



The Promise

A publication for friends and supporters of Girl Scouts of Central Illinois
Issue 1 Winter 2010



Girl Scouts
of Central Illinois

Dear Friends of Girl Scouting,

This past year, over 22,000 girls became members of Girl Scouts of Central Illinois. Our commitment to providing the Girl Scout experience to any girl who wants it meant that we offered membership assistance to nearly one out of every two of these girls. That translates to over \$150,000 in membership assistance. We also offered hundreds of girls partial or full camperships so that they could experience the magic of the outdoors in a way that only Girl Scouts can provide. Our girl members traveled the state, the country, and the globe, and received programming in self-esteem, the arts, technology, financial literacy, career exploration, and more – all while having fun with other girls and developing meaningful relationships with caring adult volunteers. Over two dozen girls achieved the Girl Scout Gold Award, the highest award in Girl Scouting, with over 40 more earning Girl Scouting's second highest award, the Girl Scout Silver Award. We know that your generosity also fosters the spirit of philanthropy in the girls we serve. Eight hundred ninety troop-led service projects allowed hundreds of our girls to give back to their communities through community service.

It has been commonplace to overhear the struggles of many of our Girl Scout families across the state. Whether our program activities have taught girls financial skills that might help them and their families weather this economic crisis or simply allowed for a diversion from the daily reminders of the receding economy, your support has helped to ease not only the financial burden faced by the council but in some cases by our local families as well.

Have no doubt that together we are building girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place. Girls are having experiences through Girl Scouting that they would not have any other way. Girls are taking charge of making their dreams come true and they are becoming leaders in their communities along the way. None of this could have happened without community support. Thank you so much for your generosity on behalf of girls in central Illinois. We look forward to a continued relationship with our community partners so that we can continue making a difference in the lives of girls!

Sincerely,

Pam Kovacevich, CEO
Girl Scouts of Central Illinois

2009-2010

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Announcing...the GSCI Alumnae Association!



The GSCI Alumnae Association is open to former girl members who are over the age of 18, men or women who were formerly Girl Scout volunteers, and lifetime members. Members of the community who are interested in supporting Girl Scouts but who are not former girl members or volunteers may also join.

GSCI alumnae will have numerous opportunities to participate in special events such as luncheons, mixers, and camp visits to meet and mingle with other Girl Scout alums. Alumnae will receive council newsletters and e-communications and will be given opportunities to participate in the Girl Scout program. Most importantly, our alums will have the opportunity to keep Girl Scouting alive and well now and into the future.



Sign up today! For more information about the GSCI Alumnae Association, contact Carla Rudicil at: (800) 777-1912 ext. 210 or crudicil@girlscouts-gsci.org. To join the GSCI Alumnae Association, go to: <http://www.girlscouts-gsci.org>



Did You Know?

Juliette Gordon Low believed so strongly in her vision of Girl Scouting for all girls that she sold her pearls to help fund the early days of Girl Scouting.



GSCI Membership



Last year our membership consisted of 22,276 girls and 5,348 adult volunteers—674 of which are lifetime members. We hold a 15.4% market share, well above the 11% national average for market share, and boast a 1:4.7 adult to girl ratio.

Camp Exec



At Girl Scouts of Central Illinois we are committed to developing the leader in every girl. We accomplish this by helping girls discover their passions and believe in their abilities and by providing them with a vast array of adult role models to look up to. One program that offers all of these opportunities is Camp Exec, a professional development program for girls ages 11 – 17.

Through activities involving personality testing, college and career exploration, resume writing, business etiquette, creative conflict management, and more, participants explore the freedom to think of themselves as pre-professionals in a variety of fields of study and/or careers which may be of interest to them. Throughout the country Girl Scout programs like Camp Exec introduce the idea of career possibilities to girls at a young age, with the hope that they will find it possible to identify a variety of ways they may become professionally successful and self-sustaining as adults.

Tatiana Sotomayor, a two-time Camp Exec attendee, said she returned to the program a second time in order to “get even more out of it.” One of Tatiana’s favorite activities was learning how to write a resume. At 15, she already has a resume ready to present to potential employers when the time comes and the skills to expand her resume as she accrues experience.

Other Camp Exec participants echoed this appreciation for developing resume writing and interview skills. Girls who participated in Camp Exec sessions listed qualities such as organization, responsibility, determination, and a “take charge” attitude as strengths they bring to a resume, job interview, or career. “I really liked learning about different kinds of jobs,” Tatiana said. She hopes to attend the University of Illinois or MIT and study engineering.

The Camp Exec program is offered in partnership with local community resources. This year’s Camp Exec program took girls to college campuses for college and career exploration. Campus experiences included a university admissions presentation, a visit to a

college career center, and tours of a campus greenhouse, planetarium, and art gallery. Guest speakers included professional women from a vast array of careers, including basketball referee, art museum director, horticulturist, life coach, and a variety of health professionals. In some cases girls job-shadowed these professionals to gain firsthand knowledge of what different careers are like.

