Virtual Girl Scouts

Keeping it REAL

Alumnae Spotlight

Troop-to-Troop

BFF: Be a Friend First

The Girl Scout Spirit

Camp Like a GIRL!

girl scouts
of texas oklahoma plains
Girl Scouts are going full-steam-ahead even in the summer heat! Many are wrapping up this wonderful, rainy summer—and we hope you all enjoyed the break. At Girl Scouts we offered great programs this summer. Adventure Trips had girls venturing across the region (even to other states) to go white water rafting, backpacking, and caving. Summer camp was a blast at Camp Kiwanis and Stevens Ranch, and day camps are meeting all across the council. Attendance at resident and day camps exceeded our goals and have set a new record!

We feel it’s important to keep the Girl Scout experience going year round. Summer programs help girls stay in touch with the awesome leadership skills and fun friendships that they make in Girl Scouting. Providing hands on experiences that are FUN is our focus. That’s what summer is all about—having fun, but did you know that while girls engage in fun activities they learn critical leadership skills? Like the girls who went on the River Runners 2013 trip. They had a blast in the rapids but they also faced a challenge and learned that by pulling together as a group they could conquer anything.

A great way to keep connected during the summer is to plan a service project. The longer daylight hours means there’s more time to do good! A park beautification or late summer food drive could mean a world of difference to your neighbors and it will certainly be an experience your girls will remember.

Remember- the BEST way to get your troop back into the swing of a new membership year is to attend one of our area Fall Kick-Off events:
- Abilene - Sept. 28
- Lubbock - Oct. 12
- Wichita Falls - Oct. 5
- Fort Worth - Oct. 19
- Amarillo - Oct. 12

These volunteer networking and learning events have tons of information for new and returning troop leaders including resources for troop meetings, ideas for events, and an update on the Fall Product Sale (the start date for the fall sale is changing to November 1).

We couldn’t do all of this great work without you. As a tribute, in this edition, we’re celebrating YOU. Read about why Laura Mason and Crystal Rushin are proud to be part of four continuous generations of Girl Scouting in Lubbock. Find out about Troop 5024 from Amarillo and how their experience in Girl Scouts is helping them put an end to bullying in their middle school.

Did you know that one-third of teen girls say they have been bullied at school? Middle school is a crucial time of transition and adjustment and is also when bullying behavior tends to peak, making these years the most important time to promote core values and develop critical social and leadership skills. So Girl Scouts has developed the Be a Friend First (BFF) bullying prevention initiative.

All of our programs, from camp to BFF, show us that the girls of today need Girl Scouting. We are committed to making sure every girl has access to this life-changing program and as we begin a new Girl Scout year this fall, we look to you and hope you’ll continue your work as a volunteer (or consider becoming one) because YOU are how it happens. YOU are why a girl grows more confident and has fun. YOU give her the security to explore her world and dream big dreams. And YOU help her accomplish them. Thank you and viva la Girl Scouts!

—Becky Burton, CEO
Our Girl Scout alumnae are as diverse as our membership—they come from different backgrounds and walks of life but it is the Girl Scout experience that binds us together.

Alumnae Spotlight

Four Generations of Scouting
Laura Mason and Crystal Rushin are a Lubbock mother-daughter team who are busy passing along the gift of Girl Scouting to the next generation. Both mother and daughter enjoy watching their girls grow in Girl Scouting. “I often tell my girls that my payment is watching [them] get something out of this,” said Laura. Crystal agrees, “I love watching my little girl and her friends succeed. It’s amazing to be a part of that.”

The mother-daughter duo recommends volunteering with Girl Scouts—even to those who do not have a young daughter. “You can still volunteer,” Crystal said. “There is always a need for volunteers—help with meetings or planning events—and it’s worth it. What you get out of it will change your life.”

A Lifetime Girl Scout
For more than 60 years, Lee Ruth Krieg has served the community both as a Girl Scout alumna and as an active volunteer. “I have had as much fun being an adult Girl Scout as I did when I was a girl,” said Lee Ruth. “It’s fun to see how much I have in common with other Girl Scout alumnae.”

