



Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania Town Hall Meeting Report—Fall 2021

Board of Directors Recent Activity

Board Meeting, June 2021

The following business actions were proposed and approved:

- The proceeds of tipping royalties and timbering at Resting Waters was approved for use as a new revenue source for the council.
- The United Fund of Warren County Allocation Request was passed.
- The proposed thinning of trees at stand #5 in Resting Waters was passed.
- The Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania asset allocation change of 60 percent/40 percent equity and fixed income to PNC's recommendation of 74 percent/26 percent equity and fixed income was passed.

Annual Meeting, April 2021

The motion to approve the Board Slate was passed.

Referrals for Board and Girl Advisory Committee

We are open to referrals and applications for our Board of Directors, Board Development Committee, and Girl Advisory Committee positions. We will have one Girl Advisory Committee position open in April 2022. The Board Development Committee is looking for nominations and applications now, especially focusing on regions 1 and 3. Please encourage girls who you believe would be interested and would benefit from this leadership experience, which is focused on governance.

National Delegates

Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania is now seeking new National Delegates. Interested parties should submit an application by October 31, 2021. The application can be found in the Council Governance Section of gswpa.org.

Annual Meeting

Our Annual Meeting will be on April 2, 2022. We will meet at The Chadwick on Perry Highway in Wexford. The meeting will be in a new format, which will include one in-person location with access for remote participation from your home.

COVID 19 Related Updates

Office Closures

Council offices remain closed to the public until October 25, 2021. Our staff will continue to work from home until that time. We will continue to monitor the situation and extend or change remote working options accordingly.

Property Updates

Camp Skymeadow

Evergreen Lodge was completely renovated. Renovation includes a new, accessible women's and gender-neutral restrooms, new windows, lighting, ceiling, and flooring. On the exterior, a new pavilion with a fireplace was added to increase our seasonal activity and dining space.

Camp Conshatawba

- The renovation of Memory Lodge was completed. New, accessible women's and gender-neutral restrooms were built and the main floor was refinished. Serving windows and new entry doors were added to the main great room. To increase seasonal dining capacity, a new creek-side, covered patio was built with a very rustic, camp feel.
- A tree canopy tour was added.

Camp Redwing

- Generator connection was added to the water system to ensure continued operation during a power outage.
- Engineering design work is being completed for Camp Redwing's sewage system improvements.

Camp Hawthorne Ridge

- Renovations to Thompson Hall created a lighter, more open feel that included new flooring, lighting, ceiling, and main entry doors.
- Camp Hawthorne Ridge also saw the addition of a low ropes course.
- Construction of new boat house storage is complete.

(Former) Camp Resting Waters

The sale of the former site of Camp Resting Waters closed on June 11, 2021. Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania has entered into a forest management plan with Casella Waste Management and will also receive tipping royalties on the landfill plot.

Kittanning Office

The Kittanning office remains on the market for sale.

Retirement Announcement

Deb Smith, chief administrative officer, has announced her retirement. She moved to a part-time status on October 1 and will assist with the transition of her departments as we welcome a new chief membership officer. We wish Deb the very best as she moves toward retirement.

Organizational Structure Change

We have evaluated our reporting structure and have replaced the chief administrative officer with a chief membership officer. This position will have oversight of the membership department, adult development, and business systems.

The chief operations officer continues to have oversight of program and property, and will assume responsibility of fund development, marketing, and product program.

Membership 2020-2021 Numbers and 2021-2022 Goal

Even with the struggles brought on by COVID-19, the membership department continued to work towards bringing on and retaining more girls and adults throughout the membership year. Efforts to keep Girl Scouts relevant and growing is a responsibility we share with our entire membership. Our organization's success relies on our volunteers and Girl Scout community actively engaging in recruitment by recommending Girl Scouts to others.

The traditional way of recruiting is in the past, and now we need each and every one of our volunteers, members, parents, and girls to help us share out why a girl needs Girl Scouts in her life. Every year we make a difference by bringing Girl Scouts to girls in our area, and this year will be no different.

To help this effort, we recently sent out a Service Unit Agenda to each service unit that highlights topics to share, as well as overall girl membership for that particular service unit. We hope this information is helpful for focusing on each area's membership.

We will continue to share our plans with our members, and you are always welcome to reach out to us for assistance getting the word out about Girl Scouts.

As the organization that you care so passionately about, we need your help to keep Girl Scouts thriving by doing all you can to get others to join us to build even more girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

Volunteer Engagement

gsLearn continues to be a training resources for volunteer to provide both fully online and blended learning (online and hands-on) learning options. We know that the past year was a challenge for our troop leaders, so our volunteer support staff worked to provide resources to help keep troops engaged.

Throughout the year the LeadHER Learning series offered live training sessions via Zoom on topics that ranged from using virtual resources and preparing for the cookie program to leading together. We plan to continue the series this fall with new topics.

