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a community publication

GSWISE celebrates the legacy of Girl Scouting in southeastern Wisconsin

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girl scouts of wisconsin southeast

Still Raising Her Hand: Marj "Sarg" Roach's 50 Years of Girl Scout Service

"What may be easy for one girl will be a real challenge for the next. But teaching values along with skills will reach each and every girl in some manner." – Marj "Sarg" Roach



“The smiles of girls learning new things and enjoying camping at the many activities we do at camp has always been my greatest reward.” – Marj “Sarg” Roach

When Marj “Sarg” Roach received her 50-year membership and volunteer pins at Outdoor Oasis Day Camp this summer, the setting could not have been more fitting. Camp is where she found her calling and where she continues to build generations of leaders; creating a legacy that continues through her family and the countless Girl Scouts she mentors.

Marj’s Girl Scout story began in 1950, when she was a Girl Scout Brownie. Years later, as a mother of four daughters, becoming a Brownie troop leader felt inevitable.

That role soon led to others.

Throughout the last five decades, Marj has served in nearly every kind of volunteer role: troop leader, neighborhood chair, day camp volunteer and director, and committee member. She helped lead a 2,000-mile Savannah Trek for 75 girls and 19 adults in honor of Girl Scouts’ 75th anniversary, supported regional outdoor events, and represented the council at two Girl Scout National Conventions.

Along the way, Marj discovered that her greatest contribution was at day camp.

“I prefer the direct interaction with girls in the outdoors,” she said. “The smiles of girls learning new things and enjoying camping at the many activities we do at camp has always been my greatest reward.”



Volunteers, like “Sarg,” provide the necessary support to keep GSWISE’s Day Camps by Community running.



Day campers of all ages discover new friendships, build new skills, and learn about the outdoors at summer camp.

Those relationships endured beyond a week at camp. Her Girl Scouts have become day camp directors, council staff members, and parents whose own children are now involved in Girl Scouting. Although Marj moved from Pewaukee, she still hears a familiar call when she is in Waukesha County: “Hey Sarg.” “Camp names” are a beloved tradition in Girl Scouting. Her junior troop coined her camp name many years ago, and hearing it today still brings a smile to her face.

Marj’s commitment to Girl Scouting is a family legacy. Her four daughters have continued volunteering with the day camp program as adults. Three joined her at camp this year. In 2025, all four were there, along with Marj’s great-granddaughter. Her husband of 60 years jokes that she thinks “Volunteer” is her middle name and raises her hand automatically whenever help is needed – a description that fits her service well beyond Girl Scouts, too.

Five decades of experience have taught Marj that leadership begins by seeing each girl as an individual.

“Every girl is different with different likes and dislikes,” she said. “What may be easy for one girl will be a real challenge for the next. But teaching values along with skills will reach each and every girl in some manner.”

Marj’s story reminds us that legacy is built by those who raise their hands.

GSWISE Delegates Help Shape the Future of Girl Scouting



Girl Scouts Audrianna, Elizabeth, Lauren, and Kailey represented GSWISE as national delegates.

This summer, GSWISE girl and adult national delegates traveled to Washington, D.C., for the 58th National Council Session (NCS), the triennial business meeting where delegates from across the country and USA Girl Scouts Overseas discuss, debate, and vote on issues important to the Girl Scout Movement.

NCS puts democracy into action: girls vote alongside adults, help elect national leaders, vote on decisions that will guide Girl Scouts through its next chapter, and participate in meaningful conversations about Girl Scouting.

Troop leader Laura Grebe saw her delegate service as a responsibility and a meaningful way to give back. Before NCS, she spoke with Girl Scouts and volunteers to gather their perspectives on the national proposals and discussion topics. At the session, she saw those viewpoints come together through respectful debate.

"It was inspiring to be in a room with dedicated, knowledgeable, and passionate people, all focused on the same issues and end goal, having such polite debate and remaining friends through it all," Laura shared. "If there was no NCS or no democratic process, the whole governance system would be contrary to what Girl Scouts is."



During NCS, Girl Scouts participated in discussion sessions and important voting.

That principle came alive for girl delegate Audrianna. One of her most powerful takeaways was realizing that delegates could challenge ideas and advocate for change.