Lee Ruth was the troop leader for her daughters’ troop and then, went on to join the board and served as the board president. “My adult Girl Scout experience has been a great way to learn how to grow in executive leadership roles.”

This executive experience has served Lee Ruth well in her numerous volunteer commitments in the Lubbock community. In recognition of her leadership and service, Girl Scouts honored her with a 2013 Women of Distinction Lifetime Achievement Award.

A Winning Position
Being a Girl Scout has amazing and maybe more importantly lasting impact on a young woman’s life. How do we know? A national research report investigating the effects of Girl Scouting on its alumnae came to one, main conclusion: Girl Scouting works. Women who were Girl Scouts display positive life outcomes. And this is the case for all Girl Scout alumnae, across age/generations, social class, race, and engagement in other extracurricular activities.

Sense of self:
Of Girl Scout alumnae, 63% consider themselves competent and capable, compared to 55% of non-alumnae.

Civic Engagement:
Of Girl Scout alumnae, 77% vote regularly, compared to 63% of non-alumnae.

Education:
38% of GS alums have college degrees, compared to 28% of non-alums.

Community Service:
66% of GS alums who are mothers have been a mentor/volunteer in their child’s youth organization, compared to only 50% of non-alumnae mothers.

Income:
GS alums report a higher household income ($51,700) than non-alums ($42,200).

Girl Scouting does not stop when a girl grows into an adult. As Laura, Crystal, and Lee Ruth have demonstrated, there is always a place and a need for alumnae involvement. Girl Scouts has a place for you to make a real difference in the lives of our girls.

For a list of volunteer opportunities and contact information, go online to www.gs-top.org/adults/volunteer-opportunities and discover all the good you can do for our girls. Find out more about the Alumnae Impact Study at www.girlscouts.org/research.

Call to action: stand up and be counted as an alumnae, volunteer and donor. Girl Scouting works.

Calling All Girl Scout Alumnae!
Keeping it REAL:
Celebrating girls and women who are making a difference

Each year, Girl Scouts of Texas Oklahoma Plains celebrates girls and women leaders through our Gold Award Gala and Women of Distinction events. Girl Scouts celebrates these girls and women because we want to give folks in the community a chance to uphold REAL people whose work is making a positive impact on all of our lives. The Real Girls, Real Women event series illustrates the amazing potential of girls and how the Girl Scout program develops that potential, producing future leaders. We have so many women to celebrate, let’s show our girls the REAL women they can be.

Gold Award Gala
The series begins with a council-wide Gold Award Gala celebrating the achievements of dozens of high school Girl Scouts who completed their Gold Award in this year.

The Girl Scout Gold Award, the highest in Girl Scouting, symbolizes an outstanding achievement. As they fulfill award requirements, girls find power within themselves to make a positive change in their communities.

They have completed amazing projects that will continue to have positive impacts for years to come. Working alongside their volunteers, girls who completed their Gold Award this year donated their time and energy to the communities they serve by completing an awesome amount of service hours. The 68 Girl Scouts who “went for the gold” and their teams of volunteers completed thousands of service hours. These Gold Award recipients have done far more than a quick community service project. Not sure how much of an “awesome” project a high school girl can complete? Try this on for size:

Lorraine McChesney of Grapevine, TX, was moved to action upon hearing how many students at her high school use the school’s food pantry as their primary source of food. The food pantry was in terrible condition when she started the project – it was very small (only big enough for one person) and contained expired food items. She found a bigger space, organized pantry items, and created an inventory. Then, to ensure the continued success of the food pantry, she developed a volunteer training system and a bilingual survey for pantry guests.

