

How to Partner with Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors on Focus on Philanthropy



Cookie Activity Pin 2008-2009

To earn this year's Girl Scout Cookie Activity Pin, girls will practice being philanthropists. You will guide them to investigate examples of philanthropy in their community and around the world and to decide whether to give money or time, or both, to make a difference in the lives of others. Along the way, they'll be exploring what it means to be generous in the world today.

Business Skills and Leadership Training

Selling Girl Scout cookies gives girls a chance to run a business and practice leadership skills they can use in their daily lives and as they grow. Girls will enjoy all the benefits that this important component of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience has to offer: They'll engage in planning and goal-setting—aiming to achieve their personal best—and teamwork, marketing, money management (including the importance of saving for future needs), and the enduring people skill of customer service.

Each year, the projects girls undertake during and beyond the cookie activities have gotten further-reaching, especially as many girls realize that they can use their cookie earnings for community-action efforts and for travel and other long-term goals. Girls also begin to understand the important role their participation in product sales has in contributing to their Girl Scout council's efforts to serve girls.

As you guide girls to consider all the ways they can put their money to work in the world, you'll be using the Girl Scouts' three keys of leadership—Discover, Connect, and Take Action—and the three processes that make Girl Scouting unique—Girl Led, Cooperative Learning, and Learning by Doing.

This will be easy because the leadership keys and the Girl Scout processes are woven right into this year's activities. You'll partner with girls as they:

- Learn and talk about how cookie proceeds benefit Girl Scouting in your community
- Explore answers to "Why Give?"
- Investigate how to be smart givers
- See how the high cost of living is impacting their community.

Then, you will advise girls as they make a team decision about donating a portion of their earnings, time or both to make a difference.

TIPS for Working with the Girls' Activity Sheet

- **Safety First!** As in all of Girl Scouting, be sure to follow *Safety-Wise* and any additional safety information from your council. If the girls' project calls for giving money, it must come from your Girl Scout group's treasury after the cookie sale. (Money cannot be collected for an organization or charity.) If you have any questions about the appropriateness of a gift, consult with your Girl Scout council.
- **Discuss "philanthropy."** Has your group engaged in philanthropy already? What is the difference between philanthropy and service, or is there one? Do you have to be rich to participate in philanthropy? Many girls will be able to identify with the definition of "youth philanthropy," and sweat equity.
- **Ask:** How is philanthropy represented in the Girl Scout Promise and Law.
- Explore the benefits to Girl Scouting by guiding girls to use information from the cookie training or the council's annual report or Web site to explore how cookie proceeds benefit Girl Scouting in your area. Girls can use their best examples as talking points for their customers.
- **Share Some Personal Experiences:** Your experiences with giving and receiving can get the ball rolling. When girls explore the "Why Give?" activity, perhaps offer up some stories from the local news.
- **Promote Smart Giving.** Open a discussion about the "Giver Beware" activity. What have girls learned in their online search about smart giving? How will this impact their decisions?
- **Service vs. Cash?** Guide the girls to analyze these different types of giving. Ask: When does nothing work but cash? When are "sweat equity" or gifts in-kind most sensible? See if girls can visit with a few local non-profit professionals.
- **Discuss Economic Trends.** How is the high cost of living affecting families and organizations in the community? Do girls have examples they can share? Local news stories might be useful—and so would a trip to or visit from the staff or volunteers at area social service organizations. Encourage the girls to explore for insights on what is most needed in their community.
- **Decision Time.** Now support girls to make a team decision—using all they have learned—to donate some of their earnings, time, or both, to an organization they believe in.
- **Make It in Person.** When the time comes for the girls to do the actual giving, make sure they connect directly—in person—with their chosen organization and some of its staff. If girls can't visit the organization, perhaps its representatives can visit the girls.
- **Reflect!** Invite girls to consider what they have learned about their values and their communities—and their opportunities to make a difference. They can use the exercise at the end of their activities—and then proudly add their pin to their vest.

What's philanthropy?

Philanthropy comes from the Greek words meaning "*to love*" and "*man*." Today, in the broadest sense, it means giving money or things to help others. A *philanthropist*, usually thought of as wealthy, is someone who gives money to sustain or endow an institution or charity. Individuals like Oprah, Warren Buffet, Bill Gates, and Bono establish foundations or charities or use their celebrity to support individuals or groups to make a difference in the world, whether it's fighting a disease, providing scholarships, or addressing the causes of poverty.

Variations on a theme

- **Youth Philanthropy:** This is service, gifting, or doing something for others to make the world a better place. Right up our alley!
- **Group Philanthropy:** This is when people get together to give in a group to increase the power of their giving. The power of one multiplied!
- **In-Kind Gifts:** This can be either service or goods given instead of money. Goods (such as clothing or cars) or surplus items (building materials or food) are often used as in-kind gifts.
- **Sweat Equity:** This is time or effort contributed to a cause.

RESOURCES

Online

Charity Navigator: Be a smart philanthropist by checking out prospective organizations and causes. <http://www.charitynavigator.org>

The Foundation Center: An authority on philanthropy, connecting nonprofits and grant makers supporting them to tools and information. It provides a comprehensive database on U.S. grant makers and their grants, as well as providing resources on all aspects of grant writing. <http://foundationcenter.org>

Youth in Philanthropy: “Explore the world of Giving, Volunteering and Helping” as well as find out about current and upcoming grants and scholarships. <http://youth.foundationcenter.org>

Girl Scout Alumnae Association: A compelling site for former and current Girl Scouts. Its stories will encourage girls to seek out alumnae among their customers and encourage them to share their own stories on the site and join the association by filling out Alumnae Association postcards (available at your council office).

http://www.girlscouts.org/for_adults/alumnae

Girl Scout publications

Consider combining this activity with a new leadership journey from the *It's Your World—Change It!* series:

- Girl Scout Cadette Leadership Journey: ***aMaze! The Twists and Turns of Getting Along.*** GSUSA, 2008.
- Girl Scout Senior Leadership Journey: ***GIRLtopia: Toward an Ideal World for Girls.*** GSUSA, 2008.
- Girl Scout Ambassador Leadership Journey: ***Your Voice, Your World: The Power of Advocacy.*** GSUSA, 2008.

Keep in mind—and guide the girls to keep in mind—that philanthropy is just one way a Girl Scout money-earning activity can contribute to their Take Action efforts. When girls are interested in making a difference, they can find many ways to take action in Girl Scouting.

So, if you see that the girls are eager to keep making a difference, guide them to decide how they might use their cookie money to fund other things, such as:

- Girl Scout journey projects
- Resources for Girl Scout Silver and Gold Awards
- Supplies for action projects
- Visits to local organizations
- Any other ways you and they might think of!

Food for Thought:

“Few people realize how large charities have become, how many vital services they provide, and how much funding flows through them each year. Without charities and nonprofits, America would simply not be able to operate. Their operations are that big.”

“In 2006, total giving to charitable organizations increased to \$295 billion (2.2 percent of GDP). This is an increase of 1 percent from 2005 (when adjusted for inflation).”

“The majority of that giving came from individuals, \$223 billion (75.6%). Giving by individuals grew by 1.2 percent (when adjusted for inflation).”

—Charity Navigator Online.
<http://www.charitynavigator.org>