"The singular most impactful lesson was learning that we could change the rules," she said. "We were able to stand up or challenge rules if anyone felt like they weren't fair."

Audrianna also valued the balance of voices around the table.

"The democratic process is important because it allows the girls who are living and learning through the Girl Scout experience to have just as much say as the adults who've been involved in the organization and have had other professional leadership roles," she explained.

Delegates considered proposals with long-term implications for the Movement. They voted to allow councils to establish policies enabling Girl Scout Juniors and Cadettes to solicit contributions for Bronze and Silver Award projects, just as Seniors and Ambassadors can for Gold Award projects. They also approved a process allowing the National Board to increase membership dues by up to 15% within a triennium, with council and delegate input. Delegates also discussed how Girl Scouts can reach more girls through new delivery models and strengthen community connections through belonging and inclusion.

Your support creates opportunities for girls to enter rooms where key decisions are made, to learn to listen across differences, and to discover that their ideas can influence the future.

Troop 10306 Keeps a Girl Scout Tradition Growing



During Troop 10306's Badge Day, older Girl Scouts had opportunities to lead younger troops.

For nearly 110 years, Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast has helped girls discover their strengths, address community issues, and grow into leaders who make a lasting difference in their neighborhoods and beyond. Troop 10306 is carrying that legacy forward – not only by completing a meaningful Silver Award project, but by creating an experience that will help younger Girl Scouts for years to come.

This year, Troop 10306 reimagined and led the Lakeland Service Unit's annual Badge Day at Fowler Park for their Silver Award project. Badge Day had been hosted by a sister troop for years, and when the opportunity came for Troop 10306 to step in, they seized the opportunity.

As Daisies and Brownies, Troop 10306 attended Badge Day and experienced the fun of learning alongside other Girl Scouts. However, when the troop that had previously coordinated Badge Day was preparing to graduate, the future of the event was uncertain. Troop 10306 saw an opportunity to step up.

"They thought it was a great opportunity to make the event their own and ensure it would continue to be offered to Girl Scouts in their community for years to come," said troop leader Julie Halbach.

Troop 10306 marketed the event, developed age-appropriate activity stations, partnered with community organizations, created sustainable materials future organizers can use, and trained other Girl Scouts to help lead. Ultimately, the troop brought together more than 200 Girl Scouts from nearly 30 troops for a weekend of learning. During the event, Girl Scouts also completed Take Action projects that benefited the Waukesha Women's Center and Oconomowoc Community Garden, extending the troop's impact beyond Badge Day itself.

The project required patience and teamwork. After spending years building trust in each other through Girl Scouts, girls felt they could offer honest feedback, listen to one another, and tackle challenges.

"Planning, coordinating, and carrying out an event for an entire service unit is a lot of work," Halbach said. "It was a long process, but the girls found it very rewarding to see it all the way through."

Leadership development remained at the heart of their project. In addition to running the stations they created, the troop trained fifth-grade Juniors to assist and mentored sixth and seventh-grade Girl Scouts as station leaders. By inviting older Girl Scouts to share responsibility, Troop 10306 created a pathway for younger participants to see leadership in action and begin imagining themselves in those roles.

The Silver Award is the highest award a Girl Scout Cadette can earn, challenging girls to identify an issue they care about, develop a sustainable solution, and put that plan into action. For Troop 10306, sustainability meant more than hosting one successful event. The troop has continued coordinating Badge Day and is now preparing for its third year of leadership, refining the experience each time and ensuring the tradition remains strong.

"Our girls have really embraced their roles as leaders of this event," Halbach said. "It is something they take great pride in and look forward to every year."

Your support makes this kind of leadership possible. By investing in Girl Scouts, you give girls the experiences, mentorship, and opportunities they need to turn their ideas into lasting community impact.



Troop 10306 brought leadership to life while working on their Silver Award project.

A Legacy to Inspire the Next Generation



Alice Read celebrates Girl Scouting's legacy at Alice Chester's historic home in Milwaukee.