We celebrated young women like Lorraine at the council-wide Gold Award Gala on May 10th. The event highlighted each girl’s achievement and included a pinning ceremony and dinner. You can find information about each girl who earned the Gold Award this year, her project, and the awesome community impact these young women have made at www.gs-top.org/gold.
Women of Distinction

We know that businesses and institutions are clamoring for ways to celebrate their amazing women leaders. Nominating these women for a Women of Distinction Award gives them a way to do that. The series also includes the Women of Distinction Events in Fort Worth, Amarillo, and Lubbock. The annual Women of Distinction program brings together and recognizes a group of purpose-driven leaders who, like the girls, are dedicated to service and leadership. This event celebrates women who uphold the Girl Scout Promise and Law in their daily life; who are positive role models for girls; and who demonstrate outstanding leadership, influence, and achievement through service to their community.

Well-known community figures like Deborah Ferguson, NBC 5 anchor, join with Girl Scouts to celebrate these amazing leaders. The awards are given for specific contributions in areas important to the Girl Scout Movement:

- Discover Award: The recipient of this award demonstrates exceptional understanding of themselves and their values and uses this knowledge in every way possible to help girls and women explore and discover themselves and their world.
- Connect Award: The recipients of this award demonstrate exceptional leadership in connecting with others to create solutions in our community and beyond to make the world a better place.
- Take Action Award: The recipient of this award serves our communities and advances the quality of life and opportunities so vital to the development of and support of women leadership.

2013 Honorees are:

Discover Award: Dr. Katie Cardarelli; Pamela Layton; Vernita Woods-Holmes
Connect Award: Lou Diekemper; Mercy Murguia; Ann Rice; Tonya Veasey
Take Action Award: Dr. Jane Moore; Jere Newton; Freda Powell
Lifetime Achievement Award: Lee Ruth Krieg; Martha Ruth Moreland

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Girls from Amarillo Troop 5024 knew that the transition to middle school can be tough for a girl – new school, new teachers, and new people – it can be a lot to handle. “Bullying is a big issue right now,” said Megan, Girl Scout Senior. “No one really prepared me for middle school and going from 5th grade to middle school can be a scary time.”

This troop of high school girls decided to take action to help their younger Girl Scout sisters by hosting a BFF Lock-in for 5th grade girls at Camp Kiwanis, a council camp property. Troop 5024 incorporated ideas from the aMAZE! Girl Scout Journey book and the BFF (Be a Friend First) program, the Girl Scout anti-bullying program that utilizes the aMAZE! Journey as a foundation. Both the aMAZE! Journey and the BFF Program help girls navigate the maze of relationships they will encounter as they get older and all of the issues that can arise – including peer pressure, bullying, gossip, and cliques.

The event served 25 girls and featured a variety of activities designed to help the girls develop health relationships and prevent bully behavior. One exercise had the girls explore different options to problems – should they tell a trusted adult about their problem or a friend, or perhaps they should tell a teacher?

In another activity, girls explored what they wanted in a friend. The girls also learned about empathy: When they talked about qualities they wanted in their friends – such as being nice, funny or cheerful – Troop 5024 reminded them they themselves may not always be nice, funny, or cheerful all the time and encouraged them to be more understanding of others.

The girls who attended the lock-in came away with great skills that will help them as they transition to middle school and they had high praise for the event.

“A lot of the girls really liked the lock-in. They’re less nervous about middle school. They feel confident and empowered.”

Megan, Girl Scout Senior
The BFF (Be a Friend First) program BFF — a name selected by girls — is based on Girl Scouts of the USA’s leadership curriculum. The program teaches girls about teamwork, solving conflicts and communicating effectively.

When girls are mean to one another, you often don’t see anything at all. But you can feel it. The cliques. The eye-rolling. The taunting. The rumors. It’s still bullying. Right now, when girls are bullied, almost no one intervenes.

It’s time to be part of the change. Sometimes, when girls stand up for one another, the bullying stops immediately. Like, within 10 seconds! BFF gives girls the tools to feel safe at school, online, and everywhere in between.

Through programs like BFF, Girl Scouts teaches girls to recognize bullying. To resolve conflicts. To be a better friend. To find the right words to stop bullying—once and for all. To HOST, or SPONSOR a BFF Series for your school, organization or for girls interested in attending a BFF program, adults who’d like to mentor, volunteer, or parents to help champion our efforts can call 800-582-7272 or check out forgirls.girlscouts.org/bff.
Camp Like A Girl!

