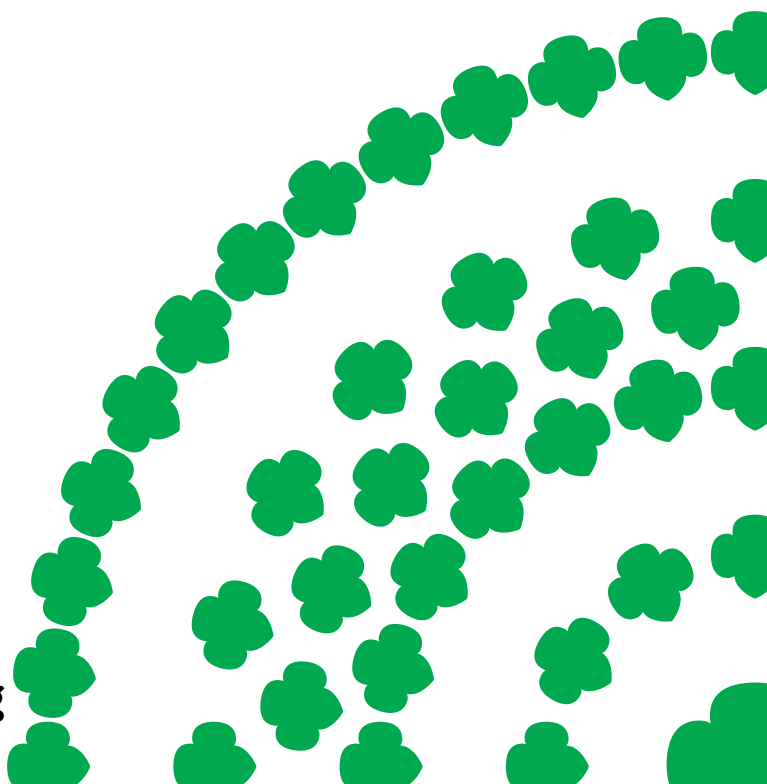




# **Family Handbook**

your guide to girl scouting

[gswpa.org](http://gswpa.org)






# Grade Levels



**daisies**  Girl Scout Daisies are in kindergarten and first grade (generally ages 5-7) and meet in groups of approximately five to 10 with two or more adult leaders in a nurturing, inclusive environment. They go on short trips, learn about nature and science, and explore the arts and their communities. Girl Scout Daisies can also earn Learning Petals, receive participation patches and complete special Daisy Leadership Journeys. Girls this age enjoy participating in the Girl Scout Cookie Program and Fall Start-Up Program.

**cadettes**  Girl Scout Cadettes are in sixth, seventh and eighth grades (generally ages 11-13). They can participate in national events and travel trips, and are eligible to earn the Girl Scout Silver Award for community service. Girl Scout Cadettes explore outdoor adventures and sports, such as sailing, drill team, horseback riding and canoeing. These girls work on badges that match their interests and talents, and complete special Cadette Leadership Journeys. They take on more responsibility for their activities and learn to set goals. Girls who are in the seventh grade or higher may also attend leadership-development trainings, such as Leader-in-Training (L.I.T.), Program Aide and Counselors-in-Training (C.I.T.) to help them develop their leadership skills.



**brownies**  Girl Scout Brownies are in second and third grades (generally ages 7-9). They learn about themselves, their families, friends and the world around them. Girl Scout Brownies can earn badges for learning new things and complete special Brownie Leadership Journeys. These girls can go to fun and interesting places and learn to set goals during both the Girl Scout Cookie Program and Fall Start-Up Program. They also enjoy attending Girl Scout camp.

**seniors**  Girl Scout Seniors are in grades nine and 10 (generally ages 13-15). They are responsible for planning their own activities with support from their adult advisors, and learn to be leaders by serving as role models for younger girls. By completing Senior Leadership Journeys, they are eligible to begin work on the Girl Scout Gold Award, the highest honor in Girl Scouting, and may also travel to national and international events and serve in leadership capacities on girl planning boards. Girl Scout Seniors may attend trainings in a variety of areas, including leadership development, program levels and First Aid/CPR. In addition, girls who are at least 14 years old may be elected to serve as Council or National Delegates.



