



Discover

a community publication

Troop 1427 builds resilience and grit during annual troop camping trip

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girlscouts
of wisconsin
southeast

Bad Weather, Good Vibes



“I never liked being outdoors before—the bugs, the weather, everything. Now, I anticipate going every year because I make memories with friends, and there’s always yummy food and fun activities!” – Girl Scout Eve

“I learned to have fun, even in our curse of awful weather! We adjusted activities and even made up an indoor game called ‘Queen Sarah’ that our troop plays every year!” – Girl Scout Maddy

Part of multi-level Troop 1427, Girl Scout Juniors Eve and Maddy attended both their annual fall and spring campouts, where they thrived despite rain at Camp Silver Brook and near-freezing temperatures at Chinook Program Center. Notwithstanding the weather, the girls enjoyed horseback riding, archery, night hikes, making solar nature prints and nail/string art, and campfire cooking.

Troop 1427’s campouts have evolved over the years. What started as an afternoon outing with a hike and s’mores grew into an overnight adventure twice a year. The campouts are girl-led and chockfull of opportunities for the troop to practice independence, choose the badges they want to earn, and practice skills in fire building and safety, cooking, lacing and knotting, orienteering, and learning to get along with different personalities.

“Our campouts expose girls to new environments and activities they may not get to try otherwise,” shared troop leader Laura G. “It’s rewarding to see the girls engaging in both physical and healthy activities, while developing soft skills in perseverance, creativity, self-regulating emotions, and practicing self-reliance.”

“The troop campouts are as much of a learning experience for the adults as they are for the campers; the parents see their kids grow and learn about camping and outdoor safety alongside their kids.”

Eve and Maddy’s advice to other Girl Scouts who may be reluctant to try camping?

“Getting over that initial hurdle is hard, but worth it! You may not know what to expect, but I guarantee it’ll be fun and will bring the troop together,” said Eve.

“Try everything—even if you are nervous, just take it one step at a time. You’ll gain confidence and still have fun,” encouraged Maddy.



Troop 1427 worked together on nail/string art.



Girl Scouts build their appreciation for nature while exploring the outdoors.



Girl Scout troop camping helps Girl Scouts learn to work with different personalities and build leadership skills.

Support for experiences in nature helps more Girl Scouts learn outdoor and soft skills, gain independence, and step out of their comfort zones.

Woodworking: A Girl Scout Summer Tradition

“My time volunteering—it’s priceless. It’s the best investment of my time and talents that I’ve ever made.”

Tim “Big Oak” S. is a long-term volunteer who brings his woodworking passion and energy to Woodland Trails Day Camp by Community. Best known for his tall stature, progression-based woodworking projects, and infamous six-foot “Ultimate Hammer of Knowledge” award of the day, Tim is a beloved presence each summer for new and returning campers.

Tim became a Girl Scout volunteer when his daughter joined Girl Scouts in first grade so they could spend quality time together. Both his wife and daughter attended summer camp at Chinook Program Center during their time as Girl Scouts, so spending summers at the Waukesha property is a family tradition. For the past 17+ years, Tim has found a meaningful place in the woodshop, where he’s built hands-on programming that fosters confidence and pride in the 100+ Girl Scouts he interacts with each summer.

With help and guidance, campers—even as young as Daisies—practice using different tools like nail guns and nail presses to create keepsake birdhouse key racks, triangle games, bug houses, toolboxes, shadowbox picture frames, and stools.

Girl Scouts also strive to earn the coveted “woodshop award of the day,” where they uncover clues to identify a daily secret staffer and, if correct, are presented at opening flag ceremony with a six-foot long wooden hammer that Tim built to proudly carry around with them all day.



Girl Scouts love creating new woodworking projects at Woodland Trails Day Camp by Community.

“I believe I’ve taught the Girl Scouts many things, but they also teach me a lot,” reflected Tim. “It’s rewarding to see the girls believe in themselves and watch them testing their abilities. It’s loud in the woodshop and can be intimidating to use tools, but I help teach them tangible woodworking skills and safety tips, and they build an ‘I can do this!’ mentality. At the same time, the girls help bring out a softer side of me. That helps me create a safe space for them to be themselves and try hard things. When you give a girl this type of security, it sticks with them.”

