

Scaling mountains is a lesson in confidence

Girl Scout Alexandra Herr reached all 48 of NH's highest peaks - by 6 years old

Boundless energy and a love of the outdoors has defined Alexandra Herr since she was little. From the day she was born, her mother, Patricia "Trish" Herr of Campton, NH, vowed to instill a love of nature in her children, and by the time Alex was 5, Trish had her hiking adult-level mountain trails. Alex and her younger sister, Sage, are individually registered Girl Scout members who are taking the Girl Scout goal of building skills through outdoor experiences to new heights.

Alex, 16, is busy completing her Girl Scout Gold Award project, called 13 Before 13. The Girl Scout Ambassador has created a list of hikes that children younger than 13 can enjoy in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. The hikes are divided into easy, medium, and hard levels, with a final hike of Little Haystack. Children choose the last hike in each section themselves. As the easy, medium and hard hikes are completed, a child earns a sticker, and once



Alexandra Herr, 16, enjoyed the view from the summit of Mount Washington in New Hampshire recently. Her Gold Award project is designed to involve children in hiking. (Courtesy photo)

they finish the whole list they earn a patch designed by Alex herself. The concept of the project is to introduce children to hiking and to experience nature with a list of hikes that are fun and suitable for younger children.

"We enjoy hiking. It's a big part of our lives. It's something that isn't too daunting," she said of her list of 13 hikes. "I want them to feel like this list was made for them...because it was! Ideally, this list would introduce children to hiking and motivate them to move on to more difficult lists after they finish 13 Before 13," is how she describes the project in her blog. She invites anyone interested in taking on the challenge to hike with her and give her feedback. She's eager to see more girls out on the trails.

when you're younger (helps with) focus, mental wellbeing, appreciation of nature, especially now with changing climate," Alex said. "If people appreciate the environment, they're more likely to advocate for that in the future. If they enjoy it, it can be a bonding experience with their family. If they don't enjoy hiking, they can enjoy other things in nature."

You might think Alex's family had been avid hikers all along, but Trish Herr said it was Alex's "over-the-top energy levels" that led to their outdoor adventures. She began hiking when Alex was just 3 years old. She homeschools her daughters, and has encouraged both to document their hikes in blog form. At first she took care of the blogging for



This is the patch Alexandra Herr designed for those who take on her hiking challenge.

"Just being in nature itself, especially

Continued on Page 2

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To learn more, contact the Advancement office by emailing advancement@girlscoutsgwm.org or calling 888-474-9686.

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Continued from Page 1

her girls, but as each reached the age of 13, she turned those duties over to them. They also host a YouTube channel, podcasts, and do speaking engagements.

Trish has documented their family adventures in a book titled "Up." In it, she describes their adventures climbing all 48 of New Hampshire's highest mountains. She says that "small doesn't necessarily mean weak; that girls can be strong; and that big, bold things are possible."

"There's a strength that comes from knowing you can do something on your own two feet," she said, "and enjoy the surroundings around you."

She notices that solo hiking is becoming less of a strictly male endeavor. "Both girls hike solo a lot now," she said. "For them to do that requires knowledge, preparation, confidence – knowing you can take care of yourself. It's very empowering. When you grow up doing that on a regular basis, you not only appreciate nature, you have confidence in yourself."

Having brought both girls up hiking, she is enthusiastic about the emphasis Girl Scouts is putting on getting girls outdoors. "I would love to see more troops of Girl Scouts out there doing the hard core stuff (her girls) are doing."

Alex hopes to have her Gold Award work finished up later this year, as she hikes with more children on her trail list and gets their feedback.

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest achievement in Girl Scouting, and a testament to the girls who earn it. Gold Award Girl Scouts have shown remarkable dedication to improving their communities and the world. For more than 100 years, Girl Scouts has provided girls with unmatched outdoor adventures where they

learn key life skills. Among the 42 new badges released by Girl Scouts of the USA this summer are 12 Outdoor High Adventure badges, designed for girls to explore nature and experience exciting outdoor adventures like backpacking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, rock climbing, and tree climbing – giving them the confidence to support one another, take healthy risks, and spend dedicated time in nature. These are the first Girl Scout badges that members can earn by choosing one of two self-directed paths.

Getting girls outdoors is one of the four pillars of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, along with building skills in STEM, life skills, and entrepreneurship.

For more information about the 13 Before 13 Program, please contact Customer Care at customercare@girlscoutsgwm.org.