Camping is a great way for girls to explore leadership, build skills, and develop a deep appreciation for nature. Whether they go for a day, week, or longer, Girl Scout camp gives girls an opportunity to grow, explore, and have fun under the guidance of caring, trained adults. **Send a girl to camp. Change her life.**

Kids who make camp a part of their lives experience:

- **Meet New People:** Camp gives kids a chance to see other kids’ diverse backgrounds. It’s a great way to make cool new friends.

- **Try a Challenge:** Not all the things that kids do at camp are easy – they’re not supposed to be! Fresh challenges — like trying new sports, learning new crafts and games can be very rewarding.

- **Appreciate Nature:** There’s a great big natural world out there, and going to camp helps girls learn how beautiful and important it really is.

- **Learn New Skills:** All the activities and instruction at camp are great opportunities to learn something new — such as archery, challenge course, horseback riding. Camp can also help you develop important life skills like independence, self-reliance, and confidence.

- **Get Healthy:** With all the fun, games, and physical activity, going to camp can be a great way to get exercise and fresh air. Swimming, hiking, and playing sports are a much healthier alternative to hanging around at home all summer.

- **Have FUN!** When you get right down to it, going to camp is all about having a good time. We offer lots of ways for girls to participate so no one misses out.

Here’s What GIRLS Are Saying:

“**We were walking around, exploring, when we heard wild hogs! We got really scared but it turned out to be our counselors, playing a joke on us!**”

Astanzia Gibson

“The best part about camp is meeting new friends. That’s what I look forward to the most.”

Brenna Kaplan

“I would recommend camp to any girl because it’s packed full with fun. I had fun at both Camp Timberlake and Stevens Ranch so imagine what it will be like to have both camps in one!”

Abby Rosemann
Having properties in line to offer the best camp experience possible to our girls is a priority at Girl Scouts. We’ve had a busy spring getting camps ready for summer.

We increased capacity at Stevens Ranch with more modern facilities and updating current facilities including improvements to the Farm House as well as a newly constructed staff house. The Check-in Building from Camp Timberlake was moved to Stevens Ranch and remodeled. In May, the council closed on the sale of the 90 acres north of Highway 67 to a local individual.

Last spring, the council closed on the sale of 100 acres on the southern end of Pitcher Pump Ranch at Camp Kiwanis. The Presbyterian Home for Children has purchased the land with plans to build a new facility. Camp Kiwanis is now open for year-round use by girls (troop camping during the school year and summer camp). Girls are enjoying the newly renovated pool at Camp Kiwanis thanks to the generous support of the Brumley Foundation, the Mary E. Bivins Foundation, the M.K. Brown Foundation, and other community donors.

Camp Boothe Oaks (CBO) in Sweetwater, is a much beloved spot on the west Texas horizon where people can be immersed in nature away from the distractions of everyday life. Luckily, the central location of CBO makes it a perfect destination for any troop wanting to explore new council campsites. CBO is open annually to provide troop, special event, and outdoor education programs for girls. Recently, several volunteers worked to clean up the camp and a group of volunteers are working with staff to raise money to match funds from the Nolan County Foundation.

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The Bath Houses and Unit Houses at Camp Rio Blanco have been upgraded thanks to a

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**Here’s What PARENTS Are Saying:**

“*I think the most important lesson Janna has learned is that every girl is different. It’s great for girls to come together from different backgrounds to explore something they all enjoy - CAMP!*”

Joyce Campbell

“*Through camp, Brenna has found a comfort at a young age with being on her own, in new situations, without her family.*”

Jeannette Kaplan

“*Abby learns new skills each time she goes to camp. She builds up confidence in herself and what she can do. She grows more and more each year in self-reliance and being out on her own.*”

Lisa Rosemann
Continued from page 8

generous in-kind donation of professional services and materials by Airco, Inc., a Lubbock-based air conditioning supply company. Airco marshaled professional connections and resources to complete the work, which began in early December 2012 and was completed in April of this year.