**juniors**  Girl Scout Juniors are in fourth and fifth grades (generally ages 9-11). They begin to assume responsibility and practice leadership skills as they try new activities. These girls develop meaningful relationships, explore computers and technology, and discover the world through outdoor adventures and sports. Girl Scout Juniors earn badges as they master new skills and complete special Junior Leadership Journeys. They are also eligible to complete the Girl Scout Bronze Award for community service.

**ambassadors**  Girl Scout Ambassadors are in grades 11 and 12 (generally ages 15-17). They are responsible for planning their own activities with minimal adult supervision. Girl Scout Ambassadors work on badges that match their interests and talents, and complete special Ambassador Leadership Journeys. These girls are also eligible to earn the Girl Scout Gold Award, the highest honor in Girl Scouting, which qualifies them for college scholarships. They travel to national and international events, serve in leadership capacities at a council or national level and may even work as a Girl Scout camp staff member, depending upon their age and experience.



# Who we are...

We are the largest girl-serving organization in the country 🌸 We are more than 3 million members strong 🌸 We are the premier leadership organization for girls 🌸 **and we are in every zip code.**

**We are Girl Scouts.** We were founded in 1912 by trailblazer Juliette Gordon Low. We are the largest girl-serving organization in the United States. We are the largest member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, a sisterhood of close to 10 million girls and adults in 144 countries.

We are urban, rural and suburban. We are schools, churches, temples, mosques, public housing, foster homes and detention centers. We are in every zip code and in 90 countries around the world.

### We turn 10 percent into much more.

At any given point in time, approximately 10 percent of girls are Girl Scouts, but:

- 80 percent of women business owners were Girl Scouts.
- 69 percent of female U.S. Senators were Girl Scouts.
- 67 percent of female members of the House of Representatives were Girl Scouts.
- Virtually every female astronaut who has flown in space was a Girl Scout.

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

**Our vision.** Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania is creating a world where every girl's voice is heard and honored with respect, her talents nurtured, her spirit supported and her beauty affirmed; a world where every girl has adults in her life who care and guide her in traveling her chosen path, and where every girl's story leads to fulfillment of her vision.

**100 years young.** We are about to celebrate a century of trailblazing, of leadership, of fun and friendship—and we're just getting started.

### We are more than 3 million strong.

- 2.5 million girls 5-17 years of age
- 18,000 Girl Scouts overseas
- 900,000 adult volunteers
- 50 million alumnae
- 112 councils throughout the United States

### Find out more:

- [gswpa.org](http://gswpa.org)
- *S'MORE*
- @aGirl e-newsletter

## Encourage girls to earn all their journey awards as they climb up Girl Scout's Ladder of Leadership

### It's Your World—Change It!

Ambassadors raise their voices to advocate for issues they care about.



**AMBASSADOR**

### It's Your Planet—Love It!

Ambassadors learn that leaders aim for justice.



Seniors learn that leaders have a vision and can move the world a step closer to it.



**SENIOR**

Seniors find out what leaders can sow on Earth.



Cadettes develop the people skills that leaders need.



**CADETTE**

Cadettes become leaders in clearing the air!



Juniors learn that leaders need the Power of One, the Power of Team, and the Power of Community.



**JUNIOR**

Juniors use leadership to bring new energy solutions to the world.



Brownies go on a quest to find the three keys to leadership.

**BROWNIE**

Brownies demonstrate their leadership while saving Earth's water.



Daisies have fun—and learn leadership skills—in the garden.



**DAISY**

Daisies learn to protect Earth's treasures.



# Pathways

How you participate in Girl Scouting is up to you—with a troop, on a travel trip, at council events, with a series or at camp! But first things first. Become a member, select the pathway(s) that interest you, then follow your dreams...



## Event Pathway

There are literally hundreds of workshops, field trips and activities sponsored by GSWPA to fill your free time. To take full advantage of the Girl Scout Event Pathway, simply go to the Calendar page on [gswpa.org](http://gswpa.org), select “girl events” and sort by grade, date or even

zip code. All of these events (including family events) are also listed in the “S’more Fun Events” section in each issue of *S’MORE* magazine and in @aGirl, our online newsletter. With so many to choose from, you can also sign up to receive registration reminder “tweets” on Twitter®.

## Troop Pathway

In partnership with adult volunteers, girls in troops meet regularly throughout the year to take advantage of a wide variety of resources—including forum activities and ideas in *S’MORE* magazine. In the Girl Scout Troop Pathway, you’ll use grade-level resources for completing Girl Scout Journeys, Girl Scout awards and a variety of badge programs. Girls and their leaders may also choose troop activities from [gswpa.org](http://gswpa.org), such as Girl Scout traditions, outings, service projects, 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary opportunities, scholarships and contests, as well as great program booklets and guides like LiveHealthy! LeadHealthy! and Mix It Up.



