girl scouts of eastern pennsylvania

Overview

Board of Directors Retreat

Tuesday, August 25, 2026
8:30 a.m. - 12 noon at Camp Mountain House

Mission Moment

Board Chair Nicole LeVine welcomed the newest members of the Board who were elected in May at the Annual Meeting: Dr. Yamil Sanchez Rivera and the three new Girl Advisors.

Management Report

CEO Kim Fraites and the four members of the Senior Management Team introduced themselves by sharing information about their families, teams, responsibilities, proudest moments of the past year, and what they are looking forward to in the coming year.

Girl membership for MY26 currently stands at 21,565; GSEP is the sixth largest Girl Scout Council in the country. MY27 membership numbers are 8,186 girls and 8,407 adults, which is lower than this time last year. The Mission Delivery team is focused on recruiting new girls (as well as encouraging current girls to renew), running summer and early fall programs, and hosting Camp for a Day programs for schools. One factor contributing to the lower renewal rates for girls is the increase of annual membership dues to $65 this year. An initiative to combat this is for the Council to underwrite the $40 difference in dues from two years ago. The Executive Committee approved the use of these funds during a meeting earlier this month.

This summer, 3,445 girls attended camp, which was 95% of the goal. Camp Mountain House has a new director, Jacki Nattress. Her long Girl Scout volunteer tenure includes being a troop leader, Service Unit Manager, Service Unit Cookie Manager, and a member of the History, Adult Camping Weekend, and Alum committees. As the new Director of Lehigh Valley Member Experience, she will be a dedicated Girl Experience resource to support girls, volunteers, members, and the community in the Lehigh Valley.

The Calling All Girl Bosses program also has new leadership: Betsy Rafferty Fromhold, Director of Girl Leadership and Highest Awards (who is a former principal in Philadelphia) and Jessika Rao McLaughlin, Program Support Manager (who had extensive program experience at Mastery Charter Schools in Philadelphia). This year, girls will be participating in six hubs around our Council.

GSEP brought 24 (of the 26) National Council Delegation members to this summer's 58th National Girl Scout Convention in Washington, D.C. Two of the three proposals placed on the National Council Session agenda passed: 1) allowing Councils the option to approve girls working on the Bronze and Silver Award projects to seek philanthropic support and 2) requiring the National Board to seek National Council approval to increase the membership dues by 15% or more. The third proposal – which sought to limit when Girl Scout cookie-branded merchandise could be sold – was removed from consideration.

We anticipate ending FY26 in a good financial position. At the September 29th Board meeting, the Board will review and vote on the FY27 Budget, which includes investments to support the new Strategic Plan.

Board Engagement, Part 1: *State of the Girl*

CEO Kim Fraites reported the key findings from GSUSA's recent "State of the Girl" research (shared last month). Examples of the research results include:

- 58% of high school girls have decided that they are not smart enough for their dream job.
- 25% of five-year-old girls say their body and the way it looks is one of their top concerns. The number nearly doubles (43%) when girls are 8-10 years old.
- 51% of girls ages 11-13 feel they must be online or they will miss out.
- 41% of girls ages 13-14 experience cyberbullying and that climbs to 54% for ages 15-17.
- Only 2.18% of philanthropic giving in the U.S. goes to women and girls.
- By ninth grade, 70% of girls have thought "a lot" about their careers, and 55% have an interest in STEM (a 10% increase in the past ten years).
- 56% of girls between the ages of 5-13 are spending time online to fight boredom.

The research also shows that family situations have undergone changes in the past few years:

- 1 in 4 children lives in an immigrant family.
- 1 in 3 children grows up "not poor, but not secure."
- The average number of children in a family is now 1.94. Households are smaller, have dual incomes, but are more pressured.
- 8.1% fewer kids under five live in large urban counties since 2020 (i.e., cities are losing their youngest residents fastest).

Girl Scouts is acknowledging the current state of girls with girl-centric, inclusive programming that is adventurous and safe and approaching adult volunteer recruitment and training to assist girls in becoming the most confident, joyful versions of themselves. The report also recommended six actions for communities to take (e.g., collect girl data; provide safe, supportive environments, build connected communities; champion and invest in girls; expand extracurricular opportunities, and expand digital literacy and online safety education).

The Board had a robust discussion on this research and how to share this data with the public, media, funders, potential partners, and families, and specifically include how Girl Scouting is supporting girls today.

Board Engagement, Part 2: *National Brand Positioning*

Chief Marketing Officer Stacey Moyers shared GSUSA's new branding, which is based on multi-year research involving girls and families (of current members and non-members). The research shows that personal development and well-being are the most important outcomes families value.

GSUSA's new branding is built on the core message of "Finding the Power Within Her." We believe that girls already have personal strengths; the purpose of Girl Scouts is to help

girls uncover their confidence, identity, and purpose. Specifically, this new branding supports GSUSA's strategic plan Vision 2030 in four critical ways: 1) clarifies the value of Girl Scouts, 2) expands relevance to new families, 3) supports sustainable growth, and 4) aligns national and local efforts.

Stacey further explained the Board's role in supporting the new branding via five priority actions: 1) align decisions to the purpose of encouraging and supporting girls to "find the power within," 2) protect the positioning by asking "does this reflect who we say we are?", 3) model the brand behaviors that honor individuality, celebrate effort, and lift others, 4) champion consistency across the Council, and 5) be brand ambassadors by sharing girls' stories and representing Girl Scouts proudly in our communities.

Closing Remarks

Board Chair Nicole LeVine thanked:

- Mary Beth Biddle and new Girl Advisors Margot F. and Claire T. for attending the Silver Awards ceremony in May.
- Joann Gonzalez-Generals and Bunmi Ojikutu and Girl Advisors Margot F. and Sira P. for attending the Gold Awards ceremony.
- Plus, she offered congratulations to Margot F. for earning her Gold Award.
- Ellen Iobst, Stacy Board, and Margot F. for participating in the Ribbon Cutting ceremony of the new Girl Adventure Place at Camp Mountain House in June.
- Ellen Iobst, Margot F., and Sira P. for serving as National Council Delegates with her and Kim Fraites during the 58th National Girl Scout Convention in July in Washington, D.C.
- Bunmi Ojikutu for once again hosting the volunteer training for Calling All Girl Bosses in Berks County.

Nicole also reminded the Board that Take the Lead nominations are due on September 15, and she encouraged the group to nominate outstanding women they know.

GSEP's 5th Annual Golf for Girl Scouts event will be held on September 14. She thanked Ashley Russo for hosting the event at Saucon Valley Country Club and Debbie O'Brien for securing Bank of America's presenting sponsorship.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.