“Supporting Girl Scouts is a long-lasting investment in their future,” stated Tim. “Girls build character, integrity, values, and tangible skills that they may not get elsewhere. It gives back to parents as much as it does to the girls—helping girls grow into the productive, successful, and happy adults they are meant to be. These girls—they are worth championing for, summer after summer.”

Your investment brings together entire families and communities for a fun week of time-honored camp activities, where adults and Girl Scouts alike grow and feel their worth.

Using Camp Skills in a Crisis



Waterfront Director Emily builds key leadership skills at camp, while making lifelong friends.

A proud Girl Scout alum, Emily K. is about to celebrate her fifth summer as an official staff member at Camp Alice Chester, where she uses her leadership skills as waterfront director. Emily is also a full-time student at Carroll University and works at a Michaels store.

“As a staff member, I’ve learned to advocate for myself—summer camp experiences taught me my worth and I’ve built confidence in my professional skills and in essential life skills. Because of the different work environments and campers’ needs year-to-year, I’ve become accustomed to quickly understanding a situation and adaptable to take the lead—especially during a potential crisis,” said Emily, also known by her camp name “Gerald.”

In December, Emily used those safety skills during a medical emergency at Michaels. Emily spotted an unresponsive customer alone on the floor who was not breathing. Emily’s instincts immediately kicked in; she called 911 and began CPR. When paramedics arrived, the customer was breathing and rushed to the hospital.

After the adrenaline decreased, Emily sought out the location of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) in Michaels to better prepare her for future emergencies. Emily discovered the store had no AED. The potential lifesaving effect of an AED stuck with Emily, so she emailed the president of Michaels to advocate for having an AED in their store, along with additional staff training to protect her community in an emergency.

“It’s because of all the first aid skills and proactive safety drills that I learned and enforce routinely at Girl Scout summer camp that I was able to react so quickly in the heat of an emergency,” reflected Emily. “Those skills are ingrained in me. If not for those skills, a very different outcome could have occurred.”

Your investment helps more lifelong Girl Scouts grow in confidence and take the lead when it matters most.

She Will: How GSWISE and Serve Marketing are Rewriting the Story

This fall, Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast launched “She Will” – a bold campaign breaking stereotypes and celebrating girls who lead fearlessly. Bringing together Girl Scouts of all generations, “She Will” shines a light on the women leading Wisconsin today and those shaping the world tomorrow. Behind the campaign is a local creative force: Serve Marketing, the country’s only all-volunteer nonprofit advertising agency.

“Serve was founded on the belief that important causes deserve powerful storytelling,” said Lauren Sutter, Executive Director at Serve. “When we partner with nonprofits like GSWISE, we’re helping important missions reach the community and inspire action.”

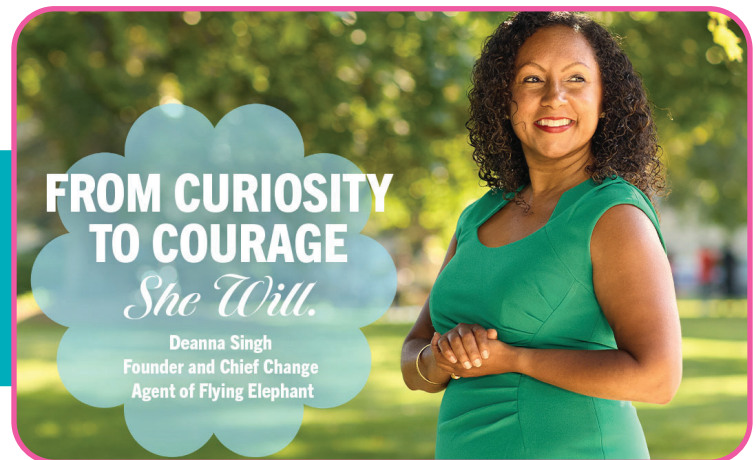
The campaign began with a discovery process, including interviews with staff, alum, current Girl Scouts, and community partners, before blossoming into a multichannel campaign, highlighting more than 20 women and girls across southeast Wisconsin. But, it was the shoot days that left the biggest impression on Sutter.

Dedicated partners like Serve Marketing help share our story and extend our mission of empowering the next generation of leaders.

