

leadership for girls



girl scouts
of eastern
pennsylvania

advancing the values of diversity and inclusion through outreach

We believe that every girl deserves the opportunity to become the leader she wants to be and the world needs her to be. Through targeted outreach, GSEP serves thousands of girls each year through a variety of leadership programs.

ACCESS TO THE GIRL SCOUT LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

With the support of financial aid, we provide access to Girl Scouts through outreach programs held during the school year and summer.

School-year outreach programs (Funded Series and Funded Troops) engage girls from underserved communities, focusing on schools with high rates of free-or-reduced-lunch-certified students. In 2008, the Girl Scout Research Institute (GSRI), published a study with two important findings. First, girls must have leadership experiences in order to gain the confidence they need to pursue and assume leadership positions as they grow older. Second, girls who come from low-income backgrounds are less likely to gain these vital leadership experiences than their more affluent counterparts. By providing in and out-of-school-time programming that gives girls the chance to lead discussions and activities in an environment where they feel safe and

supported, GSEP focuses on developing the three keys to leadership:

- 1 Discovering more about themselves
- 2 Connecting with others, and
- 3 Taking action to make the world a better place.

FUNDED SERIES

The series pathway engages large numbers of girls during or after school, serving close to 2,000 girls annually. These four to eight part programs offer research-based curriculum from GSUSA focused on particular themes. Examples of the curriculum include *Free Being Me* about body confidence and self esteem, *Friendship Circles* and *Be a Friend First* about anti-bullying, *Inspirar* about environmental science and sustainability, and *Imagineer* and *Imagine Your STEM Future* about STEM and career exploration. Through Funded Series offerings, GSEP has served entire populations of girls at several elementary and middle schools, and whole 9th

and 10th grade classes of girls in high schools. This shared experience by large numbers of girls offers transformational opportunities to influence school culture and develop girls' leadership skills.

FUNDED TROOPS

Funded Troops engage nearly 3,000 girls annually through weekly troop meetings. Funded Troops meet for 20-30 weeks, and utilize the Leadership Journeys* curriculum, which includes reading, discussions, games, projects, and other activities that get girls thinking about the world around them and their place in it. There are three Journeys, organized around an integrated theme and an age appropriate curriculum for six age levels (K-1; 2-3; 4-5; 6-8; 9-10; 11-12):

1 It's Your World—Change It!

This Journey focuses on helping girls develop the visionary, collaborative, and strategic components necessary to be an effective agent of change. Activities encourage girls to think about how they would like to make a contribution to the world and what it means to advocate for their values.

2 It's Your Planet—Love It!

In this Journey, girls learn about environmental issues such as clean water and air, noise pollution, global warming, soil contamination, and agricultural processes. Girls explore what it means to be responsible stewards of the planet.

3 It's Your Story—Tell It!

This Journey gives girls the opportunity to tell their stories through a range of

creative approaches. Self-esteem is a natural byproduct of this Journey because through storytelling and creative expression, girls gain a deep understanding of themselves and their potential, and develop the confidence to become leaders.

ADDITIONAL SCHOOL YEAR PROGRAMMING

In addition to meeting activities, girls who participate in Funded Series and Funded Troops have access to supplemental Girl Scout programs. GSEP holds programs during the weekend on special topics such as the environment, technology, or the arts. Through the **cookie program**, girls develop **5 skills**: *goal setting, decision making, money management, people skills, and business ethics*. Through their cookie proceeds, girls earn opportunities to go on trips, attend camp, or participate in special programs. Girls are encouraged to design and implement their own Take Action Projects, which involve identifying a problem in their school or community and working together to create a sustainable solution.

FUNDED SUMMER PROGRAMS

GSEP's Funded Summer Programs take place at neighborhood community centers. These four to eight week programs curb summer learning loss and serve nearly 4,000 girls through a variety of Girl Scout Leadership Experience programs including series and Journeys.

GIRL SCOUTS BEYOND BARS (GSBB)

GSBB is a personal and leadership development program for girls who are coping with the effects of having a mother who is, or has been, incarcerated. Having a parent in prison, particularly one's mother, is a traumatic experience that can have long-term negative effects on children's emotional, mental, social, and even physical wellbeing. GSBB acts as a stabilizing force in the lives of participating girls, giving them a sense of belonging, purpose, and perspective that supports their successful development as they transition into young adulthood.

The GSBB program is active in the City of Philadelphia, and serves 50–65 girls between the ages of 5 and 17. There are between 25,000 and 30,000 children in Philadelphia contending with issues related to parental incarceration. Girls faced with these circumstances are at higher risk of developing lasting emotional and psychological problems. Children of incarcerated parents experience high rates of internalizing issues, such as anxiety, depression, hyper-vigilance, withdrawal, shame, and guilt, as well as externalizing issues, such as anger, aggression toward others, and attention problems.

GSBB helps girls overcome these challenges by creating a supportive, stable environment. The program engages three key strategies:

- 1 To provide girls with the Girl Scout Leadership Experience;

2 To build strong, deep relationships between the GSBB leadership and girls and their families/caregivers; and

3 To facilitate in-prison visits for girls and their mothers.

GSBB focuses on two primary outcomes and one secondary outcome for girls and their mothers, which correspond to the key strategies of the program:

- 1 Girls' personal development;
- 2 Girls' leadership development; and
- 3 Strengthening the mother-daughter bond (secondary).

CAMPERSHIPS AND FINANCIAL AID

Girl Scout camp is heavily subsidized by GSEP, allowing for inexpensive camp fees for all girls. However, some families need more assistance. GSEP is committed to making summer camp accessible for all girls, regardless of their economic circumstances. Need is especially high in urban areas where opportunities for outdoor experiences are already limited. Camperships make it possible for girls to develop into resourceful decision makers, explore the outdoors, and collaborate with other girls from around the region. More than 300 girls receive Camperships to attend camp each year.

In addition to GSEP's outreach programs, girls from around the region receive financial aid to assist with membership fees, troop dues, program fees, and supplies.



¹Schoenberg, Judy, Ed.M., Kimberlee Salmond, M.P.P., and Paula Fleshman, M.S. *Change It Up! What Girls Say About Redefining Leadership*. Rep. New York: Girl Scouts of the USA, 2008. Print.

²Ibid.

*Journeys are the national curriculum designed by the Girl Scout Research Institute (GSRI) aligned with all 50 state standards.



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