With more people connecting virtually, our volunteer support staff has been able to connect with service units even more than before the pandemic. They are excited to be back in the field making connections, but we know that the use of virtual meetings will continue to help volunteers connect with staff well into the future.

We had our first Service Unit Team Leadership quarterly meeting in May for service unit team volunteers to learn about upcoming initiatives at council and to have the opportunity for Q&A with different departments. At the second meeting in August, over 50 volunteers attended, and there was a lot of information shared. The meetings are available on the website for registration, and the next meeting will be in November.

We are excited to be rolling out a pilot of our refreshed service unit structure, which is a more collaborative model for our service teams. We value our service team volunteers and know they are usually juggling more than one volunteer role, and this team approach aims to spread out the responsibilities among a team of volunteers.

Two new training paths launched in 2021 were the Let's Go Camping and Girl Scouts Small Craft Safety Training. Other courses added this year to gsLearn include program-level training for volunteers working with Daisy, Brownie, or Junior Girl Scouts; Brand Ambassador 101 for Volunteers; courses on the new badges; and refreshed courses on the Volunteer Toolkit.

Approximately 80 volunteers attended the 2021 Leadership Summit at Camp Redwing at the end of August.

Summer Camp

Coming off virtual programs from October through March 2021, the outdoor program team worked diligently to run safe and fun events for the girls. These models led to the successful completion of running in-person resident camps.

This summer, our council provided:

- 10 weekend/troop programs
- Eight weeks of resident camp at Camp Conshatawba and Camp Skymeadow and six weeks of resident camp at Camp Hawthorne Ridge.
- 76 resident camp sessions

Program highlights included:

- **Midnight Madness:** Girls received hammocks and stayed various locations around camp while getting to stay up late.
- **Culinary Cadettes:** Girls learned various strategies and tips for cooking. They were given the task of creating and implementing a dessert from scratch.
- **Horse programs:** Various programs where girls got to learn about horses while gaining skills riding, grooming, and caring for the horses.
- **Travel programs** included trips to Presque Isle, Kennywood, and exploring Pennsylvania's beautiful state parks.

Girl Program

Our highest awards Girl Scouts could not be slowed down by the pandemic. We were excited to hold a belated virtual ceremony for our 2020 Gold Award Girl Scouts and an in-person celebration in the spring for our 2021 Gold Award Girl Scouts. We hosted our first Silver Award recognition at the Carnegie Science Center and hope to make this an annual tradition.

GSUSA hosted its first Girl's Change the World event which was a national recognition for all Gold Award Girl Scouts and to encourage more girls to work towards their Bronze and Silver Award. Along with this new national event, GSUSA launched a Girl Scouts of the USA Gold Award Scholarship allowing each council to nominate a local Gold Award Girl Scout to receive a \$2,000 scholarship. We are thrilled to recognize Chintha Kathiresan for her work creating pre-kindergarten activities books for teachers at Chinmay Mission Pittsburgh and were ultimately shared nationwide.

Product Program

In September, Shelby Miller retired after a 40-year career in Girl Scouts. Shelby served as director of the product program team since 2008. She will be missed, and we wish her all the best in her new adventure! We welcomed Amanda Farrell as the new director on September 14, and she will be based in our Edinboro office.

Fall Product Program (MagNut)

The MagNut Program, our council's fall product program, **began Friday, Oct. 1**. In addition to traditional order card sales, customers can purchase magazines and order nuts and candy through girls' secure websites. Online customers can have their nut and candy orders shipped or girl-delivered. New products include a sweet and salty nut mix and chocolate peppermint pretzels. Online training was offered again this year for service unit MagNut managers and troop leaders. The first council-wide MagNut rally took place on Thursday, September 30 on Facebook.

Launching with the MagNut Program, Girl Scouts will now redeem their Girl Scout Bucks and Indie Program Rewards through an easy-to-use online form. Girls will be notified by email of the total they've earned through the MagNut Program in December and can begin applying amounts to activities, shop purchases, and more right away—no more coupons or forms to mail.

Girl Scout Cookie Program

The iconic Girl Scout Cookie Program kicks off **Friday, Jan. 7, 2022**. There's a new Girl Scout Cookie in town! Adventurefuls are an indulgent brownie-inspired cookie with caramel-flavored crème and a hint of sea salt, and they are joining the 2022 Girl Scout Cookie Program lineup with the same eight varieties that were available in 2021 and all at the same price—\$5 per box.

The council's virtual cookie rally returns, taking place **Thursday, January 6**. Training for service unit cookie managers is scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 16 at 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 17 at 10 a.m., and Thursday, Nov. 18 at 6:30 p.m. Troop leader training is available Tuesday, Dec. 7 at 6:30 p.m. and Wednesday, Dec. 8 at 10 a.m. All training sessions will be held virtually.

GSUSA recently announced new Cookie Business badges that help girls think like entrepreneurs as they run their own cookie businesses and incorporate online sales via the Digital Cookie platform. The badges progress from goal setting and effective sales-pitching in-person and online to using market research, creating business plans, and implementing digital marketing campaigns.