



girl scouts
of central & southern
new jersey

TROOP LEADER GUIDE

2017-2018



SERVICE UNIT CONTACT INFO

Girl Scouts of Central & Southern NJ consists of 57 service units. Think of service units as Girl Scout communities specific to a geographic region. Service units are made up of many dedicated volunteers working to build the Girl Scout experience in their immediate area. Service unit team members and troop representatives meet several times throughout the year to share ideas, receive training, and talk about important announcements. Take a moment to fill out the form below when you meet with your Service Unit Representative.



We love service unit volunteers!

YOU ARE A MEMBER OF THE FOLLOWING SERVICE UNIT:

SERVICE UNIT NAME: _____ SERVICE UNIT # _____

SERVICE UNIT MANAGER	
<p>The service unit manager ensures the service unit is functioning and supports new and existing volunteers. The service unit manager guides the service unit by sharing information provided by Girl Scouts of Central & Southern NJ and facilitating service unit meetings.</p> <p><i>You will get to know your service unit manager (often called the SUM) at your leader meetings. They'll have the 4-1-1 on what's going on around GSCSNJ.</i></p>	<p>Name of Service Unit Manager(s): _____</p> <p>Contact info: _____</p>
REGISTRAR	
<p>The registrar assists the members in your service unit with registration and supports and encourages accurate registrations for the Fall Product Program and Cookie Program, and Early Bird registration.</p> <p><i>You will want to connect with the registrar to double check that your girls and troop volunteers are registered as members. Make sure to check in with them before the Fall Product and Cookie Programs!</i></p>	<p>Name of Registrar: _____</p> <p>Contact info: _____</p>
RECRUITER/ORGANIZER	
<p>The Recruiter/Organizer rounds up adult volunteers and girls in Girl Scouts while ensuring that all girls in the service unit have the opportunity to fully participate in Girl Scouting programs and activities.</p> <p><i>If you are looking for more girls to join your troop, let your recruiter know!</i></p>	<p>Name of Recruiter/Organizer: _____</p> <p>Contact info: _____</p>
TREASURER	
<p>The treasurer provides general oversight and management of all service unit and troop finances.</p> <p><i>When you have questions about troop finance or need assistance with your bank account, contact the treasurer.</i></p>	<p>Name of Treasurer: _____</p> <p>Contact info: _____</p>
COACH	
<p>The coach welcomes new leaders and introduces them to resources and support, including: the service unit team, leader meetings, troop support, and online training resources.</p> <p><i>You will want to connect with your service unit's coach to learn more about getting started as a leader. The volunteer wants to make sure that you have the best Girl Scout experience!</i></p>	<p>Name of Coach: _____</p> <p>Contact info: _____</p>

WELCOME!



Thank you SO MUCH for volunteering as a Girl Scout troop leader!

We're excited to have you on board! As a Girl Scout volunteer, you're helping to build girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place.

We created this guide just for troop leaders, with helpful advice on getting your troop going, learning Girl Scout lingo, and leading with gusto! Plus, we have some tips from troop leaders who have been in your shoes before.

Whether you've been a Girl Scout since Kindergarten or if this is your first introduction to the organization, we know this guide will provide you with useful information for your journey as a troop leader. Feel free to read through it now, or scan through it to use as a reference guide later.

You'll learn more about your local Girl Scout contacts throughout this guide, keep in mind that staff are a resource at the GSCSNJ council! We love to hear from you – feel free to give us a call at 856-795-1560 or email us at customercare@gscsnj.org

Yours in Girl Scouting,

Girl Scouts of Central & Southern, NJ



HERE'S WHAT'S INSIDE:

- 4** Useful Information
- 5** Knowing Your Responsibilities
- 6** New Leader Checklist
- 7-8** All About Girl Scouts
- 9** Uniforms
- 10** Program: Journeys, Badges & Petals
- 11-12** Progression - Inclusivity
- 13-14** Ceremonies
- 15** Safety First
- 16** How Many Volunteers Do You Need
- 17-20** Family Meeting & Involvement
- 21** Where & When to Meet
- 22** Setting Up Your Troop Meeting
- 23** Attendance Tracker
- 24** Troop Finances
- 25** Communications
- 26** Managing Girl Behavior/Troop Conflict
- 27-28** Where to Find Things On Our Website
- 29-32** Glossary
- 33-36** Extra Resources

USEFUL INFORMATION

OUR MISSION

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

GIRL SCOUT PROMISE

On my honor, I will try:

To serve God* and my country,
To help people at all times,
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

GIRL SCOUT LAW

I will do my best to be

honest and fair,
friendly and helpful,
considerate and caring,
courageous and strong, and
responsible for what I say and do,

and to

respect myself and others,
respect authority,
use resources wisely,
make the world a better place, and
be a sister to every Girl Scout.

*Members may substitute for the word God in accordance with their own spiritual beliefs.

GIRL SCOUT YEAR AT A GLANCE 2017

OCTOBER

- Our new Girl Scout year officially begins! - Oct. 1
- Fall Product Program Oct 2 - Oct 27
- Founder's Day: Oct. 31
Honors Juliette Gordon Low's Birthday in 1860

NOVEMBER

- Cookie Training- *Gearing up for our Cookie Sale!*
- *Girl Leadership Summit November 18*

DECEMBER

Shop and Service Center locations will be closed December 25 - January 1.

GIRL SCOUT YEAR AT A GLANCE 2018

JANUARY

- *Cookie Sale Begins January 18!*

FEBRUARY

- **World Thinking Day: Feb. 22**
Have your troop connect with international Girl Scout sisters!

MARCH

- **Girl Scout Week: Mar. 11-17**
Celebrates the first Girl Scout meeting in the United States in 1912. This year, we're celebrating Girl Scouting's 105th birthday!
- **Girl Scout Sunday and Sabbath: Mar. 11 + Mar. 17**
Give girls an opportunity to attend their place of worship and be recognized as a Girl Scout.

APRIL

- **Girl Scout Leader's Day: April 22**
A special day to thank volunteers for all they do. We'll be celebrating YOU!

JUNE

- **Summer camp begins!**
(WAHOO! Who's excited for next summer already?!)

JULY

- We hope you and your troop will be finding adventure and fun in the great outdoors at a camp session, troop outing, traveling, or field trips.

AUGUST

- We're gearing up for the new year by forming new troops, recruiting volunteers and girls, and planning all the fun things in store for the upcoming membership year (like next year's program theme, events, trainings, and more!).

SEPTEMBER

- Prep for a great Girl Scout year.
- Troop Leader Symposium

KNOWING YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES



Before getting started as a troop leader, it is important to review and understand what you will be responsible for. These responsibilities will help guide your experience and ensure that you know what you will be held accountable for.