## Camp Pathway

Love the outdoors? Your pathway in Girl Scouting can include outdoor appreciation, high adventure challenges, nature and environmental activities, weekend explorations or summer experiences. Select “resident camp,” “CORE camp,” “day camp” or “overnight camping” on the Calendar page of [gswpa.org](http://gswpa.org) and sort by grade, date or even zip code. All Girl Scout Camp Pathway opportunities are also listed in each issue of *S’MORE* magazine’s “Camp Like a Girl section” and girls who attend camp can stay connected on our camp Facebook® pages.



## Travel Pathway

Got the travel bug? Girl Scouting offers great ways to begin planning your next adventure! Each issue of *S’MORE* magazine includes exciting road trip opportunities, plus stories from girls who have a passion for travel. The Calendar page on [gswpa.org](http://gswpa.org) allows you to select “road trips” and sort by grade and date too. Girls who sign up for the Girl Scout Travel Pathway will also receive advance notification each year on upcoming trips via mail or e-mail.

## Series Pathway

If you want to participate in several sessions around a specific area of interest or theme, try the Girl Scout Series Pathway. These are listed in *S’MORE* magazine and on the Calendar page of [gswpa.org](http://gswpa.org) under “program series.” What’s best about being in a Series Pathway? It’s easy to find program themes—that may be of interest to you—posted on the *S’MORE* Facebook® page.



Girls can participate in any number of pathways; and all Girl Scouts can benefit from participation in the Fall Start-Up Program or Girl Scout Cookie Program.

# Get Involved...

## Were you once a Girl Scout?

Your experience is forever a part of the Girl Scout Movement, whether you were involved in Girl Scouting as a Daisy, Brownie, Junior, Cadette, Senior or any other level you remember as a girl. Former volunteers, board members and staff members are also all a part of our alumnae network.

E-mail [alumnae@gswpa.org](mailto:alumnae@gswpa.org) or call 1-800-248-3355 to reconnect with Girl Scouting.

**What did you do today?** As a Girl Scout volunteer, you'll add meaningful days to girls' lives and to your own as well. Tackle everything from global warming to election reform. Travel to incredible places. Share your personal passions and create experiences together that you'll never forget.

## Thinks it's a full year commitment? Think again.

Schedule tight? No problem. There are endless, flexible ways to participate. Spend a day coaching a sports clinic. Build Habitat homes with girls. Or lead a week's journey abroad. The time commitment is totally up to you.

## What new paths will you explore together?

Whatever you choose, you'll be making a lasting impact on the lives of young girls. We'll give you the information and support you need. And you'll have lots of fun doing it!

*"I have had so many girls tell me what my time has meant to them. It's an amazing feeling."*

**Camp.** Share your appreciation of nature. Hike. Bike. Canoe. You can camp by day or overnight.

**Events.** Have high energy but limited availability? Choose your favorite topics, and help girls unleash their potential.

**Series.** Love the environment? Building a business? Marine biology? Meet with girls six to eight times, sharing your passion and knowledge in a way that fits your schedule.