Camp Exec helps girls to see that they already have experiences they can build upon professionally. Even the youngest participant can be led through the process of creating a resume or portfolio highlighting her accomplishments. Girls develop confidence in themselves as they realize that they are already reaching and accomplishing. They learn that building upon their early successes can be great fun.

In short, it’s the balanced combination of fun and learning that accounts for Camp Exec’s success and makes it such a hit with older girls. When asked if they would recommend the program to friends, the answer participants gave was an unqualified “Yes!”

Europe 2009



Girl Scouts has long promoted the value of travel for all girls. Travel allows girls to see new places, meet new people, learn about different cultures and ideas, experience independence, develop navigation and decision-making skills, expand their horizons, and come to see themselves as members of the global community. Beginning with day trips close to home for younger girls and broadening to include trips across the country and around the world for older girls, the Girl Scout travel pathway provides a progressive travel program designed to meet the needs of girls as they advance through the Girl Scout age levels.

This past June a group of thirteen girls ages 14 – 18 experienced the benefits of travel firsthand when, accompanied by eight adults, they traveled to England, France, and Switzerland. From June 10 – 19, 2009, members of troops 1117 and 1167 enjoyed a spectrum of modern, ancient, urban, and countryside sights that included Buckingham Palace, the London Underground, Versailles Palace, the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, a night cruise on the River Seine, and gorgeous mountain and meadow views in Switzerland. Highlights of the trip

included visits to two of the four World Girl Scout Centers: Pax Lodge in London, and Our Chalet in Adelboden, Switzerland, where the group had the privilege of spending two nights in an attic dormer overlooking the Swiss Alps.

Members of this travel group prepared for the trip for two years. The group held planning meetings every other month in 2008 and every month in 2009 leading up to the trip. They set, researched, planned, and reached a series of financial goals to fund the trip, including earnings from part-time jobs and profits from Girl Scout product sales, rounding out their balances via troop money-earning projects such as a garage sale. Contributing to a sense of accomplishment for several participants was the fact that this trip represented their first-ever excursion on an airplane or out of the country.

This group of travelers looks forward to turning their travel experiences into a service project by visiting GSCI troops to talk about how to plan a trip, how to set goals and save money to pay for it, and how their travels have affected them.

In Her Own Words: Interview with Chelsa Green

Chelsa Green, a Girl Scout Ambassador, participated in the GSCI Europe trip in the summer of 2009. Below are some of her thoughts and reflections about her experiences.



What kinds of things did you do as a troop to prepare for your trip to Europe?

We did a lot of prep work such as researching the customs and cultures of the countries we'd be visiting. We also met with a native Londoner who talked to us about life in England. And of course, there was a lot of financial planning.

Did you have any fears prior to the trip?

I had some fears about the long flight over the ocean, due in part to a prior bad experience. Fourteen hours of flying was very challenging, but worth it!

Did you have any uncomfortable moments during the trip?

Paris was kind of challenging. It was a very loud city, with sirens going off, a protest in a train station...the city seemed dirty, and we were sometimes approached by beggars. People seemed more closed there, or maybe it was just the language barrier. Paris was also very beautiful and fun, but as an urban experience it was more challenging.

Continued on page 5

Did you make any new friends on the trip?

We met up with a group of Girl Scouts from Alaska and ended up traveling with them. Most of the time we were so busy but by the end we had really bonded with them. I was just talking to one of them the other day – we have stayed in touch via texting and stuff like that.



What was a personal highlight of yours from the trip?

Climbing mountains in Switzerland! After growing up in Illinois, the heights and views of Switzerland were spectacular. Everywhere you look there are mountains and valleys and hills and streams and lakes—nothing is flat! Breathing the air up in the mountains was amazing! It's so clean, and the views are so clear. I also appreciated all the history and the art and getting to see things that, in the United States, you only hear about, such as the Mona Lisa. There was art everywhere! Also, the history is so old. Here in the U.S. when we think of history we think of the Liberty Bell, but the history in Europe is so ancient. Nothing here is that old.

Has the trip changed you as a person?

It has definitely broadened by horizons and changed how I look at things. It has expanded my awareness beyond my own city, state, and country. I now feel a personal connection with those places and people, something I would not have had otherwise. Now when I hear something on the news about France or England I feel connected to it. It completely changes your view of the world. It has also changed my view of college. I now see college as a potential opportunity for studying abroad.

“This trip has expanded my awareness beyond my own city, state, and country. I now feel a personal connection with the places I visited and the people I met. When I hear something on the news about France or England, I feel connected to it. It completely changes your view of the world.”