- **Accept the Girl Scout Promise and Law.**
- Understanding the Three Keys to Leadership that are the basis of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience: **Discover, Connect, and Take Action.**
- **Share your knowledge, experience, and skills** with a positive and flexible approach.
- **Work in a partnership** with girls so that their activities are girl-led, allow them to learn by doing, and allow for cooperative (group) learning; you'll also partner with other volunteers and council staff for support and guidance.
- **Organize fun, interactive, girl-led activities** that address relevant issues and match girls' interests and needs.
- Facilitate a **safe experience** for every girl.
- **Process and complete paperwork**, such as permission slips, health history forms.
- **Communicate effectively** and deliver clear, organized, and vibrant presentations or information to an individual or the group.
- **Oversee the troop funds with honesty and integrity.**
- **Maintain a close connection to your service unit by attending monthly Leader meetings.**



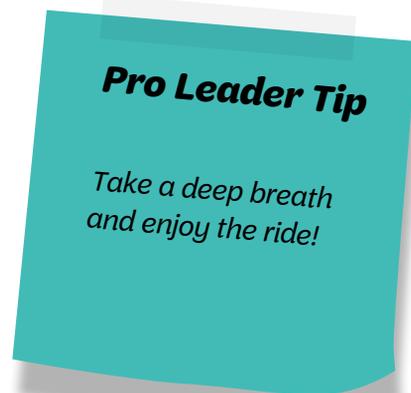
NEW LEADER CHECKLIST



Here's a list of to-do's to get your troop up and running. We'll break down each one in this guide.

Getting Started...

- Get to know the Girl Scout program at gscsnj.org, specifically looking at information under the "Volunteer" then "Leadership Training" section.
- Complete new leader onboarding (membership, background check, welcome video and New Leader Orientation)
- Website, specifically looking at information under the "Volunteer" then "Leadership Training" section.
- Attend your Service Unit Introduction meeting
- Secure a meeting location, date(s), and time(s) for troop meetings.
- Send an introductory email to troop families, including the troop meeting schedule.
- **Hold a Family Meeting.**
- Contact your Service Unit Treasurer to open a troop bank account.
- Hold your first troop meeting.
- Identify who will be your troop's Fall Product Program manager (if you're ready to participate) and Cookie Manager
- Log in to the Volunteer Toolkit to set up your Troop calendar and to get ideas to share with the girls.



Pro Leader Tip

*Take a deep breath
and enjoy the ride!*

October

- Participate in the Fall Product Program

November/December

- Complete troop cookie manager training (if you will be assisting with cookie program for your troop).

January/February/March

- Participate in the Girl Scout Cookie Program.
- March is a great time to check out camp opportunities for girls and troops, for all different ages and abilities. We'll send you more info on this when the time comes!

April/May/June

- Hold an end-of-year ceremony or court of awards.
- Submit your End of Year Troop Finance Report.

ALL ABOUT GIRL SCOUTS



History

Girl Scouts is over 2.7 million strong – 1.9 million girls and 800,000 adults who believe girls can change the world. We're part of Girl Scouts of the United States of America (you'll commonly hear it referred to as **GSUSA**).

It began over 100 years ago with one woman, Girl Scouts' founder **Juliette Gordon "Daisy" Low**, who believed in the power of every girl. In 1912, Juliette was in England where she met Sir Robert Baden Powell (the founder of Boy Scouts). Upon her return to the United States, Juliette began the first Girl Scout troop to provide an environment to prepare girls to meet their world with courage, confidence, and character. This first troop of 18 girls played basketball, hiked, camped, swam, and learned about the world around them.

Today we continue the Girl Scout mission of building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

We're the preeminent leadership development organization for girls. With programs for girls from coast to coast and across the globe, Girl Scouts offers every girl a chance to do something amazing.

Who was Juliette Gordon Low?



Juliette was born on October 31, 1860, which we celebrate yearly as Founder's Day. She was a compassionate, curious, and independent woman and was interested in nature, art, animals, and athletics. Throughout her childhood and young adulthood, she experienced several ear injuries. This contributed to an almost complete loss of hearing for the rest of her life. These experiences and interests played a strong role in the development of the ideals and values of Girl Scouts.

"Scouting rises within you and inspires you to put forth your best."

- Juliette Gordon Low

ALL ABOUT GIRL SCOUTS



Members

Members are girls, adult volunteer members (like you!), and lifetime Girl Scouts who are joined together in the pursuit of building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

Troops

Troops are the most common way girls participate in Girl Scouts. Troops are led by volunteers. The average troop size is 12 girls, but we've got troops of 20 and more! Troops allow girls to work as a team and build lasting friendships.



Service Units

Our council is made up of 57 service units. Service units are comprised of volunteers and girl members in an immediate geographic area. These service units are led by experienced individuals who support leaders, troops, and individual members. You may hear from your service unit volunteers regarding events, trainings, cookies, and much more!

Girl Scouts Central & Southern NJ

Girl Scouts of Central & Southern NJ is one of 112 councils in the U.S. and serves 19,000 girls. Our work is supported by more than 10,000 volunteers – including YOU! We'll get to know one another over the coming year (and for years to come) as you and your troop attend council events, have questions, would like support, through our social media, and more.

Girl Scouts of the U.S.A

Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. (commonly referred to as GSUSA) is the national organization to which Girl Scouts of Central & Southern, NJ belongs. GSUSA serves 2.7 million girls and adults. GSUSA is comprised of 112 Girl Scout councils in all 50 states and Puerto Rico.

W.A.G.G.G.S.

W.A.G.G.G.S. or the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts is a 146-member international organization whose mission is “to inspire girls and young women to reach their fullest potential as responsible citizens of the world.” Girl Scouts of the USA is a member.

UNIFORMS



Girl Scouts wear full uniforms in ceremonies, when officially representing Girl Scouts, and when they want to show their Girl Scout pride. We know girls enjoy acquiring **patches, badges, and insignia** for their uniforms, and this is definitely one of the most memorable pieces of Girl Scouts for alumnae. Here are some basic tips:

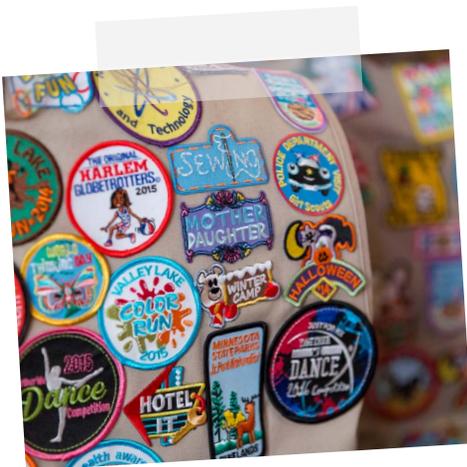
- Sashes are worn from the right shoulder to the left hip.
- The insignia tab is worn on the left chest, over the heart.
- All unofficial awards go on the back of the uniform, including cookie, camp, and fun patches.
- Full uniform is: sashes, vests, and tunics are worn with white shirts and khaki pants or skirts.
- If you run out of space on the front of your uniform, you may place badges and awards on the back.

Fun Patches

Fun patches are given to girls for attending events or participating in non-Girl Scout program related activities. Patches should be placed on the back of the uniform.