For Alice Read, Girl Scouting is more than a treasured tradition: it's a family legacy. Her grandmother and namesake was Alice Chester. She founded Girl Scouts in the Milwaukee area in 1917 and later purchased Camp Alice Chester. Chester also served as National Girl Scout First Vice President alongside honorary president Lou Hoover, President Hoover's wife. During her term, the organization solidified the Girl Scout Cookie Program. Alice Read's mother, Marion Chester Read, carried that commitment forward as a lifelong Girl Scout, dedicated volunteer, and Alice's childhood troop leader.

Alice followed in her family's footsteps as a lifetime member and troop leader. One of her most memorable experiences was taking her Cadette troop to the Girl Scout center in Cuernavaca, Mexico. This trip reflected the confidence, curiosity, and leadership her family champions.

"I want future generations of women to have the same opportunity to discover their abilities and develop leadership skills," Alice said.

She remains inspired by Girl Scouts' ability to evolve while giving girls the supportive space to pursue their potential:

"Girl Scouting is still so important to young girls to help them develop confidence and self-esteem. A high percentage of female C-suite executives were Girl Scouts, and many often credit Girl Scouting for contributing to their success and encouraging them to be confident, courageous young women. These qualities continue to shape their success."

As GSWISE approaches its 110th anniversary and celebrates the legacy that Alice Read's grandmother set in motion, her story reminds us that a legacy is not only what we inherit, but what we choose to carry forward. Partners and donors like the Read family help our mission thrive. Your support can help write the next chapter in Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast's story.



Alice Chester and her husband, William, served in France during World War I. Following her service, Chester brought Girl Scouting to Milwaukee.

Thank you for your support at She Will: A Legacy of Leadership Celebration!

What an unforgettable evening! At *She Will: A Legacy of Leadership Celebration,* more than 230 guests gathered at Discovery World for our first-ever Desserts First experience – a joyful celebration of girl leadership, community, and of course, Girl Scout Cookies.

Thanks to our donors, sponsors, partners, volunteers, bakers, and friends, the event raised more than $176,700 for Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast. Your gifts, sponsorships, auction participation, matching contributions, and in-kind support help nearly 13,000 girls across southeastern Wisconsin access experiences in leadership, entrepreneurship, STEM, outdoor adventure, civic engagement, and community service. We are deeply grateful to everyone who helped make the evening possible.

Save the Date! She Will: Thursday, September 23, 2027

For sponsorship opportunities, email ***giving@gswise.org***



Thank you to those who supported us at our first-ever She Will celebration!

Here's a Peek at What GSWISE Has Been Up To





More than 1,500 Girl Scouts kicked off the new school year at the Milwaukee County Zoo!





Girl Scouts explored hands-on engineering and motorsports skills with Kellymoss.




Thank you to our dedicated partners at Rockwell Automation, who provided key assistance at our summer camp properties to get them ready for campers.

Calendar of Events



January 12:
Girl Scout Cookie Season Starts



March 7-13:
Girl Scout Week



March 12:
Girl Scouts Birthday

girl scouts of wisconsin southeast

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Dear Girl Scout Friends,

In 2027, Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast will celebrate an incredible milestone: 110 years of helping girls discover their strengths, find their voices, and recognize the power they have to be the difference.

As proud as we are of that history, I believe our legacy is ultimately about what comes next.

Today's girls are growing up in a world that asks a lot of them. Girl Scouts gives them something increasingly important: a place built for them, where they can belong, build meaningful friendships, try something new, take the lead, and simply experience the joy of being a girl.

Across southeastern Wisconsin, we see that happening every day. Girl Scouts are exploring future careers, getting outdoors, serving their communities, speaking up about issues that matter to them, and discovering that their ideas and their voices have power.

None of it happens without your support.

Your generosity creates the experiences, relationships, and opportunities that help girls grow into courageous, confident leaders. When you invest in Girl Scouts today, you're not simply honoring 110 years of history. You're helping a new generation of girls write the next chapter.

Thank you for believing in girls and for standing with Girl Scouts. Together, we can ensure that every girl has the opportunity to discover who she is, what she can become, and the difference she can make in the world.

Yours in Girl Scouting,

Ana Simpson
GSWISE Chief Executive Officer



Ana Simpson, CEO

110 years
1917 2027
Girl Scouting in Southeastern Wisconsin

Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.