

Connect!

Volunteer E-Newsletter For Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland

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August 2009

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Volunteer Services

Summertime Reflection

Right now it's summer. It's time to enjoy the weather, let the sun dance on your skin, let the cool breeze blow the cobwebs from your thoughts. It is time to relax, remember, and refresh. Why not use some of this time to start planning for how you might work the journeys into your next Girl Scout year?

Think back on your past year. What successes did you have? As you worked with girls, do you remember the look on their faces when you helped them discover a new experience, or supported them as they took the plunge and tried something new—and then discovered that they were good at it? From that moment, each girl developed a new passion, strove to prove her excellence, and was introduced to people who could help her explore, grow, and develop. Together, you embarked on a journey. Your memories are wonderful; theirs are life-changing. And there are so many more life-changing memories in the works!

Journeys Make Your Lives Bigger

Life is a journey, particularly for girls. On every journey, you start somewhere, perhaps with an invitation, a picture that inspires you, or words in a book. You make a decision to go somewhere new. And on the way, you might try foreign foods, visit new places, and hear new ideas that spark your imagination, forge new friendships, and take home beautiful memories and perhaps a few keepsakes. Most importantly, you come home a little wiser...and your world is a little bigger.

Those same elements are part of each Girl Scout journey. The journey books take you and girls on new adventures, where you will discover, connect, and take action to make a difference in the world. Journey books are designed to take girls to new places, all

under the umbrella of a particular theme, but it is your expertise, experience, and imagination that bring the books to life and make the journey unique for your girls.

Forget the Stress

Each journey adult guide has been created specifically for you, providing information that helps you facilitate discussions and activities with girls. Included in each adult guide are explanations of journey themes, sample sessions, tips for encouraging girls to choose and complete activities, and ideas for Take Action projects. Journey books give purpose and structure to the year as you and the girls define goals and choose activities related to a central theme. They also describe how to make sure the Girl Scout Leadership Experience is girl-led. Girls define their own goals and the activities they want to pursue, while you guide them and lend your expertise.

Plan for the Year Ahead

To get started, first draw up a simple calendar and plot out what your year might look like:

Then consider the following questions:

- How many meetings will you have each month? When do you plan to break for holidays or other events?
- How many weeks should be set aside for camp or travel?
- How many weeks do you need to allocate for the Girl Scout Cookie Program?
- At the beginning of the year, how will you introduce the journeys and related books to the girls and their parents? Is there a kickoff event that can help bring the journey theme to life for the girls—what's a good day for this?
- Are there guest speakers you can introduce to the girls who will open up new opportunities for them?
- If you've worked with this group before, what are their preferences? Badge work? Field trips? Special events? Can these also be tied to the journey theme? Make sure to include these activities in your calendar as a starting point. Girls will fill in the details as they guide their own journey.

Once you've established a loose framework, the girls will be ready to lead their own exploration.

Keep it Girl-Led

You've plotted out a framework for your year, but come fall, it'll be time to ask the girls what they think. Remember: You want girls to lead!

Before your group even opens journey books, ask the girls what the journey and related theme mean to them. Maybe the theme ignites a discussion (or even debate!) that helps the girls chart their course for the year. Use this information to help the girls plan a journey kickoff event for themselves and their families.

In your discussions, probe to find out what the girls are most interested in accomplishing over the year. Maybe one or more girls had a particular adventure over the summer that they can expand on as a group? Ask, too, how they'd like to incorporate these interests into their year.

For example, suppose girls are intrigued by the theme of the journey book or by a related theme that's a presence in their lives. This is your chance to encourage girls to

dig deeper. Can they organize and plan a field trip or longer travel opportunity to find out more? Is there an event in another pathway that meshes with this topic or area of interest? Can the girls locate and communicate with an expert in the field via e-mail? Can they invite a local guest speaker to answer specific questions or demonstrate particular skills? And which badges can the group choose to work on that will deepen their skills in this particular area?