Our Girl Scout shop staff is awesome, and they understand how confusing finding all of the parts of a uniform can be!

Questions about uniforms? Stop by one of our retail shops or contact our shop staff at 856-795-1560 and they will be able to answer any of your questions! You can also find specifics on each grade level's uniform on our website.



Cool patches!



Some of our favorite Brownie badges!

PROGRAM: JOURNEYS + BADGES/PETALS



The Girl Scout program centers on our mission of building girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place. We know that this part of the program may look different than it did if you were a Girl Scout as a girl. Journeys and badges are the backbone of the program and will provide girls with a well-rounded Girl Scout experience!

Remember, as the leader, you get to customize the experience so it will fit for your girls!

Journeys

The Girl Scout Journey program lays the foundation for girls to build leadership skills, while learning about themselves and their world. Each Journey is made up of Discover, Connect, and Take Action (or the three Keys to Leadership).

Through the Discover portion of the Journey, girls learn about broader topics, such as water or how to tell a story. Then, during the Connect portion, girls see how what they learned during Discover connects to their world. Finally, through Taking Action, girls plan and implement a Take Action project that addresses a need in their community.

There are several Journeys that girls can complete. A few examples are: It's Your World – Change It! inspires girls to make changes in their communities. It's Your Planet – Love It! focuses on addressing conservation of the environment. It's Your Story – Tell It! encourages girls to tell their own story in creative ways.

Journeys can be completed in a few ways, and it is important to pick the best option for your troop. One way to complete a Journey is to follow along with the Journey books and the adult guides. These are broken down into 6 to 10 meeting sessions; some troops choose to focus on a Journey over a whole Girl Scout year. Another way to work on a Journey is to attend a council-led program, where girls earn part of the Journey and usually need to complete the Take Action project on their own as a troop.

Badges

Girl Scouts earn badges that demonstrate a proficiency in a progression of skill-building activities. Generally these activities connect to a specific subject matter (for example, first aid or animal habitats). Some even complement Journey activities. Skill-building areas include S.T.E.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), Life Skills (Healthy Living, Travel and Older Girl Programming), Entrepreneurship, and Outdoor.

While most program grade levels (Brownies through Ambassadors) earn badges, Girl Scout Daisies earn petals, leaves, and badges. Each petal correlates to a line from the Girl Scout Law and the leaves focus on Financial Literacy.

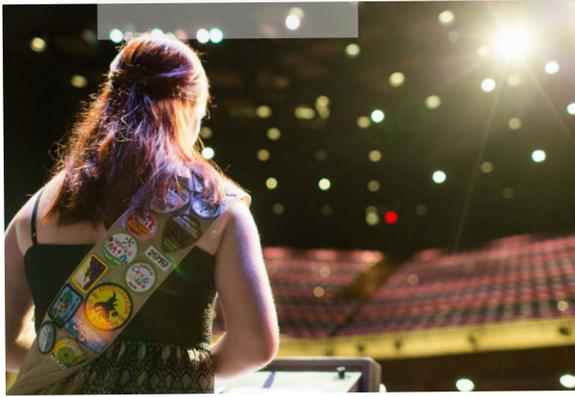


PROGRESSION



PROGRAM LEVEL	GRADES	WHAT ARE THEY UP TO IN GIRL SCOUTS?	WHAT ARE THEY LIKE?
Daisies	K, 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn the Girl Scout Promise + Law Earn petals + leaves + badges + Journeys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lots of energy! Beginning to understand basic number concepts Just learning how to write and spell
Brownies	2, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earn badges + Journeys Can attend overnight camps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are social and enjoy working in groups Want to help and can handle individual responsibilities of a task Love to act in plays, create music, dance
Juniors	4, 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earn badges + Journeys Can earn the Bronze Award Start to be viewed as role models for younger Girl Scouts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Want to make decisions and express opinions Are aware of expectations and sensitive to the judgments of others Are social and enjoy doing things in groups
Cadettes	6, 7, 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earn badges + Journeys Can earn the Silver Award Can be a Program Aide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spending more time with peer groups than family. Focus is on friends and relationships of their age group. Can be very self-conscious Navigating their increased independence
Seniors	9, 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earn badge + Journeys Can earn the Gold Award Can be a Program Aide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning to clarify their own values and considering other view points Strong problem-solving and critical thinking skills Feel they have lots of responsibilities and pressures
Ambassadors	11, 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earn badges + Journeys Can earn the Gold Award Can be a Program Aide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can see complexity of situations and controversial issues Enjoy expressing their individuality Feel that there are more responsibilities and pressures

INCLUSIVITY



Girl Scouts of Central & Southern, NJ embraces girls of all abilities, backgrounds, and heritage, with a specific and positive philosophy of inclusion that benefits everyone. Each girl – without regard to socioeconomic status, race, physical or cognitive ability, ethnicity, primary language, or religion – is an equal and valued member of the group, and groups reflect the diversity of the community.

Inclusion is an approach and an attitude, rather than a set of guidelines. Inclusion is about belonging, about all girls being offered the same opportunities, about respect and dignity, and about honoring the uniqueness of and differences among us all.

You're accepting and inclusive when you:

- **Welcome every girl** and focus on building community.
- **Emphasize cooperation** instead of competition.
- Provide a **safe and socially comfortable environment** for girls.
- Honor the **intrinsic value** of each person's life.
- **Teach respect for, understanding of, and dignity toward all girls** and their families.
- **Actively reach out** to girls and families who are traditionally excluded or marginalized.
- Foster a **sense of belonging** to community as a respected and valued peer.



CEREMONIES



Ceremonies are a great way to celebrate different aspects of the Girl Scout year. Girl Scouts celebrate by honoring themes that are important to girls, including bridging into a new level and everything in between. Come on, who doesn't love to celebrate!

Investitures

Investitures are a way to welcome new members into the Girl Scout family. During an investiture ceremony, new girls are presented with the appropriate Girl Scout pin. Your troop can host this ceremony at the beginning of the year (usually in September or October), and there are many ways you can conduct the ceremony!

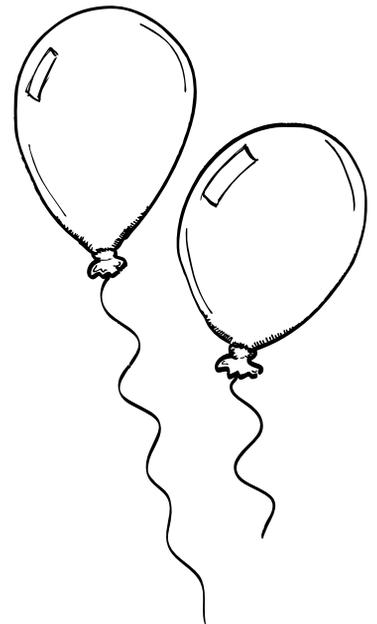


Rededication

Generally, investitures are tied to a Rededication ceremony. Rededication is a time for current members to reconnect with the Girl Scout mission and their commitment to the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Consider a Rededication ceremony for your second year.