Alexandra and Sage Herr climb the Caps Ridge Trail on Mount Jefferson in June 2015. (Courtesy Photo)

Girl Scouts love the outdoors



Dear friends,

In the words of a special Camp Farnsworth song, this was a summer many hundreds of girls will never forget! Over the course of several weeks, girls explored, challenged themselves, and made new friends. Whether they were climbing a rock or the four-sided climbing tower, girls reached impressive heights. Our camps were full of songs, laughter, and amazing adventures.

At Camp Farnsworth, we celebrated 110 summers of all-girl camping fun, bringing together alumnae from the 1940s through today. A highlight was the unveiling of the Vermont historical marker celebrating the vast reach of the Girl Scout camp experience.

Beyond our summer programs, girls are also on the move in the out-of-doors in other ways. This year we celebrated our state parks with 10 new summer programs. Girls, their families and troops were able to hike, fish, learn outdoor photography skills, and see our state's natu-

ral resources up close and in new ways. Due to the great success, we will offer another series of Girl Scouts Love State Parks programs in September 2020.

We also continue to train our troop leaders in a wide variety of outdoor skills. Over the course of the past year, our team of volunteers and staff have updated and revitalized our outdoor courses - designed to get more leaders comfortable with, and therefore more girls out in, the out-of-doors. Farnsworth Weekend again brought adults and older girls from across our council together to kick off another great year.

This issue of The Trailblazer celebrates our focus on the out-of-doors. The outdoors has played a key role in our program from the very beginning and continues to provide exciting experiences for girls today. Thank you for making Girl Scout camp and Girl Scout outdoor programming possible. We are so grateful for your support and friendship.

Yours in Girl Scouting,

Patricia Mellor
Chief Executive Officer, GSGWM
Gold Award Girl Scout

Save the Date

G.I.R.L. Expo
October 19, 2019
NH Sportsplex, Bedford, NH

April 11, 2020
DoubleTree by Hilton,
Burlington, VT

The G.I.R.L. Expo focuses on "everything exciting for girls" including hands-on activities, STEM, outdoors, Take Action interactive zones, exhibitors, fun workshops, live stage shows, raffles and more! If you, your company, or someone you know would like to be a part of G.I.R.L. Expo, contact us to learn about all the ways you can participate! Learn more by visiting girlscoutsgwm.org/GirlExpo.

Young Women of Distinction
November 9, 2019
NOAH's Event Center,
Bedford, NH

November 10, 2019
Essex Community Education
Center, Essex, VT

The Young Women of Distinction event honors girls who have earned our highest awards, including the Girl Scout Gold Award. Alumnae who are highest award recipients are invited to join us and be honored as well. RSVP to customer care by November 1.

SUMMER CAMP 2019 BY THE NUMBERS

7 WEEKS
OF CAMP



1,102 CAMPERS
spent 1,985
camper weeks



50 Jump-In
Campers
20 Coaches

100 Camp Staff & Volunteers
plus 10 Counselors-in-Training



22

Low-ropes



13

Boating



8

Archery



13

Lifeguard



13

CPR

Staff Trained

22 PROGRAM & CAMP AIDES

134 CAMPERS
at Troop Adventure



102 CAMPERS
at volunteer-run day camps

STEM MOBILE UPDATE

Thanks to all of your incredible support, we're thrilled to announce that we've raised enough funds to purchase and outfit our Mobile STEM Lab van!

Our next step is to fill the van with state-of-the-art STEM equipment and programming essentials, so it's not too late to give! Visit girlscoutsgwm.org/STEMLab to donate.

Outdoor programming expands at our camps

Girl Scouts has a long and rich history of providing unparalleled leadership development programming through getting girls outdoors. In fact, based on what girls report as most important to them today, outdoor programming is one of Girl Scouts of the USA's top four national program focuses. Research shows that through outdoor experiences, girls have unique opportunities to try new things, improve skills and confidence, overcome fears, develop a lasting respect for the environment, and help other girls.

Locally, Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains has embraced this focus with enthusiasm—growing attendance at our summer camps across Vermont and New Hampshire, expanding and innovating outdoor volunteer training, and enhancing year-round outdoor programs with new and unique activities, such as outdoor art, mountain biking, geocaching, orienteering, ice fishing, and more.

This year we are excited to strengthen and expand these programs even more through an exciting internship program. With generous support from the Richard King Mellon Foundation, the Student Conservation Association (SCA) and Girl Scouts of Western Pennsylvania (GSWPA), this internship program allows for sixteen different Girl Scout councils across the country to elevate outdoor and environmental conservation activities at the local level.