None of this will happen overnight, but by asking gentle questions, showing interest in their answers, and helping them take the next steps in their exploration, the girls will lead their own journeys as leaders of their communities—and the world!

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Membership Services

Gearing up for the New Girl Scout Year!

Do Your Part and “Together We Can...Make The World a Better Place”

Hey leaders.... Don't forget that your troop will not be able to participate in the Fall Opportunity Sale unless you have completed the Finance Summary Form for the troop account(s) you are in charge of. Don't keep the girls from this great learning and fund-raising opportunity. If you have questions, give your membership services manager a call!

It's Sign Up For Scouting Time...

Once again, Girl Scouts has joined forces with Boy Scouts of America in an effort to recruit members into both organizations. Your membership staff will be conducting talks at area schools the first week or two of August and then we are asking your help to man sign up booths in your schools/communities. Monica or Becky will be calling you in the next week to discuss your sign up nights! More information can be obtained at www.scoutinginkansas.org or www.kansasgirlscouts.org.

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Program Services

Program Reminders!!

- A new condensed equipment inventory form will be out soon. Each service unit will need to make sure their inventory is current and up to date. We will be contacting your service unit if we do not have a current inventory to set a timeline for this task to be completed.
- Trip applications for girls who want to participate in the Council-Sponsored Summer trips will be online in August. Visit www.kansasgirlscouts.org .

- Don't forget that the **Dad and Me Fishing** is coming in September (Saturday the 12th)! Remind dads in your troop of this fun upcoming event.
- Help! Need someone who can cut wood from a pattern to make bird houses.
- Looking for adults interested in helping on a council level with girl program.

Interested? E-mail vmjacobs_gs@yahoo.com

There are lots of items in the **Lost and Found from camp**. If your girls forgot to bring something home check with us to retrieve it!

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Product Sales Information

Preparing for Fall Opportunity Sale!

With the Fall Opportunity Sale just around the corner, take time now and plan to attend your Area Meeting: Aug 4th in Quinter or Aug 30th in Hoxie, to receive your product sale supplies. Keep in mind that every troop **MUST** have submitted a Finance Summary form for approval in order to even sell product.

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In the Council Shop

SHOP, SHOP, SHOP

The new Journey "It's Your Planet Love It" books have arrived at the Hays Shop. This Journey has an earth-friendly theme, and will invite girls to tackle issues like the world's water supply, energy, and the impact of food choices on the planet. There are also earned awards and keepsakes that coordinate with this new Journey. Stop by the shop today and take a look at these new and existing books.

And to help keep your Journey's organized, there is a new and very elegant Girl Scout briefcase. Everyone will want one. Its striking fuchsia lining serves as a wonderful contrast to the outer black case. It carries everything from a laptop to a lipstick!

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News to Use & Ideas to Motivate

"14 Women"

Girl Scouts of the USA has partnered with The Creative Coalition (a nonprofit organization that educates and mobilizes leaders in the arts and entertainment communities), to bring copies of the powerful documentary, *14 Women*, to every Girl Scout council nationwide.

Take advantage of this exciting new way to demonstrate leadership values to your troops. The film takes an in-depth look inside the lives of the fourteen women U.S. Senators in the 109th Congress. Our women Senators possess the leadership values girls look for in their role models, and *14 Women* provides girls a unique opportunity to see what they can achieve when embracing leadership positions and as such, will be a great film for girls to watch while pursuing the Ms. President Patch.

GSUSA developed this participation patch for girls of all ages to celebrate past women who have paved the way for girls to enter public service and educates girls on what women leaders are currently achieving in politics with the support of The White House Project, a nonprofit organization that aims to advance women's leadership in all communities and sectors of public service.

We hope that you check out these DVD's from your service unit library and let Girl Scouts enjoy the opportunity to see firsthand how women are taking action in meaningful ways that uphold the values for which the Girl Scouts stand.

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