Scouts' Own Ceremony

A Scouts' Own ceremony is girl-led and planned. The ceremony centers around a theme, such as nature, service, or sisterhood. These ceremonies can include, but are not limited to, spoken word, songs, poetry, or dance. It is important that it encompasses the girls' expression of their feelings on the topic picked out by the troop. Try this one a couple months into the year, once your girls feel more comfortable around one another.





Court of Awards

Another common ceremony is the Court of Awards. This ceremony recognizes girls' accomplishments throughout the year. It can be held at any time during the year and wherever the troop or service unit wishes it to be. The Court of Awards includes both girls and volunteers.

Flag Ceremonies

Flag ceremonies are used to honor the American flag and occur at the beginning and end of an event and/or meeting. While not a required part of troop meetings, it is recommended for girls to have some familiarity with the process of the flag ceremony.



Bridging Ceremonies

Bridging ceremonies signify the girls move from one level of Girl Scouting to another (for example, Girl Scout Daisies to Girl Scout Brownies). It is a ceremony that provides girls an opportunity to reflect on their achievements and look forward to new adventures and responsibilities to come. Traditionally, girls cross over a bridge (can be a real bridge or something your girls make) sharing what they have learned at their level.

All 3rd grade Girl Scout Brownies Fly Up and receive their Brownie Wings in addition to earning the Bridge-to-Junior Award.



For more details on ceremonies, including how to conduct your own with your troop, contact your Service Unit Team.

SAFETY FIRST!



Safety Steps

Zoe is a leader for a Girl Scout Brownie troop that meets every other week at her daughter's elementary school. At this troop meeting, the girls were working on their Fair Play badge. While the girls were untangling themselves from a human knot, Zoe heard a shout from one of the girls in the troop, Linnie. Zoe ran closer to see what happened and Linnie had tripped while moving and landed on her arm. While Linnie is starting to cry, Zoe is thinking about what to do.

What should she do next?

First, don't freak out!!!

1. Tend to the girl. Provide any necessary or immediate first aid.
2. If needed, call 9-1-1.
3. Call the girl's parents/guardians to inform them of what happened.
4. Fill out the Incident/Accident Report, which can be found on our website, and send it to incidentreport@gscsnj.org

The safety and well-being of girl and adult members is our highest priority. It's imperative to know and understand the safety policies and procedures for our Council. Listed below are some of the main resources where safety policies are listed. Safety policies can feel overwhelming, so know that if you take some time now to review them, you'll feel more confident as you participate in Girl Scouts. And, we've got your back! If you have questions or concerns about safety or your responsibilities, give us a call.

Volunteer Essentials: Volunteer Essentials provides all the information you need to be a successful Girl Scout volunteer. We encourage you to skim through and become familiar with the different sections. This guide is filled with information about Girl Scouting such as traditions, responsibilities, and awards. You will also find information specific to volunteering with Girl Scouts of Central & Southern, NJ, such as tools, resources, and policies.

Safety Activity Checkpoints: These include activity-specific safety guidelines including camping, land sports, water sports, Cookie Program, etc.

For the most accurate and complete information about GSCSNJ policies and procedures, refer to Volunteer Essentials, available on the GSCSNJ website.



HOW MANY VOLUNTEERS DO YOU NEED?



Whatever the activity, from camping to cookies sales, adult supervision is required regardless of the grade level of the girls. The table below has been developed to show the minimum number of adults needed to supervise a specific number of girls (councils may also establish maximums due to size or cost restrictions). These adult-to-girl supervision ratios were devised to ensure the safety and health of all girls taking part in the activity. For example, if one adult has to respond to an emergency, a second adult is always on hand for the rest of the girls. It may take you a minute to get used to the layout of this chart, but once you start to use it, you'll find it extremely helpful.

Pro Leader Tip

Never feel bad asking for help. Delegate tasks, and meet with your co-leader regularly.

	Group Meetings		Events, Travel, and Camping	
	Two unrelated adults (at least one of whom is female) for every:	Additional adult to each additional # of girls:	Two unrelated adults (at least one of whom is female) for every:	Additional adult to each additional # of girls:
Daisies	12	1-6	6	1-4
Brownies	20	1-8	12	1-6
Juniors	25	1-10	16	1-8
Cadettes	25	1-12	20	1-10
Seniors	30	1-15	24	1-12
Ambassadors	30	1-15	24	1-12

Here are some examples on utilizing the chart: If you're meeting with 17 Daisies, you'll need three adults, at least two of whom are unrelated (in other words, you and a family member), and at least one of whom is female. This is determined as follows: for up to 12 Daisies you need two adults, and one more adult for up to six additional girls. Since you have 17 girls, you need three adults (2+1). If, however, you have 17 Cadettes attending a group meeting you need only two unrelated adults, at least one of whom is female, since the chart shows that two adults can manage up to 25 Cadettes.

In addition to the adult-to-girl ratios, please remember that adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old, registered, and background check.

FAMILY MEETING



Having a family meeting is key to setting up a successful year of Girl Scouting! It's also a great opportunity to ask parents and guardians for their support throughout the year.

What is a family meeting?

A family meeting is designed to provide an opportunity for troop leaders to connect directly with families and friends to foster engagement with the troop. Troops typically hold family meetings at the beginning of each Girl Scout year and prior to Cookie Sales.

How do I prepare for the family meeting?

Here's a checklist of tasks as you prepare for your meeting:



- **Choose a meeting day and location:** Select a date, time, and location. The meeting space should have enough room to accommodate families and their Girl Scout(s) and should ideally be where you plan to meet as a troop throughout the year. This will give girls and families some general familiarity with the location and how to get there.
- **Invite troop families:** Prepare and distribute an invitation to all troop families (parents/guardians) to attend. Introduce yourself, provide the meeting location details, and any request for forms or materials you need the families to complete (like the health history form, permission slip, dues, etc.) Be sure to provide blank copies of the forms you need them to complete along with the invitation.
- **Plan a Girl Activity:** This is an activity that the girls can do during the meeting while you chat with the families. You can set aside a nearby area of the meeting space where girls can work on a quiet activity together with your co-leader and/or Older Girl Scouts while you meet with parents.

SAMPLE FAMILY MEETING AGENDA



Below is a sample agenda you can follow for your meeting, but remember, this is your meeting! Structure it to fit your needs.

Welcome and Introductions

- **Introductions:** Introduce yourself and any other present Girl Scout volunteers. Have participants introduce themselves and share if they have any Girl Scout experiences. If you do not have a second troop leader, explain to families the process of becoming a leader and that two leaders are required for each troop. Explain that the troop leader's role is to work with girls, but that it is the girls' troop, because girls lead! The troop will do activities based on what the girls choose. Explain the Girl Scout mission and how we engage girls in discovering themselves, connecting with others, and taking action to make the world a better place.



Program Information

- **Program materials/uniforms:** Share the Girl Scout program materials such as The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting and Journey books specific to your troop's program level. Let families know that the Guide will have information about Girl Scouts, as well as the badges and Journeys that will be the basis for their troop activities. You can decide whether each family will be responsible for purchasing their girl's supplies or if you will collect payments and purchase everything for the troop.