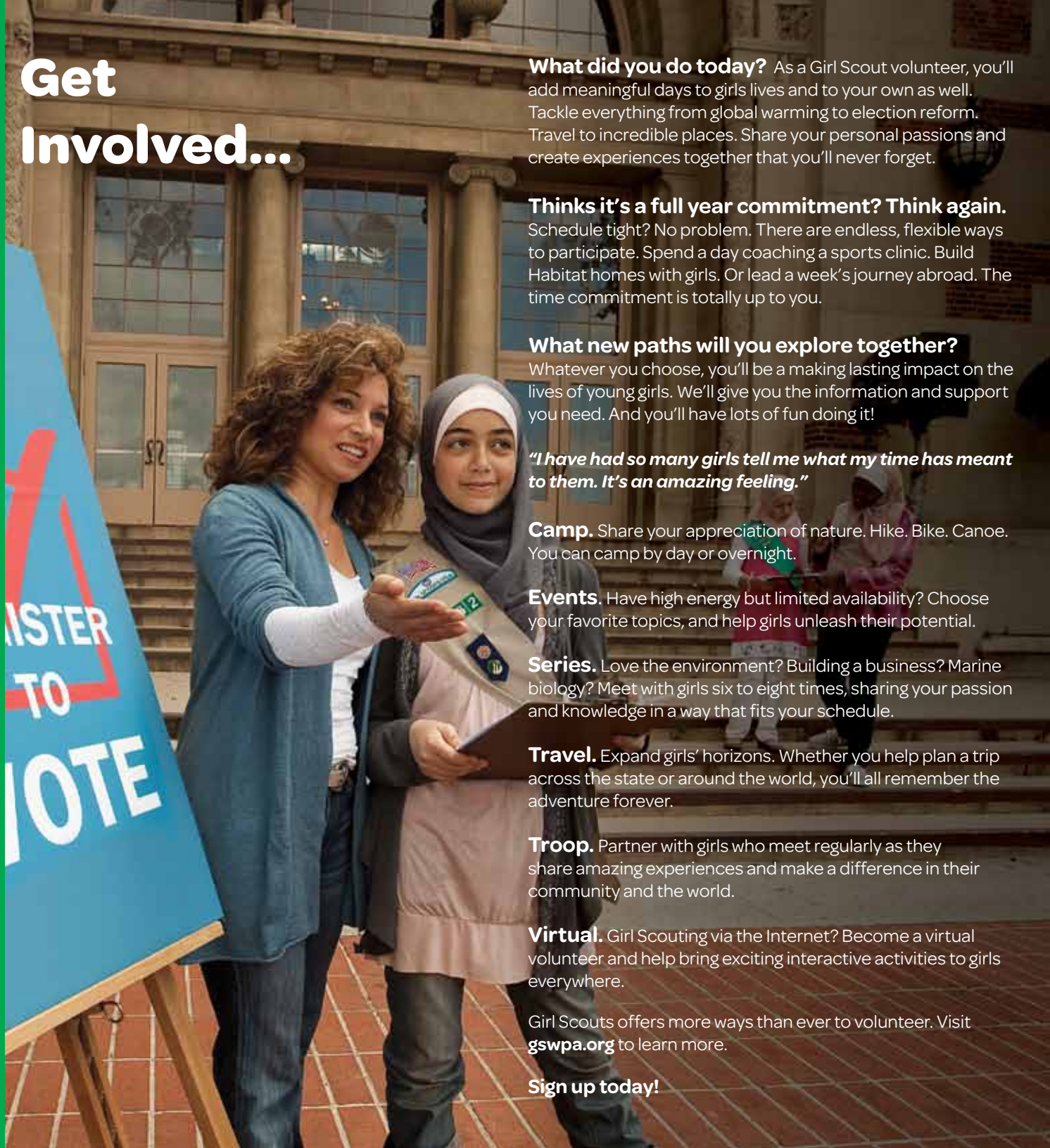
**Travel.** Expand girls' horizons. Whether you help plan a trip across the state or around the world, you'll all remember the adventure forever.

**Troop.** Partner with girls who meet regularly as they share amazing experiences and make a difference in their community and the world.

**Virtual.** Girl Scouting via the Internet? Become a virtual volunteer and help bring exciting interactive activities to girls everywhere.

Girl Scouts offers more ways than ever to volunteer. Visit [gswpa.org](http://gswpa.org) to learn more.

**Sign up today!**



# Troop and Group Income



**Dues or Fees** – The amount of money girls contribute to the troop/group. Girls and parents help decide how much they can afford and agree on setting the amount. Dues are usually 50 cents to \$2 per meeting; fees vary.

**Council-Sponsored Fall Start-Up Program** – The Fall Start-Up program, or MagNut Sale as it's more commonly referred to, is made up of the QSP Family

and Friends Magazine renewal and subscription program from Reader's Digest Association, and the sale of nut and candy items. This sale takes place in October and November, and requires parent/guardian permission for a girl to participate. Troops retain a portion of the proceeds from the sale as determined by the Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania Board of Directors. Parents are responsible for their girl's sale proceeds until turned into the troop.

**Council-Sponsored Girl Scout Cookie Program** – The Girl Scout Cookie Program, held in January-March, is an important part of Girl Scouting, and requires parent/guardian permission for a girl to participate. Not only does it fund programs and activities, but it teaches girls important life skills, such as goal setting, responsible money handling, greeting the public and answering questions, and following through with a commitment. The wonderful thing about the Girl Scout Cookie Program is that it raises critically needed funds in a way that provides girls with a positive experience that develops character and skill. Parents are responsible for their girl's sales proceeds until turned into the troop.