Council Activities At-a-Glance

Last year GSCI offered more than 200 council-sponsored activities across six program areas of concentration: Healthy Living, Financial Literacy, S.T.E.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), Travel, the Arts, and Outdoor Education.

Grant-supported programs such as uniquely ME! and S.T.E.M. mean that girls gain exposure to the value of healthy choices and curricula in the sciences, while other programs provide opportunities for professional development and career exploration, exposure to the arts, training in financial literacy, and numerous outdoor activities.



Troop Leaders Needed!

Are you interested in serving as a role model for girls ages 5 – 17? If so, GSCI needs you! Currently we have girls on a waiting list who want to join Girl Scouts, and we need adult volunteers to lead them. Being a troop leader is an incredible opportunity to inspire girls to lead with courage, confidence, and character and make the world a better place. As a Girl Scout leader you will find a welcoming, inclusive environment where your specific skills and talents are appreciated. At the same time, you'll have the opportunity to enhance your skills and rediscover your own potential.



Giving Back

Community service is an important element of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. In Girl Scouting, girls of all ages give back to their communities and develop qualities which help them grow into caring, concerned citizens. Here are just a few examples of the many council-sponsored service projects girls completed over the course of the past year:

- 355 girls learned the importance of helping others be prepared for school as they collected school supplies and donated them to local schools for children in need
- Over 900 girls participated in a winter Festival of Giving by making blankets for Project Linus, visiting nursing homes and bringing holiday treats to residents, writing letters and cards to injured soldiers, and holding food and coat drives and filling stockings with toys and supplies
- 636 girls participated in a council-wide diaper drive to donate to local agencies that help young families in need

Sole Patrol

In addition to council-sponsored community service projects, many troops conduct their own projects based on needs they see in their own communities. One such project turns old shoes into drinking water on the other side of the world.

From their leader, Sherri White, troop 5090 learned about a group of local citizens who collect old shoes, export them and sell them for thirty-five cents per pound, and use the money to support well-digging operations in areas of Africa where water is scarce or water quality is poor.

Troop 5090 stepped up to contribute to a cause they felt was worthy. They distributed fliers soliciting shoes at the Fall Color Drive festival in Pike County. Some members of the troop took a wagon door to door around their neighborhood collecting shoes, while others collected from friends and families. One member of the troop gave public presentations to the Pittsfield Rotary group and Illini Community Hospital, detailing the

project and requesting community assistance.

A local coordinator sees that the collected shoes are exported and sold for thirty-five cents per pound and that the money goes to Living Waters, an organization that promotes drilling wells to provide clean water for people who would otherwise have only contaminated water or scarce access to any water at all. Well-digging rigs are purchased, transported to Africa, and assembled to provide potable water.

Previously it took 100,000 pairs of shoes to generate \$30,000 to buy a drilling rig and towing vehicle to provide clean water in Kenya. One rig can drill 30-40 wells a year, and each well will last for 30 years. This year, because prices have gone up, 200,000 pairs of shoes will be required to buy a rig. So far troop 5090 has collected 8,000 pairs of shoes, and the entire project has so far collected 175,000 pairs.



Sherri White has noticed a difference in the girls in her troop since they've begun the project. "The girls seem to think more about the impact they can have on other people and that material things don't matter as much as how they treat others and how their actions affect others. I think it has helped them appreciate the things they have be mindful of what is really important."

OPERATION COOKIE SHARE

Support Our Troops Overseas

Show your support for our soldiers and your local Girl Scouts through Operation Cookie Share! Operation Cookie Share is a program that allows customers to not only satisfy their own sweet tooth, but also show their support for military troops overseas. When customers are asked if they would like to purchase cookies, they will also have the option to purchase additional boxes for military troops. Operation Cookie Share will run from pre-sales ordering throughout Cookie Booth season. Operation Cookie Share is held in partnership with the Adopt-a-Soldier program sponsored by

State Farm's Military Affinity Group (MAG), an employee resource group that supports the military and their families.



Long Range Property Plan

Did you know Girl Scouts of Central Illinois just completed a Long Range Property Plan? Visit our website for details.

www.girlscouts-gsci.org



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teaches girls how to manage money.



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Girl Scouts of Central Illinois
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Watch for these special events in 2010!

Thursday, January 21

Women of Distinction Reception, Champaign

Saturday, March 13

Thin Mint Jubilee, Bloomington

Thursday, April 22

Women of Distinction Awards Banquet, Champaign

Thursday, May 13

Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend Celebration, Pekin

Saturday, July 24

Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend Celebration, Quincy

Wednesday, September 15

Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend Celebration, Bloomington

Thursday, September 23

Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend Celebration, Springfield

Stay tuned for more details!

Go green!

If you would like to conserve resources and receive our newsletters electronically, go to www.girlscouts-gsci.org and sign up today!