Registration and Forms

- **Registration:** Each girl must be registered to participate. Parents and guardians should also register and complete the approval process (background check) so they can help with the troop.
- **Collect forms:** Health history forms, permission slips, etc. that you need from families.

What You Can Expect from Your Parents/Guardians

- Parents or guardians should play a role and are important for the success of a troop. Ask for help transporting or chaperoning girls on trips, bringing snacks, sharing special talents, or attending troop meetings. Remind parents or guardians that any adult that has regular contact with girls, handles money, or chaperones trips must be a registered member and complete a background check.

Troop Finances

- **Troop Dues:** Troop dues is the money used to buy troop project supplies, cover meeting expenses, and any additional badges earned. Communicate with parents or guardians how much and when Troop dues are collected.
- **Fall Product and Cookie Programs:** The Fall Product Program and Cookie Program are designed to help girls learn about financial literacy and are an opportunity for troops to earn proceeds to fund their Girl Scout experience. However, there may be some out-of-pocket expenses for families such as field trips and uniforms/books.

Communication

- **Troop Communication:** Talk about how you plan to keep in touch with families about upcoming troop activities, dates, and reminders. Ask the adults to review the phone/email list to ensure their information is correct. Decide on a method of communication that will work best for parents and leaders (email, phone, text, etc.)



FAMILY INVOLVEMENT



As a troop leader, you'll be developing meaningful relationships with the girls in your troop. Parents and guardians can also provide assistance and experience to your troop, and help make meetings and events run more smoothly. Here are some tips on fostering relationships with your girls' families:

- **Let them know that families and troop leaders need to work together to support the troop.** Here are some benefits of parent/guardian involvement that you can share with families:
 - Parents and guardians know their children better than anyone else. They can provide insight and help when it comes to planning and problem solving.
 - Involving caregivers can help keep girls interested in the troop and troop activities.
 - Involved caregivers become closer to their girls, develop an extended social network, and are actively contributing to the community.
- **Ask for help in transporting girls on trips, bringing snacks, sharing special talents with the troop, or by attending troop meetings.** Make a check list of tasks you'd like assistance with and have a sign-up sheet to ensure parent/guardian participation.
- **Communicate often with parents and guardians** (through email or printed updates). Talk to parents as they pick up and drop off their girls.

If parents or guardians will be working directly with girls, they'll need to be registered and background checked. There are many ways that the families can participate in a girl's Girl Scouting experience:

TROOP VOLUNTEER POSITIONS:

- Troop Leaders
- Troop Cookie Manager
- Troop Fall Product Manager
- Troop Treasurer
- Troop Volunteer (field trip chaperone, occasional help, etc.)

WHERE + WHEN TO MEET WITH YOUR TROOP



You will work with co-leaders to determine the best time, date, and location to meet.

While it's important to ask for feedback from families as to when dates and times work, ultimately, the troop leader(s) is responsible for deciding the time, date, and location of meetings.

Girls and adults participating in troops can meet once a week, once a month, or twice a month — how often is up to you and your troop members.

Not sure where to start looking for a meeting space? Your service unit volunteers will help you!

Troops can meet just about anywhere, as long as the location is within the geographic boundaries of their Service Unit Area, is safe, and easily accessible to all girls and adults.

A meeting place needs to provide a safe, clean, and secure environment that allows for participation of all girls. Consider meeting rooms at schools, houses of worship, libraries, community buildings, childcare facilities, and local businesses. Here are a few things to keep in mind when choosing a meeting place:

Safety: You'll want your location to be safe, secure, clean, properly heated and cooled, and free from hazards with all exits clearly marked.

Cost: Free or low-cost to use is best!

Availability: Will the location be available at the time and date of your meetings?

Facilities: Sanitary and accessible restrooms are a must.

Accessibility: Be sure to accommodate girls with varying abilities and their caregivers.



SETTING UP YOUR TROOP MEETINGS



Each Girl Scout meeting provides an opportunity to explore the world and learn new skills. As a troop leader, you can customize your year and the activities in each meeting with your girls. Flexibility is key — based on the needs and interests of your girls, you might have a meeting where you do just one activity, and then your next meeting may consist of three activities. The typical ninety-minute meeting consists of:

Pre-Meeting: This is the period before the meeting officially begins. Troop leaders, parents, and girls can use this time to chat and greet one another. Since you will be talking and setting up, the girls should have an easy, self-directed activity to engage their attention.

This troop started their pre-meeting with coloring!



Opening (5 mins): The official start of the meeting. Opening activities:

- Focus the girls on the meeting
- Are chosen by the girls
- Often include the Girl Scout Promise and Law
- May include a simple flag ceremony, song, game, or story

Business Meeting (10 – 20 mins): This is the time for special announcements, dues, attendance, making plans, deciding/voting on activities, and other troop business. During the business meeting, girls will learn how to lead, influence others, and communicate feelings and opinions. Little by little, allow girls to take responsibility for more of the business of the troop. Depending on how much you have to discuss, this section could also be done as part of your opening.

Activities (20 – 40 mins): Girls get a chance to build skills, try new things, explore their interests, and work cooperatively with others. Girls help plan the activities they'll do during troop meetings. These can include:

- Ideas from Leadership Journeys or The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting
- Badge activity
- Physical activity (active games, etc.)
- Outdoor time/field trip

Snack time (10 mins, optional): Depending on the age range of your girls, troops may need some time to take a break and eat a quick snack. Parents/girls can take a turn bringing in snacks.

Clean-up (10 mins): Clean-up teaches girls to be responsible and allows girls to practice the Girl Scout tenant: "Leave things better than you found them." Use a Kaper Chart to split the tasks up fairly among the troop.

Closing (5 mins): The official end of the meeting. During this time, you can remind the girls of what you reviewed during today's meeting, what's coming up in the next meeting or activity, and end on a positive note. Many troops like to close the meeting with a traditional Friendship Circle.

For more detailed information, including meeting and year plans for specific program levels, please visit your **[Volunteer Toolkit under MYGS on our website gscsnj.org](http://gscsnj.org)**. We have also included a sample attendance tracker, so you can keep track of which girls attended what meeting.

PRO TIP: Name the meeting (with the date) after which badge or activity you are completing, in case you need to fill in a parent of a girl who might have missed a meeting!

TROOP FINANCE



To ensure that finances are managed appropriately, troops must open a bank account. **There should be two registered, unrelated adult volunteers in charge of the bank account.** For more information about opening the troop bank account, please discuss with your Service Unit Treasurer.



Girls should be included in making decisions about how their troop's money is spent; this is key when managing troop finance. Money-earning is an opportunity for girls to gain business and financial literacy skills that are appropriate to their grade-level. Troop finance also provides the opportunity for girls to understand that they must do their part to help the troop earn money to accomplish the things they want to do.

How is money earned

Girl Scout troops should be self-sustaining through the participation in the Fall Product and Cookie Program activities and collecting troop dues. Additional money earning activities can be done for specific reasons. For more information contact moneyearning@gscsnj.org.

