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.

A must read for all volunteers is the *Blue Book of Basic Documents 2012.* 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 2012*** can be found on the council website.

Your Responsibilities as a Girl Scout Volunteer

- 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 interests/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.

Adult volunteers decide among themselves which duties and responsibilities they are assuming in the management of the troop. Each troop needs at least two, non-related adult volunteers registered with a 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
- 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, or chaperoning field trips, etc.-must have a completed volunteer application on file and complete an updated background check every three years. This can be done online in one easy step at www.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, our self-paced, online orientations to Girl Scouting. If you haven't, please contact your local council for your passwords. Those online sessions and *Volunteer Essentials* are designed to give you all of 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.

Adult Volunteer Learning and 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 registered adult volunteers in troop leadership positions **(01 or 02)** are required to complete a step-by-step process:

1. Complete the online volunteer application and background check. If you do not have access to a computer, a printed *Volunteer Application* is available from your membership manager or at any resource center.
2. Complete *Council 101*: *Welcome to Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast.*
3. Complete *Leadership Essentials* for the appropriate grade level (Girl Scout Daisy through Ambassador).

Adult Learning Policies for Courses

Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast requires new troop leaders and advisors to complete *Council 101: Welcome to GSWISE* before meeting with their troops and to complete the *Leadership Essentials* course within three months of assuming leadership. First Aid/CPR and adult enrichments are also offered and 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.

Financial Assistance

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

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

Key Things to Remember about Training

- Follow registration procedures and bring necessary books and materials.
- Be considerate to others by being on time.
- Please notify the office if you will not be at a training you've registered to attend.
- Please do not bring children to any adult learning course, unless the course or event offers childcare.
- An important part of Girl Scouting is having fun. This should be true at training, too.
- Adult learning facilitators are volunteers.

Other Volunteer Development Opportunities

Adults can gain experience in managing others, 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 your membership 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 GSWISE

Council 101: Welcome to GSWISE 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: Independent study is available on our website for those unable to attend the classroom sessions that are offered.

Leadership Essentials

Leadership Essentials is the last step in 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 troop leaders and advisors.
Prerequisite for new leaders: *Council 101: Welcome to GSWISE*
Fee: None
Note: A GSUSA online training is available for your grade level training, *Girl Scouting 101*, for those unable to attend a classroom session. This online training can be found on the council website.

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 www.gswise.org.

Fall 2013 Leader Training Saturdays

Each event will include *Council 101: Welcome to GSWISE* plus grade-level *Leadership Essentials* training sessions, resource center shopping opportunities, membership tables, program information, and product program activities information, all participants will receive a Girl Scout canvas bag as a thank you gift. Check our website for dates and locations.

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 orientation.

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).

First-aider (Level 1)

The presence of a first-aider is required for many group activities. This course offers standard first-aid and CPR, preferably with a focus on children.

> ***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 are 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.

If you are unable to attend a session for which you are registered, please cancel by calling the council office. For the most current dates and locations, visit the council website. Courses are offered by PULSES.

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:** $40 per person
> **Note:** Please wear comfortable clothing.

Additional Course Offerings

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 800-33-SAFETY
- American Heart Association Heartsaver CPR AED classes
- EMP International 800-246-5101 (Basic first aid plus American Heart Association CPR)

Camping and Outdoor Courses

Camping is a favorite activity and tradition in Girl Scouts. It is required that a trained adult volunteer be present for planning and participating in troop camping so it will be a safe, fun, and educational experience. It is advisable to take required outdoor training well in advance of any anticipated troop overnight and/or camping trip. Time for planning and preparing with girls is essential to a successful trip. The following courses meet *Safety Activity Checkpoints* guidelines and prepare participants for a successful overnight camping trip with girls. For the most current dates and locations, visit the council website.

Planning the Overnight Experience

This course includes the ABCs of planning an overnight camping trip with a Girl Scout troop. Topics include how to involve girls in meal and program planning, what equipment to bring, use of kaper charts, safety issues, and several activity/theme ideas. Information specific to the various GSWISE properties and how to register to use those facilities is also covered. Information about using a fireplace is included but no training is given for building or cooking over outdoor fires. Cooking over indoor fireplaces is not permitted at Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast properties.

Who should attend: At least one adult for each troop or group having an overnight camping trip.
Fee: None
Note: Independent study is available on our website for those unable to attend classroom sessions.

Camp Skills for Outdoors

This is a two-part course including a preplanning session and an outdoor camp experience. This course includes outdoor skills training and additional outdoor program information.

Who should attend: At least one adult from each troop or group that is planning on building an outdoor fire or teaching/using outdoor skills (i.e., knots, knife safety, cooking over a campfire).
Note: The *Camp Skills for Outdoors* sessions are paired, an individual needs to attend the two that are scheduled together in order to receive credit for the complete course.
Prerequisite: *Planning the Overnight Experience*.
Fee: Varies based on the decisions made at the pre-planning session.

Additional GSWISE Adult Learning Opportunities

Anti-Bullying Initiatives

- ***When Words Hurt…***—Patch program for girls in grades K–3
- ***When Friends Are Not Friends***—Patch program for girls in grades 4–5

These 90-minute trainings provide Girl Scout troop volunteers with activities to take back to their troops. 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.

Fee: None

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 and fall.

Who should attend: Adults and Girl Scout teens, 16 years and older, may attend this training and become certified. Certified teens still need a certified adult with them to teach archery.
Fee: $25 per person includes materials and certification.

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.

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 in fall and spring. For the most current dates and locations, visit www.gswise.org.

Who should attend: Adults and Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors.
Fee: None

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.

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, and then you may add additional comments. 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 December 20, 2013.

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 adult learning at 800-565-4475.

Council Award
Marion Chester Read Award–recognizes an individual who has received the Thanks Badge and/or Thanks Badge II (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 area or program delivery audience.

Honor Pin–recognizes a registered Girl Scout adult who has provided outstanding service to two or more 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 benefitting the total council or entire Girl Scout movement.

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.

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 or you may complete the Year Pin Request form found on the council website. Pins are given out in spring at your service area meetings/celebrations.

Volunteer 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.