Interns from SCA are bringing their energy, enthusiasm, and experience to these councils - benefiting Girl Scouts in a big way. From geology programming in Maine and outdoor training in Pennsylvania to land maintenance projects on the Iditarod Trail in Alaska, these interns are planning, taking



SCA intern Jade Robinson holds one of the geocaching kits she created. (GSGWM Photo)

action, and leading while protecting our nation's natural and cultural resources.

Through this funding, councils are offering innovative programming that addresses environmental impacts such as water pollution, the effects of weather on rocks, the declining butterfly and bee populations, and connecting STEM education to the outdoors through geology, biology, and forensics. In addition, girls are able to get outdoors and have exciting adventures that would not have been possible without this funding, including wildlife tracking in Yellowstone National Park, and summiting Mt. Helena in the Olympic National Forest.

On a local level, we welcomed our SCA outdoor program intern, Jade Robinson, in July. Jade is an Environmental Studies major who is passionate about getting young people engaged in environmental stewardship. She has traveled in Costa Rica, where she studied the boreal and cloud forests; participated in a National

Outdoor Leadership School course; lived nomadically in Yukon, Canada, for 30 days where she gained class II & III whitewater experience; and actively practices "Leave No Trace" principles.

Working closely with our outdoor program staff, Jade's role at GSGWM has focused on adding opportunities to support volunteers taking girls outdoors - trail development, geocaching, and nature activities. This summer, Jade took 22 campers and 3 staff to hike Girl Scouts' Low Trail at Camp Farnsworth in Vermont, teaching girls about tree identification, maintaining trails, and conservation efforts along the way.

Jade also completed other programs with our campers. The first was creating "nature kits" with our Camp Aides based on our outdoor badges such as geocaching and water conservancy. Another program focused on work with our day camp Program Aides at Camp Kettleford in New Hampshire, where Jade developed geocaching boxes - each containing different activities..

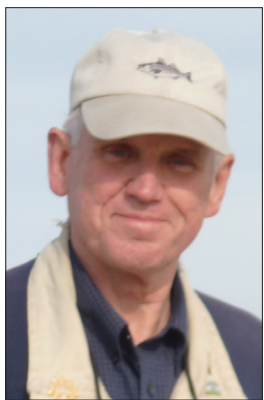
We are excited to continue the powerful outdoors-focused work Jade began over the summer. Between September and December, Jade will be busy delivering volunteer outdoor trainings, such as Basic Outdoor Living Skills (BOLS) trainings, facilitating outdoor experiences and activities at the Older Girl Conference, and preparing and improving camp resources such as cook kits and other supplies in preparation for our outdoor winter programs.

We are tremendously grateful to GSWPA, the Richard King Mellon Foundation, and the SCA for providing such a wonderful opportunity to further empower local girls through meaningful outdoor experiences.

Girl Scouts explore beaches with Coastal Rompers

Since its start in 1996, the Coastal Rompers program has provided countless opportunities for older Girl Scouts to experience and appreciate marine life, help with the conservation of our shoreline, and take action to make the world a better place.

Girls in grades 6-12 get together as Coastal Rompers to visit area aquariums, explore beaches and intertidal pools, perform community service in their annual beach cleanup, and help others learn about marine life. Coastal Rompers also offers older Girl Scouts a chance to develop and practice leadership skills by both delivering sea-related programs to younger girls, and by experiencing the coastal marine world with their peers.



Neil Savage (Courtesy photo)

Neil Savage is the co-founder of Coastal Rompers, along with Girl Scout Alum Lee Williams. In 1996, Girl Scouts had already been leading Discovery Weekends, where they would go tide-pooling – exploring the life in the areas where ocean water advances and recedes – and the two realized older girls didn't want to just watch over younger girls, they wanted to have an experience more like a camporee. Savage said they started Coastal Rompers, drawing on his background as a marine biologist and oceanographer, with about nine girls coming to the first meeting at Camp Seawood in Portsmouth, NH, that fall.

Today, while some participants simply

enjoy their marine adventures, other Coastal Rompers lead Discovery Weekends – tidepooling events for younger Girl Scouts – and a program called Trees, The Sea, and Me at the Urban Forestry Center. These are the girls who become program aides. Gwen St. Germain, Savage's current co-leader, said "Some of these girls don't necessarily want to do things for themselves, they want to do things for others. The power to believe in themselves and give back is where it begins here."

Savage brings a wealth of knowledge and a caring spirit to the program. At 78, with Parkinson's disease, Savage is having to step back a bit on his involvement with the program, but hasn't lost an ounce of his enthusiasm for teaching girls everything he can.

