Cadette-Senior-Ambassador Leadership Essentials*
- *Planning the Overnight Experience*
- *Troop Finance*

Adult Volunteer Learning & Development at GSWISE

This section for Girl Scout adult volunteers describes a variety of learning opportunities to help each volunteer working within the Girl Scout program. Progression is a key concept in the Girl Scout program. It allows girls to build upon and improve existing skills. This is also an integral part of adult learning. Trained adult volunteers can make a positive difference in the lives of girls. Some guidelines for learning opportunities within our council are explained below. As an adult volunteer, you need to attend the required courses before selecting other learning opportunities to meet your individual needs and the needs of your troop or specific position.

Who Needs Adult Learning?

All adult volunteers in troop leadership positions (**01 or 02**) are required to complete a step-by-step process:

1. Complete both the online volunteer application and background check. If you do not have access to a computer, a printed *Volunteer Application and Background Check Authorization Form* is available from your membership manager or at any resource center.
2. Register as a Girl Scout member (\$15 annually)
3. Complete the course *Council 101: Welcome to Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast*.
4. Complete the course *Leadership Essentials* for the appropriate grade level (Girl Scout Daisy - Ambassador).

Adult Learning Policies for Courses

Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast requires new troop leaders and advisors to complete the course *Council 101: Welcome to GSWISE* before meeting with their troops and to complete the course *Leadership Essentials* within four weeks of assuming leadership. First Aid/CPR and adult enrichments may be required for troop activities. Adult volunteers, other than troop leaders and advisors, may become the qualified adults and attend these courses. Additional courses for indoor and outdoor activities are also available. Check out the *Training Timeline for Girl Scout Volunteers* located on our website to help you plan ahead.

Financial Assistance

There is no fee for the *Council 101: Welcome to GSWISE* or *Leadership Essentials* courses. Certain courses such as First Aid/CPR, outdoor training, and some adult enrichments may require a fee. A limited amount of financial assistance is available for courses; to request financial assistance, please contact our director of recruitment and development or any volunteer training and development manager.

Course Registration, Attendance, and Records

Training courses are open to all registered adults and Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors who serve in a leadership position. At these valuable trainings, you will learn concepts that you can apply to your troop and to your everyday life. A minimum of five participants is required in order to facilitate a classroom learning course. To avoid cancellation, please register as soon as possible. Participants are asked to arrive on time and stay for the duration of the course. Upon completion of courses, attendance is recorded. **Please notify the office at training@gswise.org if you will not be at a training you have registered to attend.**

Registration options: Online: gswise.org Email: training@gswise.org Phone: 800-565-4475

Other Volunteer Development Opportunities

Adults can gain experience in managing other volunteers, planning, organizing, public speaking, training, and time management by assuming the responsibilities of an administrative volunteer. Opportunities include school or site organizer, cookie support team member, adult learning facilitator, and more. Contact a volunteer training and development manager for details.

Adult Learning Opportunities

For the most current course dates and locations, visit the council website. Additional courses are added throughout the year.

Council 101: Welcome to Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast (GSWISE)

This is the first step for leaders and advisors to gain a general understanding of Girl Scouting and introduce them to the structure, policies, and processes of Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast.

Who should attend: All newly appointed leaders, advisors, and co-leaders.

Fee: None

Note: An on-line training is available on our website for those unable to attend the classroom sessions.

Leadership Essentials

Leadership Essentials is the second requirement for leadership training. In this training you will get an overview of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, explore your specific Girl Scout grade level program, learn about progression in Girl Scouting, and how to ensure outcomes.

Who should attend: All newly appointed and bridging (moving to the next level) troop leaders and advisors.

Prerequisite for new leaders: *Council 101: Welcome to GSWISE*

Fee: None

Note: An on-line training is available on our website for those unable to attend the classroom sessions.

GSUSA Volunteer Orientation

All newly appointed volunteers in positions other than leader and advisor are asked to complete the online GSUSA Volunteering for Girl Scouts Series and Events. Volunteers in 03 positions will gain a general understanding of Girl Scouting—its purpose, values, and history. The GSUSA Volunteer Orientation is an online training and can be accessed at any time via our website. If you do not have access to the Internet, please contact the Volunteer Development department at 800-565-4475 for other options to complete this orientation.