**Money-Earning Projects** – These are special projects the troop develops to earn additional money for a specific major program goal/activity, not just to increase the troop's treasury. These projects should be age-appropriate and provide girls with a valuable learning experience. Solicitation of cash is not an appropriate money-earning project. To participate in additional money-earning activities, girls must get council approval and take part in both the Fall Start-Up Program and the Girl Scout Cookie Program.

# Expenses

The \$12 annual membership is not considered income since it is passed on directly to GSUSA.

Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania provides financial assistance for membership dues based upon need. For more information, contact your troop leader, volunteer or membership manager.

## Troop and Group Income Typically Pays For:

- Materials needed by the girls for activities in the meeting place
- Supplies and equipment needed for basic operation (flag, song books, camping equipment, etc.)
- Learning opportunities for volunteers that are required by the council
- Pins, patches and recognitions awarded to the girls
- All expenses related to outings, camp-outs and trips, including extra insurance if applicable
- The troop/group may vote to set aside funds to pay for the registration of girls for the next year, handbook or Journey sets, and/or uniform components.

## The Parent/Guardian Typically Pays For:

- Yearly national membership dues to GSUSA
- Weekly or monthly troop dues
- Uniform and insignia
- Journey Books and Handbooks
- Transportation
- Cost of day and resident camp (or other Pathways in which she participates—beyond the troop or group)
- Contributions to council-sponsored fund development efforts
- Fall Start-Up Program and the Girl Scout Cookie Program



\*Official Girl Scout uniform, insignia and books may be purchased online or at any of the Girl Scout Shop locations listed in this handbook.

# In Girl Scouting...

Girls develop a strong sense of self.

Girls develop positive values.

Girls gain practical life skills.

Girls seek challenges in the world.

Girls develop critical thinking.

Girls develop healthy relationships.

Girls promote cooperation and team building.

Girls can resolve conflicts.

Girls advance diversity in a multicultural world.

Girls feel connected to their communities,  
locally and globally.

Girls can identify community needs.

Girls are resourceful problem solvers.

Girls advocate for themselves and others,  
locally and globally.

Girls educate and inspire others to act.

Girls feel empowered to make a difference in the world.



# Three Keys to Leadership

**The Girl Scout Leadership Experience.** We have identified the three keys to leadership: girls **discover** themselves and their values, **connect** with others and **take action** to make the world a better place. At Girl Scouts, everything centers around the girl: activities are girl-led, providing the opportunity for girls to learn by doing in a cooperative learning environment.

Discover

## Contributors

Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania invests \$267.79 to serve each of its 35,000 girl members. We rely on the generosity of our Girl Scout friends for charitable contributions, which enable our council to keep program and activity fees modest for all girls, provide leader training to our adult volunteers, maintain and update council properties and camps, and provide creative program experiences with girls in a safe and nurturing environment.

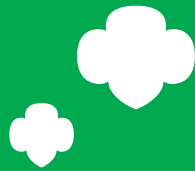
Connect

Through Girl Scouts, girls build character and skills for success in the real world. In partnership with committed adult volunteers, girls develop qualities that will serve them all their lives, such as leadership, strong values, social conscience and conviction about their own potential and self-worth.

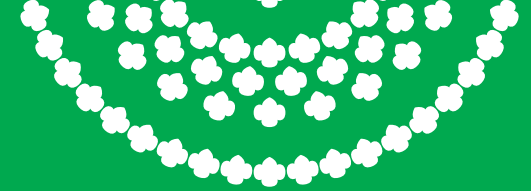
Take Action

We appreciate your belief and support in the value of the Girl Scout experience. For more information on how to contribute, e-mail [donate@gswpa.org](mailto:donate@gswpa.org) or call **1-800-248-3355**.