"The girls have taken over most of it," he said, saying St. Germain will do more driving and organizing, while he will bring a chair to an event. "They bring things back to me!" he said of a trip to the beach the Coastal Rompers would take. "We still find things they haven't seen yet!" The girls are always happy to have him along.

Savage has arranged for the Girl Scouts to visit a Coast Guard station, visit a lighthouse, take special tours of the New England Aquarium in Boston, visit the marine lab at the Isle of Shoals, and take a gundalow ride on the Piscataqua River in Portsmouth, NH. A gundalow is a flat-bottomed sailing cargo vessel commonly used on New Hampshire rivers in the 1700s and 1800s.

The girls meet regularly to take field trips and perform service, and the annual beach cleanup, part of an international effort, is popular with the Girl Scouts. They clean almost a mile of



Girl Scouts recently enjoyed the marine lab at the Isle of Shoals. (Courtesy photo)

coastline in Rye, NH, providing valuable data on the trash that's found as part of their effort. Savage said they typically haul 600 to 700 pounds of plastic, bottles, cigarette butts, lobster trap pieces, and more from the beach. "People think the beach is their ash tray," he said, "so they go down and smoke and stick it in the sand. The world's beaches are litter sites. Occasionally we see dead birds or seals." Lobster traps lost at sea are a huge problem for the beaches.

This year, Coastal Rompers is becoming part of the Girl Scout Mariners program. Mariners have had a bold history in Girl Scouts since 1924, and are being brought back to provide girls with high adventure on the water, developing skills in boating, sailing, kayaking, canoeing, swimming, safety and rescue, weather and navigation, and taking action on the ocean, lakes and rivers. Mariner troops are for girls in grades 8-12.

Alum Profile: Sharon Baade - outdoors expert

As a former camper, camp counselor, camp director, and outdoor enthusiast, it's no surprise Sharon Baade now works for Girl Scouts of the USA as Senior Program and Property Manager. Baade leads the Program Support to Councils team, onboarding new staff, planning and delivering program webinars, and providing support services to councils around older girl programming, badge and Journey implementation, highest awards, and travel.

"I also work with council boards of directors to support their long-range processes," she said, "and support staff in camp management and planning."

She is also responsible for updating Safety Activity Checkpoints each year, and is on the core team for the G.I.R.L. 2020 convention in Orlando next year.

Baade is a lifelong Girl Scout. "I was a girl member from Brownies through Seniors. Through my college years I was on camp staff, and the week before I graduated from college, my CEO called and offered me a position on staff, and I have been a staff member and proud Girl Scout ever since."

"There is no better laboratory in which to develop girls' leadership skills and help them grow into caring, successful adults than the outdoors."

Sharon Baade

As a girl member and young adult, she was in the North Iowa Girl Scout Council (now Greater Iowa). As a staff member, she has also been on the staff of councils in Michigan (now Michigan Shore to Shore), New York (Western New York), Vermont (now Green and White Mountains), Tennessee (Heart of the South), and Wisconsin (Northwestern Great Lakes).



Sharon Baade (Courtesy Photo)

She is also a Gold Award Girl Scout, having earned her First Class designation as a girl.

Baade says she has been blessed to see the amazing ways outdoor activities change girls. "I've seen girls at resident camp for the first time grow incredibly in independence and self-reliance. I've seen girls go from being quietly terrified to feeling powerful as they challenge themselves and stretch their limits when they take part in high adventure activities. I've seen girls at camp have a chance to meet and make friends with girls from places, ethnicities, families and cultures that are different than theirs. I've seen girls get immersed in the outdoors, and then think differently about the natural spaces they are in as they develop environmental stewardship skills and work to protect a patch of lady slippers, marvel at the call of a loon, or lead a campaign with their peers to stop using plastic straws. There is no better laboratory in which to develop girls' leadership skills and help them grow into caring, successful adults than the outdoors."

Her personal experience as a girl in the outdoors helped make her the person she is today. "I was blessed with truly smart parents who sent me off to resident camp for the first time after a year that included childhood surgery, as they didn't want me to see myself or be seen as that little sick kid. I took to it immediately. I loved being in the woods, hearing the crickets at night, and lying on the dock with my unit watching for falling stars. Camp gave me power and purpose as a child, and led me to my lifelong career, and to my endless love for the outdoors, the night sky, and all I've been lucky enough to experience."