Troop Finance

This Troop Finance online training covers the seven lessons of Opening a Troop Account, Managing the Troop Account, ACH Procedures, Financial Assistance, Annual Troop Cash Report, Money-Earning Basics, and Girl Scout Activity Insurance. These lessons can be taken as a whole for better understanding of all the aspects of troop finance or specific lessons may be taken as needed. See the council website for this enrichment.

WISE Leader Continuous Learning Series

Webinar Learning opportunities for all volunteers and parents! Topics vary by month. Visit gswise.org for a list of monthly topics.

Register online using Personify eBiz to receive your confirmation email with a link to the webinar.

Special Events

From time to time, special training events are planned for new and returning leaders and other troop volunteers. For announcements and specific information about upcoming events, please go to gswise.org.

Anti-Bullying Patch Program

When Words Hurt...—Patch program for girls in grades K–3

When Friends Are Not Friends—Patch program for girls in grades 4–5

Fee: None

Materials are included in convenient take out boxes that are available at all resource centers. Activities help girls recognize what behaviors are positive and caring and what behaviors cross the line. Girls explore the roles of the bully, target, and bystander. Girls will understand how to stand up for themselves and others. They will also learn how to create healthy relationships. Use these at troop meetings, camping trips, etc. Participation patches are also available in the resource centers for \$1.50 each. If you cannot wait to get started, download the leader guides under the **Volunteers** section of the council website.

First Aid and CPR Training

Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast offers first aid and CPR courses to comply with GSUSA standards, as described in Chapter 4 of *Volunteer Essentials*. 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. **Note:** 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 review Chapter 4 for more information.

The presence of a first-aider is required for many group activities (outside of the regular meeting space). The course required to be a first-aider is one that offers standard first-aid and CPR. Try to take age-specific CPR training. That is, take child CPR if you are 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 Scout requirements.

Note: The following healthcare providers may also serve as first-aiders: physician, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, paramedic, military medic, and emergency medical

technician. Volunteers may be required to provide copies of cards and/or certificates that show current completion of First Aid and CPR training taken with a provider outside of GSWISE course offerings.

For the most current dates and locations, visit the council website. Courses are offered by PULSES.

If you are unable to attend a session for which you are registered, please cancel by emailing the council office at training@gswise.org.

Medic First Aid, CPR and AED

Course contains step-by-step, hands-on training that allows participants to respond effectively in emergency and life-threatening situations.

Who should attend: At least one registered adult who accompanies a troop/group on activities or overnight trips must be certified in first aid and CPR.

Fee: \$42 per person

Note: Please wear comfortable clothing.

Additional Course Offerings for First Aid and CPR

A number of providers sponsor first aid and CPR certification courses in many communities within our council. When looking for CPR training, be sure the course requires a test (not attendance only). You can check with local chapters of these organizations for course availability:

- American Red Cross www.redcross.org \ux\take-a-class
- EMP International (Basic first aid plus American Heart Association CPR)
- American Heart Association Heart Saver First Aid CPR AED classes

Camping and Outdoor Training Courses

Camping is a favorite activity and a tradition in Girl Scouts. It is required that a trained adult be present for planning and participating in camp skills training so it will be a safe, fun, and educational experience. Please refer to our web site for trainings of planning the overnight experience (online option available) and camp skills training as well as *Venture Out!* an interactive outdoor volunteer resource.

Archery

Become certified to teach archery at day camp or to your troop, using the council's archery equipment. Certification is good for three years. Eight-hour courses are scheduled in the spring.

Who should attend: Adults and Girl Scout teens, 16 years and older, may attend this training and become certified. Teens still need a certified adult with them to teach archery.

Fee: \$25 per person includes materials and certification.

GPS (Global Positioning Systems)

Learn how to use a GPS so your troop can participate in geocaching—a worldwide scavenger hunt. Courses include instruction on using the council-owned GPS units as well as participating in a geocache scavenger hunt. Courses are scheduled on request. Contact the program department for more information.

Who should attend: Adults and Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors

Fee: None

Red Cross Small Craft Safety–Canoe Certification

Canoe certification by at least one adult is required to take girls canoeing.

Canoe Skills: Participants are expected to be experienced paddlers and will be tested on paddling strokes to navigate your canoe in a straight line, make turns, paddle backwards, and stop.

Canoe Safety: Participants will learn what to do when an emergency occurs on the water including self-rescue as well as rescuing others from falls overboard and capsized canoes. Participants must demonstrate these skills in the water. Participants will also learn how to plan and prepare for canoe trips.

Once certified, you may rent the council canoes to use at our properties with water. You may also need a lifeguard.