“We are glad to be in a position to help,” said Tim Guilliam, Airco, Inc. president. “I know that my daughter and many other girls in the area are happy about these improvements and I am glad to be a part of that.” This wonderful opportunity came about in large part to Tim’s connection to Girl Scouts – he is a proud Girl Scout Dad and his wife is a Troop Leader.

When he heard about the improvements that Camp Rio Blanco would need to get up to par, he felt that he could make a difference.

You can help our girls go to Girl Scout camp. Just $15 can help buy her gear, and $50 can subsidize her camp experience. Your gift will help girls grow in their confidence, courage and character. You can help give them the experience of a lifetime and the tools they need to face life’s pressures. The one place where the best in Girl Scouting converges is Girl Scout camp.

**Girl Scouting is a powerful positive force in the world and girls need us. Will you send $20 or $50 or even $160 for a full campership to give a girl the opportunity to attend summer camp? Every girl deserves that chance. Use the included envelope to support a “campership” today or give online at www.gs-top.org/give.**

To find the best contact for your area, go online to www.gs-top.org/contact-us to find our council directory. We want to hear from you and welcome the chance to partner with the communities we serve.
Though we had a few calls and email into our online help desk (helpdesk@gs-top.org or call toll-free 855-266-0759) the outcomes were clear. By 9am on April 1 our camps were 60% full. Parents didn’t have to fill out the same piece of paperwork for each camp their daughter wanted to attend plus they were able to see instantly what their summer plans with Girl Scouts would be. At Girl Scouts, we realize the power that can be harnessed by using online tools to serve our members.

We’re planning on going virtual in a variety of ways like offering more virtual volunteer trainings via www.gs-top.org. Online training makes it easier for volunteers across the council to get the information they need in the comfort of their own homes at any time of day. “The face of volunteering in Girl Scouts has changed,” said Becky Burton, council CEO. “Fifty years ago most troops were led by stay-at-home moms. We still have great full-time moms volunteering but we have so many working parents, grandparents, even college kids and working adults without kids of their own.”

Virtual training helps us bring our volunteers up to speed on the diverse ways that they can help provide the awesome Girl Scout Leadership Experience to girls in their community. It also extends the various ways that adults can volunteer. “We have flexible ways that adults can participate,” said Burton. “Adults can, of course, lead a troop, but they can also spend a day helping girls go on a field trip or teaching a class about preventing bullying – and we know that if we’re offering flexible ways for adults to help, we need to offer flexible support systems for them.”

We’re also focusing on keeping all of our communications streamlined and up-to-the-minute. Enews is delivered monthly and all event, camp, program, and registration confirmations go out via email. We also are really excited about social media. The council’s Pinterest page (http://pinterest.com/girlscoutstop/) was crazy during the cookie sale. On Pinterest, we share artwork, graphics, and it’s a great place for our volunteers to get ideas on crafts, projects, swaps and more! Facebook (www.facebook.com/GirlScoutsTOP) is a great place to share and get ideas. Favorite posts on facebook include “This Month in Girl Scouting” and “Throwback Thursday”.

So what can you do?
• Like our council on facebook: www.facebook.com/GirlScoutsTOP
• Send feedback and suggestions about the current website to pr@gs-top.org

As a movement Girl Scouts is working hard to embrace our virtual world and we see this as a learning opportunity for our girls so there is a big focus on girl safety as we are more and more online. Girl Scouts has an internet safety pledge that we encourage all parents to review with their daughters. Highlights of the pledge include not sharing personal/identifying information, agreeing to never meet with someone they only know online, and working with their parents to set up guidelines for their “online time”. It’s a jungle out there, and Girl Scouts is here to help parents navigate their daughter’s virtual experience.
We’ve just celebrated Independence Day and our minds are focused on patriotic activity. Did you know that when you purchase Girl Scout cookies, you can choose to show your patriotism by participating in Project Troop to Troop. Project Troop to Troop is a council service initiative that encourages members of the community to buy packages of Girl Scout Cookies to donate to the U.S. Armed Forces.

