

**From:** Girl Scouts of West Central Florida, Inc. <Girlscoutswcf@email.girlscouts.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 12, 2020 1:37 PM  
**To:** Alice Benefiel  
**Subject:** Girl Scout Leaders, here's what you need to know this month.

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To access virtual activities for your family, please visit [the Girl Scouts At Home page](#). To keep up with the latest news and information surrounding the council's response to COVID-19, please [visit our blog](#).

You can also sign up for council text alerts by texting "BEPREPARED" to 855-980-0305.

## Returning to In-Person Troop Meetings and Activities

We have heard from many of you that you are concerned about the social and emotional health of your Girl Scouts. You've shared that families see the

important role Girl Scouts can play in wellness and resiliency during this traumatic time. Many have shared that you are willing to follow strict guidelines to maximize safety and minimize risk for COVID spread, while allowing for in-person troop meetings and activities. **Virtual meetings and activities remain the safest way to prevent COVID-19**, which is an extremely contagious virus that spreads easily in the community.

Beginning today, **troop leaders may collaborate with families to decide whether they are comfortable with hosting small, in-person troop events.** Any troop that begins to meet in person must adhere to the [COVID-19 In-Person Meeting Guidelines](#), which include the following requirements:

- All adults and girls must complete designated [COVID waivers](#)
- Troop leaders must retain [waivers with health history forms](#) for one year
- Troop events must not exceed a max of 8 girls and 2 unrelated adults per meeting with documented attendance records
- Troop events should be outdoors (unless that is not possible due to rain)
- All attendees must maintain social distance of 6 feet and wear cloth masks (unless a health challenge prohibits a mask)
- No troop will meet in gyms or physical fitness locations, unless a separate community room is available
- Volunteers must inspect and follow cleaning protocols in advance and post troop meeting
- Individual parents/caregivers must drop off and pick up their own girls from meeting – no carpooling
- One First Aid/CPR certified adult must be available if meeting in public spaces such as parks, libraries, etc. that are not listed officially as the troop meeting location

### **Suggestions for Large Troops**

For larger troops, the current maximum meeting or activity attendance is firm: **8 girls and 2 unrelated volunteers**. Large troops consisting of more than eight girls may continue with their current size, but must make plans to break into smaller groups to host in-person meetings or activities. Consider: grade-level groups (for multi-level troops), patrols, or other segments of girls based on interest or convenience.

Below are some ideas for troops with more than 10 members who choose to follow the COVID guidelines and host in-person meetings or activities:

- Groups of 10 meet at two different times (e.g., Daisies at 4 p.m. and

Brownies at 5:15 p.m.)

- Groups of 10 meet at more than one location or residence(s)
- Stagger restroom use to avoid overlap
- Stagger two (or more) small groups across a distance that is at least 50 feet apart (i.e., slightly less than the distance between bases on a Little League baseball field); Example: one group is in the front yard and the other is in the backyard.

To help meet the needs of troops during this exceptional time, **GSWCF will allow a troop to have three background screened adults** to ensure safety ratios when a large troop has split into two small groups on the same premises. For example, 16 girls split into two groups could have three background-screened adults, instead of the normally required four adults, so they can meet at the same time and location while remaining 50' apart. One adult can work with each group while the third adult serves as the safety ratio volunteer who supports both groups. The adult would be **required to keep both troops within their line of sight at all times** and ensure the troops meet the 50' distancing rule between groups of 10. It is important that this third volunteer is able to respond in an emergency, while continuing to watch both groups safely and effectively.

### **Troop Meetings at Private Residences Now Permitted**

With limited access to schools, churches, community centers and other facilities, volunteers face challenges to locating safe and inexpensive locations for troop gatherings. To help ease this burden, GSWCF is permitting troops at all levels to meet at private residences as long as they adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Troops must follow [COVID guidelines](#)** to include facilitating the event outdoors
- Each person attending must have a [signed COVID waiver](#)
- Each volunteer hosting meetings in their home must have a [Residential Meeting Agreement](#) on file and follow all standard safety ratios and requirements for leading a troop
- Leaders can now select "residence" when submitting their annual [troop update form](#)
- Meeting at a residence is considered the primary meeting location and will not require a first aid/CPR trained adult

### **Remember – Troop Meetings are Girl-led**

While we have these critical safety guidelines, it will be important to remind troop volunteers that this is a "girl-led" experience. Thus, all troop helpers who will be hosting troop meetings or leading activities should complete the "[Let's Be Girl-](#)

[Led](#)" webinar to equip them for working with the troop.

We know this is a difficult time for families, and especially – our girls. That's why we are working on a number of resources to support [virtual meetings and at-home experiences](#) so that you can continue to connect girls, even when in-person activities are not safe. But we understand that this risk varies across our geographic footprint spanning eight counties, and we want to offer options to help our troop leaders and families navigate their different comfort levels for in-person activities.

All troops should monitor local restrictions for small gatherings. Restrictions vary greatly from county to county, and even from town to town--and frequently change. If your area is more restrictive, you must follow the local requirements.

If you have additional questions, please review our [Membership Q&A](#) or contact your service unit manager.

[COVID Guidelines](#)

[Residential Meeting Request](#)

[COVID Waiver](#)

**Start Making Plans for the 2020 GS Sweets and Treats!**



This year's Girl Scout Sweets & Treats program will begin October 5. Before the program begins, be sure to:

- Ensure all your girls are registered for the 2020-21 year
- Verify that you are registered for 2020-21 year and have an up-to-date background check
- Make sure your information is up to date in your [MyGS](#) account
- Ensure that you have a troop bank account

### **Here's how your troop can get started**

Recruit your troop's Fall Product Program Manager and let them know about the trainings. All trainings will be on-line through [gsLearn](#). As we are still in the planning process, please contact your Service Unit Fall Product Manager for updates. On-line training for Troop Fall Product Program Managers will begin September 1.

