

New Leader Launch

Monthly New Leader Chats

girlscouts
of west central florida

September Questions

Guest 1 - Kim Buettner, Vice President, Product Program- Fall Fundraiser

1. What is the Sweets & Treats Fall Program?

- Friends and family sale that occurs late September through November
- Items sold include nuts, chocolates, magazine subscriptions and specialty items such as candles, Tervis tumblers, stationery, and Bark Boxes
- Beginning platform for the Girl Scout Entrepreneurial Program. The girls develop five essential skills including goal setting, decision making, money management, people skills and business ethics
- Girl Scouts will use the skills she learns in this program throughout her lifetime
- Girl Scout troops earn 15% of proceeds for every item sold. There is also the option to earn an additional 2% in troop proceeds if they opt out of rewards. This is an option for J/C/S/A troops and must be an ALL-girl decision within a troop. The process for this is described in training and the volunteer guide.

2. As a new leader, is it difficult to participate in Sweets & Treats? No.

- Volunteers consistently praise the simplicity of this program. For a very simple experience, troops can have caregivers 'set it and forget it.' For this the caregiver helps their Girl Scout, set up their page, makes sure it is set for 'shipped only' only and then they don't worry about it. They send out 18 unique emails which help the girl scout earn certain levels and then watch for the customers to respond. The emails are only sent to friends and family. This gives the Girl Scout an opportunity to experience entrepreneur programs.
- Girl Scouts love what they learn and the fun they have throughout the program. They can create an avatar which then is used on their personalized patch. The personalized patch is earned when they send 18+ emails and sell 4 Mags or more items and 40+ nut/chocolate items.
- All items make great gifts for the special people in your life – family, friends, teachers, coaches and more!
- There are tips to make the most out of your experience. We have two resources available for download – one talks about how to simplify the experience and the other offers tips from troop leaders.
- Great program for earning new year start-up funds for your troop. Your troop earns proceeds PLUS there is the opportunity for the troop bonus. The bonus provides an opportunity to earn \$10 per girl for your troop by having each girl

register her account and sell at least 5 online items by Oct. 12. The \$10 per Girl Scout helps your troop with start-up funds and is deposited directly into your troop's account by Oct. 31.

3. What do leaders need to do to make sure their troops can participate in Sweets & Treats?

- Complete troop level fall product manager Sweets & Treats training – available in gsLearn – search 'fall.' All volunteers have access to this training in gsLearn.
- Fill out the troop fall product manager agreement for M2 access. This form is found in final module of Sweets & Treats fall training. Once you complete it, the products team is notified that you have completed the training, and the team begins the process to add you to the M2 platform. M2 is the system we use for the Fall program.
- Ensure your troop has roles assigned to the leader and troop fall product manager, MY26 active membership, and an approved background screening.

To earn proceeds, troops must have a minimum of 5 girls registered and 3 of those girls must be participating. Troops not meeting this will earn council credits.

4. If I need help during the season, what support is available to leaders?

- Contact your Service Unit Cookie Manager – they are a great resource of experience and can connect you with other troop leaders
- Attend the Sweets & Treats Chats – in the moment learning, Wednesday evenings, 7 p.m., schedule in gsLearn. During the chats we discuss what you need to know during that time of the sale. There is also the opportunity to ask questions.
- Contact info@gswcf.org. If you are unable to find an answer for your question you can always contact the product program team through info@gswcf.org.

Guest 2 – Nicole Jacquot, Volunteer Development Manager- New Leader Training

1. What training is required for all new troop leaders, and how soon should they get started?

- Every new leader should complete the New Leader Learning Path in gsLearn, which is our online learning platform for Girl Scout volunteers. Ideally, you would want to get started before meeting with your troop and complete it within your first six months of becoming a leader.
- The learning path covers topics like how to deliver the Girl Scout program, troop safety, your first troop meeting, and managing troop finances.

2. How long does it usually take to complete the required new leader training?

Most leaders can complete the online training in about 2–3 hours. You don't have to do it all at once — gsLearn saves your progress so you can work through it at your own pace.

3. Is it realistic for leaders to complete it in one sitting if they would like to? Or should they expect to spread it out?

- While you could complete all the training at once, we highly recommend spreading it out over the course of your first six months of being a leader.
- The first course in the New Leader Learning Path is called “Welcome to Girl Scouts of West Central Florida” and it will give you an overview of all required courses, when it is recommended to complete it, and how long it will take.