# Dates to remember



# Our council



- Oct. 1** @aGirl e-newsletter sent (subscribe at [gswpa.org](http://gswpa.org))
- Oct.-Nov.** Fall Start-Up Program and Fall Town Hall Meetings (dates and locations are in the fall/winter issue of *S'MORE* magazine)
- Dec. 1** @aGirl e-newsletter sent
- Jan. 1** *S'MORE* magazine (spring/summer) – first distribution mailed
- Jan.-March** Girl Scout Cookie Program (dates are in the spring/summer issue of *S'MORE* magazine)
- Feb. 1** @aGirl e-newsletter sent
- Feb. 22** Girl Scout Thinking Day
- March 1** Early Bird Registration begins (runs through June)
- March 12** Girl Scout Birthday
- March 30** *S'MORE* magazine (spring/summer) – second distribution mailed
- March-April** Spring Town Hall Meetings (dates and locations are in the spring/summer issue of *S'MORE* magazine)
- April** GSWPA Annual Meeting (date and locations are in the spring/summer issue of *S'MORE* magazine)
- April 1** @aGirl e-newsletter sent
- April 22** Girl Scout Leader's Day
- June 1** @aGirl e-newsletter sent
- July 15** *S'MORE* magazine (fall/winter) – first distribution mailed
- Aug. 1** @aGirl e-newsletter sent
- August** Volunteer Kick-offs (invitations sent to all volunteers)
- Sept. 15** *S'MORE* magazine (fall/winter) – second distribution mailed
- Sept. 30** Membership re-registration due (new members can register at any time)

## Office Locations

Most offices are open 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday. We are closed for all major holidays. Council shops are open at locations marked with an asterisk (\*). Some shops may close for the summer. Please call ahead for hours of operation or shop online anytime at [gswpa.org/shop](http://gswpa.org/shop).

### \*Corporate Office

30 Isabella Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15212

### Regional Offices and Service Centers

#### \*Beaver

443 Third Street  
Beaver, PA 15009

#### \*Duncansville

2875 Route 764, Suite 12  
Duncansville, PA 16635

#### \*Edinboro

5681 Route 6N  
Edinboro, PA 16412

#### \*Greensburg

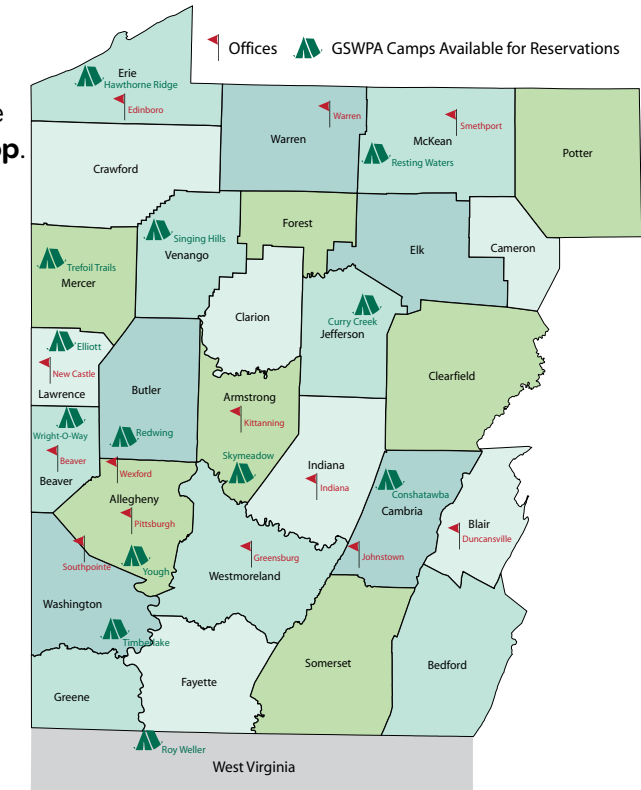
126 East Otterman Street  
Greensburg, PA 15601

#### Indiana

The Atrium  
665 Philadelphia Street  
Indiana, PA 15701

#### \*Johnstown

612 Locust Street  
Johnstown, PA 15901



#### \*Kittanning

2359 Freeport Road  
Kittanning, PA 16201

#### \*New Castle

223 N. Mercer Street  
New Castle, PA 16101

#### \*Smethport

217 West Main Street  
Smethport, PA 16749

#### Southpointe

345 Southpointe Blvd., Suite 125  
Canonsburg, PA 15317

#### \*Warren

185 Hospital Drive, Building 50  
Warren, PA 16365

#### Wexford

11279 Perry Highway, Suite 505  
Wexford, PA 15090



## Girl Scout Mission

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

## The 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.

## The 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.



\*The word "God" can be interpreted in a number of ways, depending on one's spiritual beliefs. When reciting the Girl Scout Promise, members may replace the word "God" with whatever word their spiritual beliefs dictate.