Just being a Girl Scout gave her the skills she needed to be successful as an adult. "All those badges and service projects taught me to think through projects and tasks from inception to evaluation," she said. "I have learned so much from Girl Scouting, and the best part: It doesn't stop. I am still learning from my Girl Scout staff colleagues, and from our girls every single day!"

Today, Baade gives back to her community by serving on the Vermont Commission for Women, has served as her neighborhood fundraiser for the American Heart Association, and served on the planning group that hosts Senior Roundup Reunions in Vermont every triennium. She looks forward to doing much more when she retires.

"Surround yourself with friends who are loving, help you see possibilities, and who you trust to be honest and supportive thought partners," she said. "And then give yourself the gift of time and space to think things through while going for a walk in the woods, paddling a kayak across a quiet lake - anything that helps you ground yourself in the best course for you."

Alum Profile: Nicole Jordan - professional success

Nicole Brassard Jordan is a business success who's also passionate about the outdoors. The deputy commissioner of the New Hampshire Liquor Commission says her years at Girl Scout summer camp taught her she could do things she never thought she could do, and gave her a love of the outdoors.

"It takes you out of your comfort zone of everyday life at home," she said. "When you are unplugged and able to experience the world in a new way it can be life changing. Nature can provide us some of the most beautiful experiences in life. You learn skills that you will have for a lifetime; problem solving, planning, working with others and overcoming obstacles."

Jordan – or "Ski," as she was nicknamed at Camp Farnsworth – spent five years as a Girl Scout with the Swift Water Girl Scout Council, now Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains. Now she assists in the management of 77 state liquor outlets and more than 1,400 employees. Her specific focus is in the marketing of programs and promotion planning, including sales and distribution of products. The New Hampshire Liquor Commission generates more than \$723 million in sales, serves over 12 million customers annually, and raises critical revenue for New Hampshire.

She was professionally recognized as one of five Outstanding Women in Business by New Hampshire Business Review in 2018, and had the honor to speak at the Women of the Vine & Spirits Global Symposium. She's also received numerous awards for excellence in customer service, innovation and performance and has been featured in national outlets like The New York Times, Forbes, The Washington Post, Whisky Advocate and more.

Because of what she learned about herself at Camp Farnsworth, she has continued to push herself both professionally and personally. "To this day I'm an avid cyclist, peddling about 3,500 miles per season," Jordan said. "My longest ride each year is 150 miles from Bedford, Massachusetts, to Okemo Mountain, Vermont, with 9,200 feet of climbing – yes, in one day! Last year while training for this event I rode past Camp Farnsworth with a childhood friend who also attended Camp Farnsworth with me one year. It was a great moment for us both. We took photos and shared them with friends and family."

As a Girl Scout, she participated in adventure camps that included riding her bike from Thetford, Vermont, to the coast of Maine. "The second year I canoed over 100 miles of the Allagash River in Maine for a full week, camping alongside the river each day. During both trips we had to plan all the meals, purchase and carry everything with us. When you are carrying/packing all of your necessities in small spaces,



Nicole Jordan at the top of White Face Mountain in New York. (Courtesy Photo)

"Nature can provide us some of the most beautiful experiences in life. You learn skills that you will have for a lifetime: problem-solving, planning, working with others, and overcoming obstacles."

Nicole Jordan

and needing to consider weight and amount of your gear, you learn a lot!"

As a girl, a close encounter with a moose left a vivid impression on her. "During the canoeing trip on the Allagash, there were many beautiful moments of calmness and beauty," she said. "About halfway through the week we came upon a moose in the river, and - while it is not advisable - I continued to canoe up to the moose, coming within arm's length to touch him before he turned and ran out of the river. When you see a moose in the river, you have no idea how big they really are. Their legs are long!"

Jordan and her husband support Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains with annual donations that provide outdoor adventure opportunities to girls at Camp Farnsworth in honor of her grandmother, Florence Isenberg, who worked for the council for many years as a camp registrar. They also participate in a fundraising cycling event to support the Franklin Land Trust, to preserve conservation land and open space.

"Surround yourself with people who love and support you with great vibes and encouragement. You can do things you never thought you would or could do. Embrace being outside your comfort zone and believe in yourself."

Thanks for making camp possible

On behalf of everyone at Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains, we want to express our deep gratitude for the support of our campership program this year. Outdoor programming is one of the most powerful ways for girls to

grow their leadership skills and, thanks to supporters like you, we can ensure that every girl who wants to participate in these programs can do so, regardless of her family's financial circumstances.

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Ready for camp! (GSGWM Photo)

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