Troop dues can be collected weekly, monthly, quarterly or annually.

The following items are important to Girl Scouts of Central & Southern, NJ :

- Girl Scouts is a nonprofit organization.
- Troops are exempt from paying state sales tax on purchases used solely for Girl Scout activities. (Use Exempt Organization Certificate, ask your Service Unit Treasurer).
- Money donated to or earned by a troop becomes that troop's property and does not belong to individual girls, volunteers, or parents/guardians. Funds used should equally benefit all girl members of the troop and not individuals.

It is important to keep track of everything that goes in and out of the troop bank account.

Check out our Troop Financial Form on the web to make your year easier!

At the end of the Girl Scout year, you'll need to submit your Troop Finance Report, which includes info about your troop's income and expenses. Girl Scouts USA and the Internal Revenue Service requires these documents, and they help to protect the interest of your troop and you as a volunteer. It's a pretty simple process and we'll reach out to you later with more information.



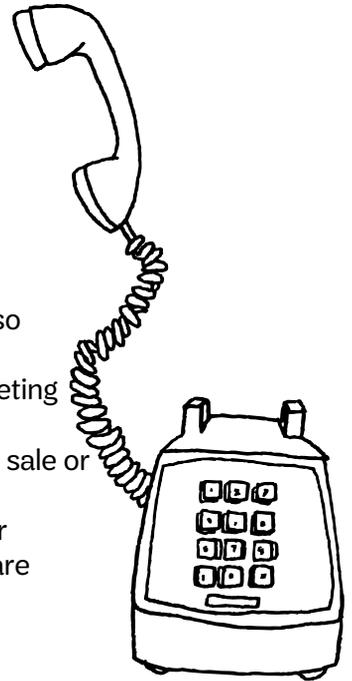
COMMUNICATIONS



As a troop leader, it will be your responsibility to build and maintain strong lines of communication with your families. Your Service Unit Team is here to help! They have many resources and are just a phone call away. Here are a few notes to get you started.

There are many ways that you can communicate with your families. Many leaders utilize email and closed, private groups on Facebook to communicate with their families. Some leaders even create a troop email account that can be used for communication to families. It is important to remember that some people are not “online” and prefer a phone call or a text message reminder. Discuss the most convenient methods of communication for you at your family meeting and take into consideration what works for your families.

Of course, you do not want to overwhelm your families with too much information but transparency is important in building trust with families so they feel more included in your troop. Your families probably do not need to know every single detail of what happened during your troop meeting but they will want to know about the bigger things that happened during the meeting (like how your troop will be participating in the cookie sale or if their girl fell and scraped her knee). Miscommunication or lack of communication can lead to confusion or conflict. If you have questions or concerns about your troop, remember that your service unit volunteers are there to help you figure it out!



MANAGING CONFLICT

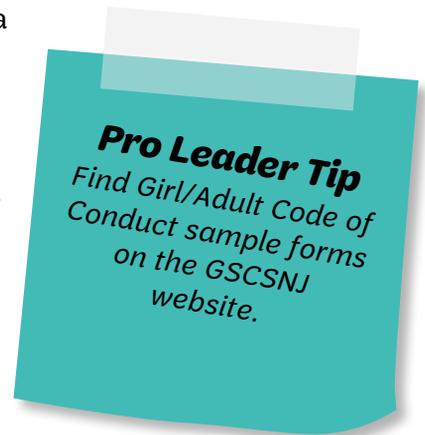
You may encounter a time when you need to have an uncomfortable conversation with a family or another volunteer. First, it is important to remember your role as a Girl Scout. You should be honest and fair, considerate and caring, responsible for what you say and do, and show respect to yourself and others. When you need to facilitate this conversation, approach it from an objective place. Many times, conflict stems from miscommunication. Try not to place blame or judge the person you are speaking with. Finally, demonstrate active listening. This does not necessarily mean that you need to parrot everything that you hear back to the person, but it does mean responding to the other person in a way that shows that you are present and listening to what they are saying.

MANAGING GIRL BEHAVIOR + TROOP CONFLICT



It is not uncommon for girls or troops to have disagreements or a behavior issue from time to time. The best way to address these topics is to be proactive right from the start! When you take a little bit of time at the beginning of the year to set the tone and expectations for all leaders, girls, and families in your troop, your year will run that much more smoothly. And, when an issue does arise, everyone will be on the same page with how to correct the situation.

Here are a few things you can do now, to help manage conflict down the road...



Create a troop agreement

A troop agreement is when the leaders and girls work together to come up with an agreed-upon set of rules for troop meetings and outings. Use the Girl Scout Promise and Law to help start the conversation!

Have girls and families sign the Girl Code of Conduct

The Girl Code of Conduct outlines basic expectations that girls should follow at meetings. Feel free to use the handout provided by council, or create your own! The key is to make sure all girls in the troop follow the same rules.

Have families sign the Parent-Guardian Agreement

The Parent-Guardian Agreement helps ensure that families understand what their responsibilities are as the parent of a Girl Scout.

Be sure to check out these resources on our website in the “Forms” section:

- Parent-Guardian Agreement
- Girl Code of Conduct



WHERE TO FIND THINGS ON OUR WEBSITE

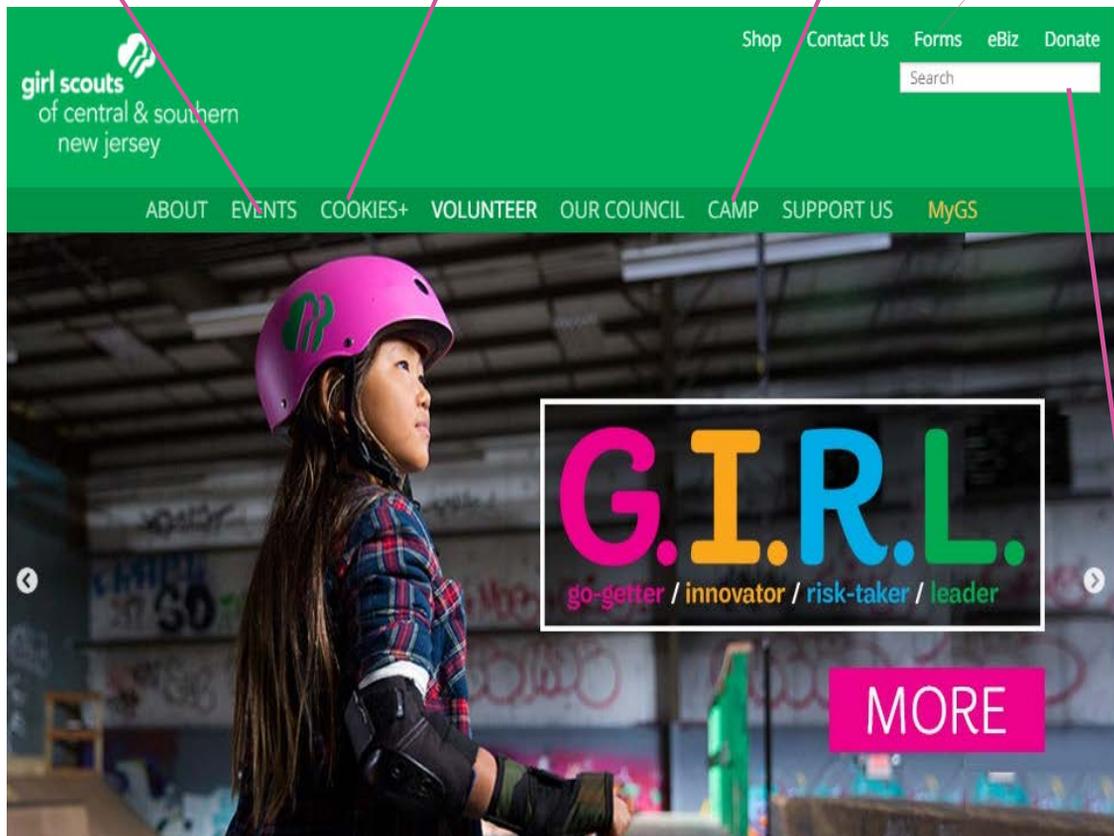


Forms - Download GSCSNJ forms.

Events - Find fun events to attend with your troop!

Cookies - Encourage your troop cookie manager to become familiar with this area of the website!

Camp - Find out more about camp opportunities for your girl and troop.



Search box - USE THIS! Enter what you are looking for in the search box and you will find it quicker. TIP: Use broad terms to widen the search results. (Example: "safety" if looking for Safety Activity Checkpoints)

KEY RESOURCES ON OUR WEBSITE



Learn more about these important pieces on our website!

Forms:

www.gscsnj.org/Forms

Need a permission slip? Getting ready to plan a day, overnight, or extended trip? Please see forms below:

- Parent/Guardian Annual Permission Slip for Troop Activities
- Girl Scout Troop Trip Guidelines
- Girl Scout Troop Trip Form



Certificate of Insurance Request:

Certain locations, such as schools or libraries, ask to see proof of insurance in the form of a Certificate of Insurance (COI) when reserving a space. Use our online form to request a copy.

Financial Assistance Form:

Girl Scouting is open to all girls and adults regardless of their financial situations. To encourage participation, GSCSNJ makes funds available to help girls and adults who need financial assistance. Information on how to request Council Cares for registration and financial aid for events, camp, uniforms, or books can be found on our website.

Safety Activity Checkpoints:

Make sure everyone stays safe on your next troop outing or activity! Be sure to review these Safety Activity Checkpoints for activities.

Volunteer Essentials:

Think of Volunteer Essentials as your encyclopedia to Girl Scout volunteering that's there when you need it.

Council Sponsored Events:

www.gscsnj.org

There is always a new or unique experience waiting for you at Girl Scouts! Check out our events page for the most up-to-date listing of council-sponsored events.

GLOSSARY



- Ambassador** A Girl Scout in 11th or 12th grade.
- Bridging** Girls graduate from one program level to another (Daisy to Brownie, Brownie to Junior, etc.) in a bridging ceremony. When girls complete the steps outlined in *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*, they earn a rainbow bridging award.
- Brownie** A Girl Scout in 2nd or 3rd grade.
- Buddy System** Girl Scouts always use this safety practice of pairing by two's. This system is required on field trips and outings.
- Cadette** A Girl Scout in 6th through 8th grades.
- Court of Awards** A ceremony to present badges and earned recognitions at any grade level typically held at the end of the school year.
- Daisy** A Girl Scout in Kindergarten or 1st grade. Also the nickname of Juliette Gordon Low.
- Friendship Circle** Girl Scouts, both girls and adults, stand in a circle holding hands, right arm over left arm, which stands for the unbroken chain of friendship with Girl Scouts and Girl Guides around the world.
- Friendship Squeeze** Within a friendship circle, one person gently squeezes the hand of the next person and the squeeze is silently passed around the circle.





Fly Up

When Brownies move up to Juniors, it's called "flying up." This is when they get their Brownie wings. Girls who fly up from Brownies can wear their wings on their vest/sash at every future program grade level.

Girl Led

An idea that girls of every grade level take an active role in determining what, where, when, why, and how they'll structure activities. Adults provide guidance, ensuring that planning, organization, and set-up are age-appropriate. Evaluation of all activities is done jointly with girls and is integral to a high-quality Girl Scout experience.

Girl Scout Handshake

Formal way of greeting other Girl Scouts by shaking with the left hand, while giving the Girl Scout sign with the right hand.

Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE)

The Girl Scout program, the GSLE includes Three Keys to Leadership: Discover, Connect and Take Action. Activities are girl-led, which gives girls the opportunity to learn by doing in cooperative learning environment.

Girl Scout Sign

Official Girl Scout greeting. The right hand is raised shoulder high with the three middle fingers extended and the thumb crossing over the palm to hold down the little finger.



Girl Scout Week

Annual celebration during the week of March 12 (the Girl Scout Birthday) to celebrate the beginning of Girl Scouts in the USA.

Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA)

National organization of Girl Scouts headquartered in New York, NY. Membership fees are paid to GSUSA. Their website is www.girlscouts.org.

The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting

A guidebook for each program level full of information about being a Girl Scout and how to earn badges.

Higher Awards (Bronze, Silver, Gold)

The highest awards that a Junior (Bronze), Cadette (Silver), and Senior/Amabassador (Gold) can earn by completing a specific Take Action Project.

Insignia	Girl Scout official emblem, buttons, badges, pins, and other official forms of recognition which may be worn on the uniform by registered members.
Investiture	A special ceremony in which a new member accepts the Girl Scout Promise and Law and receives the membership pin.
Juliettes	Independent Girl Scout not participating in a traditional troop.
Junior	A Girl Scout in 4 th or 5 th grade.
Kaper Chart	A chart that divides the jobs within the troop/group. The chart typically rotates or can easily be changed so that everyone experiences each job and has the opportunity for leadership.
Membership Dues	An annual fee to Girl Scouts of the USA for registration which goes directly to National Headquarters.
Program Aide Training	This training is available for older girls (Cadettes, Seniors, Ambassadors) and focuses on deepening leadership skills and teaching older girls to be mentors of younger girls.
Quiet Sign	Girl Scout signal for silence in a group situation. The person in charge raises her/his right hand and Girl Scouts fall silent as they raise their right hand also.
Service Project	A project that is done for a community and addresses an immediate, short-term need in the community.
Service Unit	Geographic unit of troops/groups within a region led by experienced volunteers who support leaders and troops.
Service Unit Manager (SUM):	An experienced volunteer who manages the local service unit.
Service Unit Team (SUT)	Group of volunteers holding key positions to support the SUM and all members of the local service unit.
Slogan & Motto	The Girl Scout slogan is “Do a good turn daily.” The Girl Scout motto is “Be prepared.”

