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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Girl Scouts of Central Illinois Kicks Off Annual Cookie Activity *Operation Cookie Share is offered again this year to support military troops*

The wait is over! Girl Scouts of Central Illinois kicks off its annual Girl Scout Cookie Activity on January 13, 2012. Girl Scouts throughout the region will take orders from family, friends, and neighbors through February 5, 2012.

This year's sale offers eight cookie varieties - Thin Mints, Caramel DeLites, Shortbreads, Lemonades, Peanut Butter Patties, Peanut Butter Sandwiches, Shout Outs, and Thanks-A-Lots. The Shortbread box will come in a special box this year to mark Girl Scouting's 100th anniversary which will officially occur on March 12, 2012.

Every year, thousands of girls gain valuable knowledge while providing the community with a special treat. The Girl Scout Cookie Activity is an integral part of Girl Scouting's Business and Economic Literacy initiative for all girls ages 5 to 17. Girls develop essential skills such as goal setting, decision making, money management, people skills, and business ethics.

Operation Cookie Share – returns this year!

Girl Scouts of Central Illinois is pleased to once again offer Operation Cookie Share as part of the Cookie Sale. Operation Cookie Share allows customers to not only support their local Girl Scouts, but also show their support for our military. When customers are asked if they would like to purchase cookies, they will also have the option to purchase additional boxes for military troops. This is the third year for the program, which has resulted in a total 145,164 boxes being delivered to military troops. Operation Cookie Share will run from pre-sales ordering throughout Cookie Booth season. Operation Cookie Share is held in sponsorship 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.

The Girl Scout Cookie Activity has become a famous annual event that helps girls develop important leadership skills they will use throughout their lives. The activity provides finance, marketing, and public speaking skills, along with valuable experiences that build a girl's self-confidence to help her develop her own personal leadership style.

"Many successful businesswomen today say they got their start selling Girl Scout Cookies," states Pam

Kovacevich, CEO of Girl Scouts of Central Illinois. “Girls practice useful life skills like planning, decision-making, and customer service. It’s always exciting to see girls developing skills they might not realize they are developing while it’s happening.”

Proceeds from the Girl Scout Cookie Activity remain local. This revenue is used to directly benefit girls by supporting troop activities and allowing the council to provide year-round programming on topics of community service, outdoor education, financial literacy, science, and the arts. Proceeds also provide support for training adult volunteers and financial assistance to make Girl Scouting available to all girls.

For more information about Girl Scouts of Central Illinois or the Girl Scout Cookie Activity, go to www.girlscouts-gsci.org or contact Erica Douglas at 877-477-4757, ext. 1506.

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About Girl Scouts

Founded in 1912, Girl Scouts of the USA is the preeminent leadership development organization for girls with 3.2 million girl and adult members worldwide. Girl Scouts builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. Girl Scouts of Central Illinois serves 20,000 girls and 5,000 adult members in 38 counties throughout central Illinois. For more information, visit www.girlscouts-gsci.org or call your local Girl Scout Service Center at 877-231-1446.