“Many of the girls had never met before arriving on set, but within minutes they were encouraging one another, practicing together, and celebrating each other’s moments,” she recalls. “It reminded all of us that Girl Scouts isn’t just a program — it’s a community where girls learn how to support each other and step into leadership.”

The project also became a full-circle moment for the Serve team itself, as strategists, producers, and crew members remembered their ties to Girl Scouts as an organization that helped shape their confidence and leadership.

“Many people know Girl Scouts for cookies, but the organization is so much more than that,” Sutter says. “When you look at women leading in business, government, and nonprofits, many of them started as Girl Scouts.”



At Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast (GSWISE), our Philanthropy team fuels our mission, helping every Girl Scout discover courage, confidence and character for her future. From corporate sponsorships and grants to major gifts, we secure the resources that expand programs, spark innovation, and reach more girls across southeastern Wisconsin.

Thanks to you, our generous donors, every girl can access Girl Scouting, no matter her financial circumstances. Your support powers:

- Needs-based scholarships for membership and uniforms
- Camperships to bring Girl Scouts into nature and make summer unforgettable
- STEM, outdoor, and leadership programs in under-resourced communities
- Transportation support so girls can participate safely and reliably

Your investments open doors for thousands of girls who might otherwise miss out on life changing experiences.

Join us at this year’s signature events where we celebrate our local girls and their achievements:

- Breaking the Grass Ceiling Golf Outing on June 29, 2026 (The Legends at Merrill Hills, Waukesha)
- She Will: A Legacy of Leadership Celebration, our girl-led fundraising gala, on September 24, 2026 (Discovery World)
- Camp Rewind, our weekend-long overnight camp for adults only, on October 16–18, 2026 (Camp Silver Brook)

Contact us at giving@gswise.org to learn more or discover unique ways to support, like sponsoring an event, donating an auction item, or doubling your impact with your company through employee gift matching. Looking ahead, our Philanthropy team continues deepening community partnerships and growing your support to ensure every girl can explore, lead, and thrive.

When we invest in girls, we invest in the future.

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



Girl Scouts earned their pins at a special Community Outreach Pinning Ceremony.



Local Girl Scouts showcased Exploremores at a special media preview event.



Media Girls take center stage as they learn about public speaking and advertising.

Calendar of Events



April: Volunteer Appreciation Month



May 19: Highest Awards Ceremony



June 29: Breaking the Grass Ceiling Golf Outing

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Dear Girl Scout Friends,

As the weather starts to shift and the ice starts to melt, we're excited to venture back into the great outdoors.

Whether Girl Scouts engage in troop camping, like Troop 1427 at Camp Silver Brook and Chinook Program Center (page 3), or day camp or overnight camp during the summer, they are learning important life skills, like resilience, grit, and teamwork. Plus, it builds their appreciation for nature. I have to say – our outstanding properties make this even easier!

What's especially powerful is that Girl Scouts' impact starts as early as kindergarten, yet, lasts a lifetime. Throughout this edition of Discover, you'll see those lifelong outcomes come to life through the stories of girls, volunteers, and staff who carry Girl Scouting with them beyond a single moment or milestone.

Impact like this isn't possible without our dedicated volunteers, like longtime Day Camp by Community volunteer Tim S. (page 4). Volunteers like Tim create safe spaces for Girl Scouts to engage in unique programming, like woodworking. Plus, volunteers learn from Girl Scouts, often reporting they are building their own confidence and leadership, which translates into their personal and professional lives.

Volunteers aren't the only ones learning while creating experiences – summer camp staff and counselors do the same. Waterfront Director Emily (page 5) took the skills she learned at Girl Scout summer camp to save a life while working at a retail store offseason.



Ana Simpson, CEO

Now, it's time to go explore the great outdoors, meet new friends/keep the old, and find a sense of adventure! I hope you'll consider joining us at Camp Rewind to revisit Girl Scout camp memories or create new ones. Or, if camping is not your style, you can still get outdoors by supporting us at our Breaking the Grass Ceiling Golf Outing!

Thank you for joining us on this journey. It would not be possible without your support.

Yours in Girl Scouting,

Ana Simpson
GSWISE Chief Executive Officer