For more information contact: [productsales@gswcf.org](mailto:productsales@gswcf.org).

### **Important Dates:**

- September 1 – Regional troop fall product manager trainings begin online via [gsLearn](#)
- Oct. 5 – Fall product program begins with paper nut/chocolate order card and online program
- Oct. 25 – Order taking ends for paper nut/chocolate order cards
- Nov. 13-16 – Nut/chocolate deliveries
- Nov 16 – Online program ends (order taking)

For information about the Girl Scout Sweets & Treats Program, [email us](#) or call (813) 262-1838.

[LEARN MORE](#)

## Earn A Patch By Updating Your Troop Information!



It's time to ensure our records regarding your troop information (meeting time, location, day, program level, etc.) are correct. We know much is uncertain right now, but we'd like to ensure that when troops begin meeting again next month (whether virtually, [in-person](#) or a combination of both), our opportunity catalog is up to date.

Updating your troop information is easy! [Complete the troop update form](#) with as much information about your troop meetings as possible. Let us know if you're meeting virtually right now and/or where you'll be meeting in-person (when it's safe to do so).

**Plus! Every troop that uses the form and updates their information will receive 2 FREE adult patches.** (Distributed beginning September 7).

## New badges to make the world a better place



GSUSA has introduced 24 new badges that take leadership to the next level. There's never been a better time for girls to practice ambitious leadership—and there's no better place to do it than at Girl Scouts.

This year, we've added new badges in the categories of:

- Entrepreneur
- STEM Career Exploration
- Automotive Engineering
- Civics

Get all the exciting [details](#), and then try free sample badge activities for girls of all ages through [Girl Scouts at Home](#).

[LEARN MORE](#)

## Go Gold On Line Application

Is your Girl Scout ready to start working on her Girl Scout Gold Award project? Through [GoGold online](#), she can fill out her Gold Award application and receive step-by-step assistance. Just create an account and she's on her way.

Questions? Contact [Alison Wernicke](#).

## Virtual Destinations- Global Girl Scouting

Girls can earn their Global Girl Scouting Patch if participate in the three remaining virtual Destinations:

- Aug. 29 - Exploring Camp Wai Lani
- Sept. 26 - Exploring Camp Dorothy Thomas
- Oct. 24 - Road to Rome

[LEARN MORE & REGISTER](#)

## Adult Learning News



[gsLearn](#) is the Learning Management System for GSWCF. You can find it in the [MyGS](#) tab, and it where you will find learning opportunities for GSWCF volunteers. There are lots of great webinars, videos and in-person training opportunities to help your troop have the best year of Girl Scouts – when you know more!

Webinar suggestions for parents/caregivers:

- [Introduction to gsLearn](#)
- [Let's Work Together](#)
- [Online CPR/First Aid Certifications \(fee: \\$35\)](#)

[More Trainings](#)

## Girl Scout Store News

FREE SHIPPING ON ALL ORDERS

THE SUMMER SALE

**\$10 OFF ORDERS OF \$75 OR MORE\***

With Code:  
SUMMER10GS

Online Only at  
girlscoutshop.com

**SHOP NOW**

Ends August 4  
*\*Some restrictions may apply.*

### What is NEW?

Our retail stores carry everything to meet your Girl Scout needs year round! Beginning in August 11, we will be open on Saturdays throughout the school year for in-store appointments and curbside pickup. We are also taking additional forms of payment including Council Dough, coupons, and gift certificates along with returns/exchanges.

Check out our [shop hours and locations!](#)

*Please note: We are only offering shop by appointment and curbside pickup at this time.*

### **Curbside Incentive: Buy Now, Save Later!**

All customers that place an order and pick up curbside will receive a coupon for \$10 off a \$25 purchase to use when the store resumes regular operating schedule.

Placing an order for curbside pick-up is easy:

1. View our inventory at [gswcf.org/shop](https://gswcf.org/shop) and select the items you'd like to purchase.
2. Email your order to the store where you want to pick up your items ([Tampa](#) or [Wildwood](#)). Be sure to include the item name, sku/item #, quantity and your phone number in your email.

We'll send you a confirmation letting you know we've received your order. Then we'll call you so you can make your payment over the phone and arrange a pick up time. When you arrive, give us a call, and a store associate will bring your items out to your car.

### **Adult Volunteers**

Volunteers, do you have the Official Navy Vest for adult volunteers? This navy vest is a classic choice in a lightly brushed cotton blend. The stand-up collar, gold tone zipper and welt pockets are among the special details that pull together your official look!

NEW- Get your official personalized I.D. Pin to wear on your uniform! Takes 2-3 week upon ordering. For additional information [email us](#) or call 813-262-1793

### **My Girl Scout Kit**

Its back-to-troop time! Stop by the Girl Scout Store and build your own Girl Scout Kit by choosing from a list of official essentials and get a FREE back pack (\$14 value) when the total reaches \$60 for one grade level. Girl Scout Store staff are happy to provide personal assistance as you choose a uniform, insignia and other items that you may need.

We recommend buying a memory book for only \$4.95. Girl can list all badges, Journeys, and high awards they earn in a fun journal that they can customize and

make their own. The book also includes space for Girl Scouts to write or draw about their favorite camp and service project memories and to set goals for the Girl Scout Sweets & Treats and Girl Scout Cookie Program. The Girl Scout Memory book makes a fun resource for girls, troops and leaders.

[STORE HOURS, LOCATIONS, AND 24/7 ONLINE SHOP](#)



**Have a question? Don't be shy!**  
**[Contact us](#) for more information.**

This email was sent to: [abenefiel@gswcf.org](mailto:abenefiel@gswcf.org)

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