Take Action Project

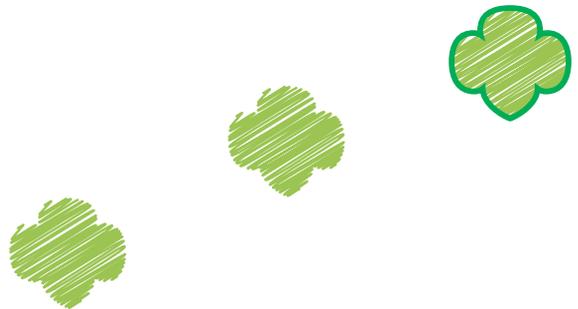
A project that addresses a root cause of a community issue, and has long-term impact.

Volunteer Toolkit (VTK)

A digital resource that supports troop leaders and co-leaders, making the process of running a troop easier and more efficient.

World Thinking Day (WTD)

World Thinking Day is observed on February 22, since 1926, a day of international friendship, speaking out on issues that affect girls and young women, and fundraising for 10 million Girl Guides and Girl Scouts around the world. Girls traditionally learn about the cultures and traditions of WAGGGS member countries.



+ Please note a Troop Trip Form is still required for all trips of two or more nights.

These forms can all be found in the Forms section on our website.



ANNUAL GIRL PERMISSION SLIP FOR 2017 - 2018

Complete this form. This form will be retained by the troop leader.

Girl's Name: _____ Troop #: _____ Date of Birth: _____
Street Address: _____ City: _____ State, Zip Code: _____
Home Phone: _____ Grade in Fall: _____ School: _____

Permission for Trips

My girl has permission to travel to, attend, and participate in troop and council sponsored activities that are less than five hours drive from meeting location, two nights or less, and not considered high-risk activities as outlined by Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Yes No*

Initialed _____ * By checking "No" I am requesting to sign individual permission slips for each activity.

If I cannot be reached in the event of an emergency, the following person is authorized to act in my behalf:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Physicians Name and Phone: _____

Hospital Address: _____

Additional Remarks: _____

Note:

Parent/Guardian Contact Information:

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Relation to Child: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Relation to Child: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Street Address (if different from girl's): _____

City: _____ State, Zip Code: _____

Email Address: _____

Parent/Guardian Agreement: I have read and understand this annual permission slip. I may change or revoke any aspect of this agreement at any time by submitting my request, in writing, to the troop leader.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____



Girl/Adult Health History Form

GIRL MEMBER ADULT MEMBER

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY IN INK.

CONTACT INFORMATION	Troop #: _____ or Individual <input type="checkbox"/>		Service Unit: _____		
	First Name: _____		Middle Name: _____	Last Name: _____	
	Mailing Address: _____		Apt. #: _____	PO Box: _____	
	City: _____		State: _____	Zip: _____	
	Cell: () _____		E-mail: _____		
	Parent/Guardian(s) Name and address (If different from girl's): (Complete for girl form only) 1. _____			Phone: () _____	Cell: () _____
	Parent/Guardian(s) Name and address (If different from girl's): (Complete for girl form only) 2.. _____			Phone: () _____	Cell: () _____
	Custodial Care Information: <input type="checkbox"/> Both Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Mother Only <input type="checkbox"/> Father Only <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____				
HEALTH INFORMATION	Name of Family Physician: _____			Phone: () _____	
	Family Medical/Hospital Insurance Carrier: _____			Policy or Group No: _____	
	Family Dental Insurance Carrier: _____			Policy or Group No: _____	
	Health Information: Age: _____ Date of birth: <u>MM</u> / <u>DD</u> / <u>YY</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Immunizations are up to date.				
	Date of last Tetanus shot: <u>MM</u> / <u>DD</u> / <u>YY</u>				
	Date of last health examination: _____ Were there any medical problems at the time? _____				
	Does participant have any physical, mental or psychological conditions requiring medication, treatment, or other special restrictions or considerations? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, please state medication and reason: _____				
	Does participant take any prescribed medications or over-the-counter drugs on a regular basis? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, please state medication and reason: _____				
	Is participant restricted or limited from participating in any physical activity? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, please explain: _____				
	Please provide a record of past medical treatment, if any, including injuries or surgeries: _____				
Participant has the following health conditions/allergies/dietary restrictions (food and medications): <input type="checkbox"/> ADHD <input type="checkbox"/> Asthma <input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes <input type="checkbox"/> Headaches <input type="checkbox"/> Seizures <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ Participants with allergies must fill out an Allergies and Anaphylaxis Action Plan form					
Allergies (specify): _____					
Emergency Contact (non-parent): _____					
Relationship: _____		Phone: () _____	Cell: () _____		
AUTHORIZATION	PARENT/GUARDIAN AUTHORIZATION This health form is complete and accurate. I know of no reason(s), other than the information indicated on this form, why my daughter/girl should not participate in the prescribed activities except as noted. In the event that my daughter/girl needs medical attention while participating in Girl Scout activities, I authorize the adult in charge to see that my daughter/girl receives routine healthcare, medications, reasonable first aid and to transport my child to a health care facility for emergency services as needed.				
	Signature of parent/guardian: _____			Date: _____	
	ADULT MEMBER AUTHORIZATION This health history is complete and accurate. I am able to engage in all prescribed activities except as noted.				
Signature of adult member: _____			Date: _____		

**Parent - please retain a copy for day camp, resident and other overnight camp programs.
Troop Leader - please retain for your records**



Use this form at your Family Meeting. It will help you get familiarized with the girls! (You can find this on our website under Forms)

The five questions below can make a world of difference in helping me understand your daughter!

- 1. What does your daughter do that makes you smile?**
- 2. What does your daughter do that makes her smile?**
- 3. What makes your daughter angry or upset?**
- 4. What does it look like when she's angry or upset?**
- 5. What should I do when it happens?**

Parent/Guardian Name _____

Child's Name _____

WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO DO THIS GIRL SCOUT YEAR...

NAME: _____

DRAW A PICTURE OR WRITE YOUR ANSWER.

Somewhere I would like to go:

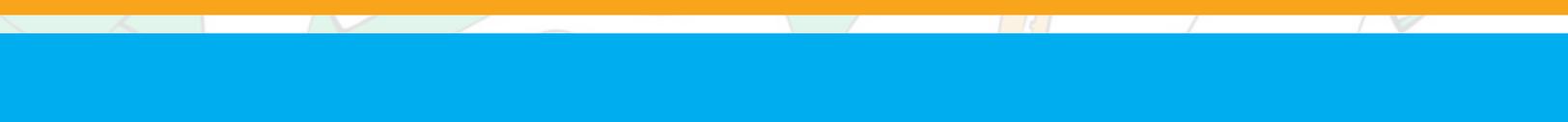
A badge I would like to earn:

Something I would like to do:

Something I would like to discover
outside:

Something I would like to make:

What do you think is the best thing
about Girl Scouts?




girl scouts
of central & southern
new jersey

40 Brace Road
Cherry Hill, NJ 08834
(856) 795-1560
www.gscsnj.org