4. How do leaders access gsLearn?

- Start by navigating to our website, gswcf.org
- Log in to your MYGS account. Once there, click the gsLearn button in the left-hand navigation menu.
- Use the search bar to type in “New Leader Learning Path” and it should come right up.

If you are logging in to gsLearn for the first time, there will be a slight delay in loading your volunteer course library. Wait 30 minutes to an hour and your course library should appear.

5. When would be a good time to have CPR/FA completed?

- As soon as your troop is ready to go on an outing away from your regular meeting place, at least one registered and background-checked adult must have CPR/First Aid. It is recommended that more than one volunteer completes the training.

6. A troop can begin meeting without a volunteer who is CPR/First Aid certified, but it becomes required once they start outings — is that right?

Yes. Simple meeting activities do not require a first aider, but some activities that can be done at your meeting place may require a first aider, usually when the activity has any risk.

7. How would you know if an activity needs a first aider present?

- Leaders should become very familiar with our safety guide known as “Safety Activity Checkpoints”.
- In the document, we record official guidelines that provide detailed safety checklists and considerations for a wide range of activities that Girl Scouts can do.
- Volunteers can find it on the Forms and Documents page of our website under Health and Safety.

8. Can volunteers receive their CPR/First Aid certification anywhere or do they have to take it through Girl Scouts?

We approve CPR/FA certifications from Girl-Scout approved organizations, and we offer CPR/FA sessions frequently throughout the year at a low cost to our volunteers.

9. What counts as Girl Scout–approved CPR/First Aid training?

- *Accepted training from organizations include the American Red Cross, American Heart Association and National Safety Council.*
- They must include both adult and pediatric CPR and AED with the first aid component, and it must be hands-on, not conducted online.
- You can view a comprehensive list in the Safety Activity Checkpoints; [under health and safety on the forms and documents page](#).

10. If a leader already has a certification, say from the Red Cross through their workplace, do they need to retake it through Girl Scouts?

If it meets the guidelines above and is from one of the accepted organizations list in the Safety Activity Checkpoints, it counts. We ask that volunteers who received their certification outside of a Girl Scout CPR/FA training, upload a copy of their certificate to the “Approved General First Aider” course in gsLearn.

11. If leaders have questions while they’re working on training, what’s the best way to get support?

Email Nicole directly at adultlearning@gswcf.org or email our customer care team at info@gswcf.org.

Guest 3 – Cathy Glasgow, Community Manager (Hernando and Citrus County), Parent/Caregiver Meeting

1. What is a parent/caregiver meeting and why is it so important for a new troop?

A parent/caregiver meeting is usually the first troop meeting of the year and helps provide necessary information to families. It is a chance to welcome families, share what Girl Scouts is all about, and explain how the troop will run. It’s also the moment to communicate that Girl Scouts is a team effort — leaders, girls, and families working together make for the best experience.

2. What else may the parent/caregiver meeting cover and how long does it last?

It lasts about an hour. Leaders and parents and caregivers introduce themselves, and discuss troop logistics like meeting day, time, and location. You’ll also talk about troop finances, have parents fill out girl paperwork, and — very importantly — establish how families can help.

3. What paperwork should families be filling out for their Girl Scout?

The parent/caregiver meeting is the perfect time to get most required girl paperwork completed for the year. This includes the Girl Permission Form, which provides consent from a legal guardian for their Girl Scout to participate in activities throughout the year and the Health History Form, which is used by the troop leader in case of an accident.

4. Should leaders follow a set agenda, or keep it more open?

Follow a structure. This will help keep your meeting on track and on time. The *Volunteer Toolkit* even has parent meeting plans that are ready to use.

5. Where can volunteers access the Volunteer Toolkit? Volunteers can access it by going to our website and logging in to their MYGS account. From there, the Volunteer Toolkit, which you will also see referred to as the VTK, is in the navigation menu on the left side of the screen. Once you are in the VTK, you can select a level and explore meeting plans. Search “Intro Plan” into the search bar and you’ll see sample parent/caregiver meetings for Daisies, Brownies and Juniors.