“Customers sponsor packages of Girl Scout Cookies that the Council sends to our men and women in uniform,” said Debbie Turner, director of product sales. “Through Project Troop to Troop, our customers get to support our service men and women and support their local Girl Scout Troop with each purchase.”

Each year we hear back from service men and women and they inevitably say nothing feels more like “home” than a box of iconic (and delicious) Girl Scout cookies.

Olivia, a 10-year-old Junior Girl Scout, said she and her fellow Scouts love sending cookies from their troop to the troops abroad. “They love the cookies,” Olivia said. “We feel really proud of ourselves because we did something good.”

GS-TOP partners with organizations across the council to deliver a taste of home to our military. These partnerships cement Girl Scouts as a permanent presence in the effort to say “thank you” to our military. We work with many organizations including:

- Airborne Angel Cadets of Texas
- Helping Our Heroes
- Dyess Air Force Base
- America Supports You Texas
- Socks for Soldiers
- Cannon Air Force Base

“It’s a wonderful thing for these soldiers to get something that shows we care,” said Caroline Miller, president of Socks for Soldiers.

“Our care packages reach troops on the front line and getting these cookies means the world to them,” said Nancy Carter, founder of Airborne Angel Cadets of Texas. “I am very appreciative of the invaluable partnership we have formed with the Girl Scouts and for the generous support of the community.”

Soldiers have even stopped Girl Scout staff in public to thank them for the sweet reminder of home. Jason Steffer is one such soldier. He has many stories of when Girl Scout cookies brought him a measure of comfort.

“I was deployed in Baghdad and every day is the same, it can be wearing,” Jason said. One day, Girl Scout cookies were passed out to everyone. “Everybody called their family after that. Girl Scout cookies remind you of home. They are a reminder that people back home love you.”

Girl Scout cookies also comforted Jason when he was just starting his military career and tragedy struck his family. “I was going through basic training when my grandfather passed away. He was my best friend,” he said. While he was traveling to get home for his grandfather’s funeral, Jason said, “I had to spend the night in an airport. And they had Girl Scout cookies in the USO. Having that comfort there meant a lot to me.”

During the 2013 Cookie Season, the public generously sponsored more than 48,000 packages of cookies through Project Troop to Troop. Thank you for your support. Your generous donations help us bring a reminder of home, love, and support to soldiers like Jason. Next winter, when you see a girl in front of the grocery store, or when she rings your doorbell, know that buying a package of cookies will help her grow in confidence and achieve her goals... and through Project Troop to Troop you can also use that opportunity to help Girl Scouts say thank you to our service men and women.

Call 800-582-7272 to get in line to help with our 2014 Troop to Troop program and spread the cookies with patriotic love.
“Girl Scout cookies remind you of home. They are a reminder that people back home love you.”
...to all our donors for your continued support!

Your generosity allows us to provide unmatched programming and outreach to girls throughout Girl Scouts of Texas and Oklahoma Plains.

For more information about Planned Giving or if you have included Girl Scouts in your will or estate plan, please let us know!

Contact Barbara Shelton, CFRE at 817-735-5313 or bshelton@gs-top.org

When you include Girl Scouts of Texas Oklahoma Plains in your will or estate plan, please use the following description: Girl Scouts of Texas Oklahoma Plains, Inc., a Texas nonprofit corporation.
This list contains donors who made contributions between January - June, 2013. We make every effort to accurately thank our donors. Please contact Mary Burnette at mburnette@gs-top.org for corrections or updates on recognition preferences.
Bio Beauty Camp

This STEM-focused twilight camp (day camp in the evening) gave over 120 Girl Scouts the chance to discover the science behind lip gloss, lotion and even bug spray! Girls wore lab coats (which they decorated) face masks and GS cookie flavored coconut oil lip gloss. Girls also learned about the beauty of being fit through exercise and healthy eating. Awesome!