Who should attend: At least one adult from each troop planning a canoe trip. Course requires swimming while wearing a PFD, kneeling in a canoe, re-entering a canoe from deep water (upper arm/body strength), and moderately heavy lifting. This course is designed for adults who will be responsible for the safety of others while canoeing. Girls with good paddling skills age 15 and older are welcome to participate but they will not be considered the trained volunteer for the canoe trip.

Fee: \$25 per person includes materials, certification, and a We Paddle Southern Wisconsin booklet

Knowing How Much You're Appreciated

Whatever your volunteer position, your hard work means the world to girls, to your council staff, and to Girl Scouts of the USA. We're calling on all members of society to help girls reach their full potential, and you've answered that call. So thank you, from the bottom of our hearts.

Just as you'll receive support throughout your volunteering experience, when you reach the end of the term you signed up for, you'll talk with your support team about the positive parts of your experience, as well as the challenges you faced, and discuss whether you want to return to this position or try something new. The end of your troop year, camp season, overseas trip, or series/event session is just the beginning of your next adventure with Girl Scouting!

If you're ready for more opportunities to work with girls, be sure to let your council support team know how you'd like to be a part of girls' lives in the future—whether in the same position or in other, flexible ways. Are you ready to organize a series or event? take a trip? work with girls at camp? work with a troop of girls as a year-long volunteer? share your skills at a council office, working behind the scenes? The possibilities are endless, and can be tailored to fit your skills and interests.

National Appreciation Weeks

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). In addition, Girl Scouts also celebrates **Volunteers Make a Difference Week**, in conjunction with Make a Difference Day, which takes place during the weekend in autumn that we set our clocks back.

Year Pins: Membership Numeral Guards and Years of Service

Each year Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast presents Membership Numeral Guards and Years of Service Pins in five-year increments (5, 10, 15, and higher) to currently registered volunteers.

Membership Numeral Guards represent combined years as a Girl Scout girl and adult member. Years of Service Pins represent years as a Girl Scout volunteer. To receive a pin, complete the sign-up sheet at your winter service area meetings, email training@gswise.org or complete the *Year Pin Request Form* found on the council website under forms. Pins are given out in spring at your service area meetings/celebrations.

Girl Scout Council and National Awards



Volunteers do so much for Girl Scouting and are an important component to its success. The formal recognition process established by Girl Scouts of the USA can be used to recognize their outstanding contributions. Take a moment to nominate an outstanding individual or group for a national or council award.

Descriptions of awards, nomination procedures, and forms are located on the council website. Thoughtful consideration should be given to determine the appropriate recognition for each individual or group and situation. Carefully read the award descriptions and examples of potential candidates to find the closest match to your candidate's efforts. Then check with the procedures for each nomination. You will need to ask others who are familiar with the nominee's work to submit letters of endorsement, make sure you address the specific facts of what the person has done to fulfill award requirements in the last three years. If they have received an award in the last three years give specific examples since then. Remember that a different person must prepare the nomination and each letter of endorsement. A candidate nominated for an award needs to be a registered member, have completed the appropriate training, and performed at a level exceeding expectations for the position.

Nominations and all supporting endorsements are due on or before February 2, 2016.

National and council awards are reviewed by volunteer task groups and are presented at the council's Annual Meeting or service area celebrations. If you have any questions about adult awards, please contact the director of volunteer recruitment and development at 800-565-4475.

Council Award

Marion Chester Read Award—recognizes an individual who has received the Thanks Badge (see National Awards) and is still showing significant support to the Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast.

National Awards

Volunteer of Excellence Award—recognizes those volunteers who have contributed outstanding service while partnering directly with girls in any pathway to implement the Girl Scout Leadership Experience through use of the National Program Portfolio or who have contributed outstanding service in support of the council's mission delivery to girl and adult members.

Appreciation Pin—recognizes a registered Girl Scout adult who provides outstanding service to at least one geographic/service area or program delivery audience.

Honor Pin—recognizes a registered Girl Scout adult who has provided outstanding service to two or more geographic/service areas or program delivery audiences.

President's Award—recognizes a service-delivery team that has significantly contributed to meeting one or more of the council's mission-delivery goals.

Thanks Badge—recognizes outstanding service benefiting the total council or entire Girl Scout organization.

Thanks Badge II—is given when the candidate has contributed to provide distinguished service after receiving the Thanks Badge, and has increased her/his impact by expanding awareness of Girl Scouting, within and beyond the council.