6. How do leaders explain to parents that their participation is part of the troop’s success? Start by saying, *Family is part of the formula*. When parents are engaged, girls have a richer experience, and leaders aren’t carrying the load alone. Caregivers can chaperone trips, lead a badge, help with the cookie program, or even just share a skill. Everyone has something to contribute. You will see in the sample Parent/Caregiver Meetings in the VTK, they recommend you host it while you also do your first introduction meeting with your Girl Scouts. This helps families feel ownership in their girls’ Girl Scout experience.

7. What if parents/caregivers are nervous or unsure about volunteering?

That’s normal. Be specific and transparent. Instead of saying, ‘I need help,’ try, ‘We need one chaperone for the museum trip on October 12, from 10 to 1.’ Clear asks make it easier for parents to say yes.

8. How would you recommend leaders ask families to help at or after the parent/caregiver meeting?

It is best to be prepared with a list of roles at the meeting. GSWCF even has a form “Ways Adults Can Help” that can be distributed at the meeting as part of their paperwork. It allows families to share how they would be willing to support the troop or skills they may have that can be shared with the girls.

9. Can any family member volunteer with the troop?

It is important to define the difference between a volunteer and a participating adult. Volunteers have a current approved background check on file completed through GSWCF when they applied to become a volunteer and are registered with the troop as a Troop Helper. They can be part of safety ratios, be responsible for watching girls and handle money. If you have an aunt of a Girl Scout who is a nurse, she can come lead a first aid badge with the troop and not need a background check or be a member, thus just a participating adult. She could not be counted as part of safety ratios or be responsible for watching girls.

10. Volunteers are adults with a current valid background check who are registered as a Troop Helper in our system? A participating adult is someone who can help the troop but just not be responsible for girls or handle troop money?

Yes, that is correct. Some troop leaders require all adults who will interact with the troop to register as a Troop Helper so they are required to get a background check, but that is up to the discretion of the Troop Leader and their co-leader.

11. Are there any other resources that new leaders could go to about the parent/caregiver meeting or how to engage families?

Yes, this is also covered in the New Leader Learning Path in gsLearn, which requires new leader training. "GSUSA New Leader Onboarding: Family Engagement - The Key to Success" is the specific course that covers the importance of families being involved in their Girl Scout's experience, roles they can fill, how to ask for help, and details how to run a parent/caregiver meeting.

12. Where can leaders go if they have more questions about parent/caregiver meetings?

They can email info@gswcf.org to connect with their Community Manager, or they can talk to their service unit's Troop Consultant.

Additional Questions from Our Volunteers

- 1. Where can we find flyers to help with new member recruitment to hang in the local libraries or post to our child's school pages? Or can we just create our own?** We ask that you do not create your own flyers, that you work with your community manager. We have templates created by our marketing team that include the necessary logos and branding for Girl Scouts. We highly recommend you speak to your community manager and your service unit manager who will be able to assist in the best flyer to include size and messaging considerations. We can even print the number needed for your specific recruitment.
- 2. Who is a community manager and a service unit manager?** Your community manager is a staff member who supports troops in a designated geographical area in our council. A service unit is a geographical area within your county, and the service unit manager is a volunteer who supports other volunteers like yourself in that area.
- 3. How do we find our service unit?** Your community manager will be able to introduce you to the service unit manager and let you know which service unit your troop belongs. You can also email our customer care team at info@gswcf.org.
- 4. How can we conduct a parent meeting if our troop is associated with an after-school program and we do not see the parents regularly?** Parent/caregiver meetings do not have to happen in-person. You are welcome to

use platforms like Zoom and TEAMS to meet and discuss the troop with your families. You can send forms home with the girls

5. **If only the leader received the e-mail to access M2, what do we do to get the co-leader access as well?**
6. **How long does it typically take for the bank account to be set up?** The service unit accounting coordinator, who is a volunteer, is the person that you will need to meet, and they will set up the bank account with you and your co-leader. We have a specific process on how to set up our bank accounts. Depending on schedules of everyone involved, it can usually be done in a couple of weeks.
7. **Do we have to wait for the bank account to be established before collecting dues for our own troop to cover the startup costs like supplies?** You can collect dues now without the account open. We recommend keeping detailed records of the amounts collected, whom from and the form. When you go to open your troop account, you can deposit these funds minus any needed for immediate supplies. The accounting coordinator will share best practices and help you create tracking of your funds outside of the bank statements. It is also important to keep receipts of items purchased and deposit any funds within three days once the account is open. We will discuss more about troop finances during our October New Leader Launch.