

EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT TAX CREDITS – WHERE DOES YOUR CONTRIBUTION GO?

Educational Improvement Tax Credit funds enable Girl Scouts to partner with school districts and community groups to offer girls the opportunity to enhance their academic experiences, improve scholastic performance and obtain leadership skills as described below.

Program Goal

Through **Educational Initiative Programming**, Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania keeps girls interested in academics while enhancing classroom content through engaging activities. Girl Scout programs provide girls with a pressure free environment where they are able to ask questions, gain additional time with academic concepts, and explore subject matter in ways that meet their interests. In addition to providing academic instruction, our programs promote leadership and the development of healthy relationships, while providing a safe place for girls that contributes to the creation of engaged students.

Educational Initiative Programs are designed to promote healthy living; teach science, technology, engineering and math; improve literacy; and develop leadership skills. **Educational Initiative Programs** address obstacles faced by girls by providing additional time learning in a safe environment with mentors who encourage girls to set educational goals, become leaders among their peers and within their community, and aspire to meaningful future careers

Outreach

Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania aims to offer **Educational Initiative Programming** in all of the 27 counties in our council. These counties include: Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Bedford, Blair, Butler, Cambria, Cameron, Clarion, Clearfield, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Fayette, Forest, Greene, Indiana, Jefferson, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer, Potter, Somerset, Venango, Warren, Washington and Westmoreland counties.

Outcomes

The effectiveness of our **Educational Initiative Programs** in increasing subject-based knowledge and raising confidence in leadership abilities is evaluated by a pre- and post-test given to each girl, an Instructor Survey and a Survey of Service for Participating Sites.

Based upon research conducted through the Girl Scout Research Institute and Girl Scouts USA National Curriculum pre and post tests, statistics have shown that at the completion of Girl Scout Educational Initiative Programs:

- 67% of girls are more likely to feel like they belong in a group of their peers.
- 60% of girls are more likely to think about what they have learned and apply it to their everyday life.
- 56% of girls are more likely to challenge themselves to try new things.
- 52% of girls learn about other people's views and opinions in order to find common ground.
- 51% of girls have a greater knowledge of how to come up with solutions to a problem and work to implement them.
- 48% of girls are more likely to initiate and plan a project or activity.

As a direct result of this programming, girls are more likely to do better in school. Girls will gain confidence in their academic abilities, increase their enjoyment of learning, lead healthier lives, and feel more empowered to set academic and career goals. Girls will understand themselves and their values and use their knowledge and skills to explore the world. As we begin our third year of Healthy Living Special Initiative Programming, Girl Scouts continues to be overwhelmed by the response and popularity of these programs. Girl Scouts continues to recruit and train certified instructors for each program site. As we continue to branch out, we are finding that schools and community centers are requesting multiple year curriculum based programs. Because of this, Girl Scouts continues to update the program curriculum and put best practices in to place for each grade level.

The program's effectiveness in increasing subject-based knowledge and raising confidence in leadership abilities is evaluated by a pre- and post-tests given to each girl, an Instructor Survey and a Survey of Service for Participating Sites. Data from the 2012-2013 program year shows that our council's Educational Initiatives are working to meet their intended outcomes. According to available data collected through pre- and post-testing, at the conclusion of the program there was an overall increase in the following:

- Girls understanding that to stay healthy they need to eat vegetables and fruits and exercise daily
- Girls stating that they like themselves even when faced with adversity
- Girls stating that they often try to include others Girls respecting the need for diversity
- Girls understanding their own self-worth