Girl Scout Junior troop 4198 in Germantown completed the Brownie Quest Journey as Brownies and continue implementing their take action project today. They began the journey with "Loop the Hoop" and "Pass the Ball, Please" teambuilding activities. They reaffirmed their personal, troop and family values by hunting for eggs which each had a part of the Girl Scout Law written on them, completed a brainstorm activity about their own talents and values, and created family values stars. Through these series of activities, the troop earned their Discovery Key.

Next, the troop developed a Team Agreement, which detailed how they would behave when they worked together as a team. They decided to demonstrate their leadership abilities by helping their families make some healthy choices and keeping them motivated to follow through on their commitments. The final step they took towards earning their Connect Key was to expand their circle of caring, and connect with community members on a take action project.

To earn the last key, they read an ELF adventure story and brainstormed ideas on who could use help in their community and what they could do to address that need. They decided to help end the embarrassment and indignity associated with running out of lunch money. In their community's school system, if a student didn't have the full amount needed to purchase a hot lunch in their account, they would be given a stale piece of bread, some peanut butter, jelly if it was available, and water. It would be obvious to all their classmates that they did not have money in their account, and the quality of the substitute lunch was quite low.

The troop spoke with the lunch room staff, office staff, and the school district's director of food services. Some troop members also attended a PTA meeting to discuss the situation and increase awareness of the shame involved in receiving the alternate lunch. As a result of their actions, some of the policies surrounding lunch accounts were changed. In the past, parents received a notice by email when the balance in their family account dropped to \$5.00 and/or a student would be sent home with a stamp on their hand to notify the parents that the account balance was low. This has been changed to sending a notification when the balance gets down to \$20.00. This is helpful since in many cases there are more than one child using a single family account.

In the past, another policy used to require that a student's balance be at least the full price of lunch in order for them to be allowed to purchase a hot lunch. Due to the troop's actions, this policy was changed to allow a student to purchase a hot lunch as long as they carry any positive balance in their lunch account. Additionally, the troop established and funded a "slush" account in the office of Amy Belle School that allows elementary students to receive one "extra" regular lunch, as well as a low balance notification so they have one more day to replenish funds into their account. The troop has also asked staff to monitor if they see a recurring need so any families with a financial need can be helped.

With the changes in policies, the number of "Free" lunches that have been given out as part of "Lunch Room Angels" has cost the troop less than \$25.00 a year – well worth the price to keep children from suffering the indignity of receiving the alternate lunch.

Girl Scout Daisy troop 4460 in Waukesha learned about, enjoyed, and protected nature when completing the Between Earth and Sky Journey. The troop began the year with a family hike at Retzer Nature Center to get acquainted with each other and the wonderful world they would be learning about throughout the year.

At their first meeting, the troop read the introduction to the Journey. They learned about the flower friends, the road trip they were taking, and how their focus was to make the world a better place. They discussed places they've been and others that they would like to visit, made luggage tags, and pretended to pack suitcases for a trip. The girls learned about maps, and were introduced to their project of decorating a blank map of the United States to track their journey "travels". The girls received the Between Earth and Sky base patch.

The troop took a trip to a recycling facility to learn about ways to protect the earth we live on by Reducing, Reusing, and Recycling. The girls learned lots of creative ways to reuse ordinary items and were surprised at how much can be recycled. They were in awe at the sight of a landfill and all left with enthusiasm to be better stewards of the earth.

At their second meeting they read the first chapter of the Journey. Lupe invited Zinni on the road trip with her. They held a roundtable discussion about different feelings and how they change over time. They talked about good feelings, bad feelings, what makes us feel different ways, how we can share our feelings with others, and ask for help with our feelings if they are overwhelming. The girls learned that knowing how other people feel helps them to be better friends, and talked about how they can help their friends with their feelings. The girls also talked about how different animals feel and behave, and what their needs are at different times of the year. They made pinecone bird feeders to help provide food for birds during the winter. The girls received their Blue Bucket Award for learning about feelings.

The troop visited the Wildlife in Need Center for a presentation about the wildlife we share this world with, and how to help and protect these creatures. They discussed what animals might make a good pet and how wild animals do not make good pets. They also had a chance to "meet" some of the wildlife and learned who to call when animals are in trouble.

At their third meeting they read chapter two of the Journey. They talked about what it means to be honest and fair, and saw how the flowers were being fair to one another by going to all the places that they each wanted to visit. They talked about the beauty of nature, and how things can look different depending on how you look at them. To illustrate this point, they did the "stone light stone bright" activity, where they looked at rocks, then put them into a bucket of water and noticed how they were suddenly a lot brighter and colorful when wet.

They decided to take another look at nature, returning to Retzer Nature Center for a snowshoe hike. After participating in a snowshoe basics class, they took a 45 minute hike that allowed them to observe how things have changed seasonally.

At their fourth meeting, they read chapter three of the Journey and discussed how everyone has special skills. They discussed how Sunny the Sunflower is able to pull lead out of the ground to clean the soil, and did an experiment to illustrate how this works. Food coloring was put into a container of

water, to represent the chemicals in the ground. Carnations were placed into the 'dirty' water, and over time, the girls observed how they drank the blue water and held it in their petals, just like Sunny does to clean the ground. The girls earned their Firefly Patch of the Journey for the special skills they have and are learning about.

At their fifth meeting, they read chapter four of the Journey, where the flowers stopped in Wisconsin, our home state. They explored how Wisconsin is home to many 'Local Treasures'. Just like the flower friends sampled some Wisconsin cheese and milk, the every girl had a mini taste test of nine kinds of cheese, and had different opinions about which ones were better than others. They talked about other local treasures including different foods, natural places, city places to visit, and seasonal activities. The girls made their own treasure to take home and share with their families – homemade butter.

At their sixth meeting, they read chapter five of the Journey, discovering that the flower friends had traveled a long way, and have seen and done a lot of new things. They made plans for the future that were inspired by the flower friends' travels and adventures. They worked at using their resources wisely by making their own paper from paper scraps, discussing how they were saving trees. This sparked more discussion about other ways they could use their resources wisely and what they could do at home to help preserve nature.

At their seventh meeting they read chapter six of the Journey in which the flower friends travel to Alaska and learned about invasive species. The girls talked about a way they could help the earth, and decided to help during the Retzer Nature Center Earth Day volunteer opportunities. They used the paper they had made to make invitations to invite their families to join them for their service project.

The girls and their families all went to Retzer to volunteer to make the world a better place, as they had decided they would start by protecting and taking care of a local treasure they had grown to love that year. A naturalist from the nature center met with them and explained how garlic mustard is an invasive plant that needs to be pulled out so the good plants can grow. They spent the morning pulling the garlic mustard out by its roots. The girls were awarded the Clover Award Patch for their hard work at making the world a better place.

The troop leader shared: "I am so proud of the girls and all they have accomplished! I think they learned a lot about the world around them and had a lot of fun doing it. It was an amazing Journey that we took. They are looking forward to continuing on their own journeys by continuing to apply the Girl Scout Laws in their daily lives."