

Girl Scouts take action to help during pandemic

Many work to earn Girl Scouting's Highest Awards through community projects

Girl Scouts everywhere have leaped into action to support their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of our girls are earning their Girl Scout Silver or Bronze Awards by making face masks for healthcare providers, and Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains has begun a council-wide Bronze Award project where Juniors will help make personal protective equipment as a team and individually.

The team Bronze Award project is a new initiative for our council, and several Girl Scout groups across the two states have put their hands and hearts to work making face masks and more. Individual Cadettes were some of the first to help their communities by making masks and button headbands as ear savers.

Samantha Laflotte, 13, of Merrimack, NH, is a Girl Scout Cadette and



Samantha Laflotte, left, assembles a 3D-printed face mask. Hanne Stuke, right, makes cloth face masks for Concord Hospital in New Hampshire. (Courtesy photos)

eighth-grader at the Academy of Science and Design Charter School, and had enough interest in the field of 3D printing to have a small 3D printer at her home already.

"I heard that healthcare workers need masks because of a shortage due to the coronavirus pandemic," she said. "They need masks to protect themselves from getting sick so they can continue to treat patients. The healthcare workers are really brave and I'm so excited that I have this opportunity to help them."

Working on similar but separate Silver Award projects are Cassandra Rodriguez and Maelin Lambert. They are Cadettes in two Merrimack troops. Both are making cloth masks, following the recommendations in a video posted by Dartmouth Hitchcock. Cassandra is sharpening her sewing skills with the project. She was busy cutting enough

fabric and elastic to make 100 masks on March 30.

In Hopkinton, NH, Hanne Stuke, 12, is also hard at work creating cloth face masks. She is a Cadette in Concord Girl Scout Troop 20507 and a seventh-grader at Hopkinton Middle School. She had already donated more than 100 masks and 50 button headbands to Concord Hospital by early May.

Samantha's 3D-printed masks are made of plastic, and contain a slot for a filter that will block the virus and is useful for up to 40 hours. Each mask will have a soft rubber gasket to make it comfortable for the wearer. She plans to provide several filters with each mask so they can be used longer. She said she is grateful to Pulsar Security for funding her project.

"We are all really proud of Samantha



Molly Daniels of Danville, VT, is one of over 100 Girl Scouts participating in our council-wide Bronze Award project. (Courtesy Photo)

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

Girl Scouts are quick to take action during pandemic to make PPE for health providers

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for seeing a need and deciding to do something about it!" said Amy Bewley, Coordinator of Marketing and Communications for the charter school. "She is doing this all on her own from home, even finding funding for it."

Merrimack troop leader Melissa Laflotte, is proud of the pair for stepping up. "I feel it's another amazing example of Girl Scouts using their resources and skills wisely to help where there is an immediate need."

Samantha and Cassandra said they will supplement their mask-making with videos or a website that will show others how to make masks.

Hanne and the rest of her troop also made blankets for sick children who are hospitalized at Concord Hospital to make them feel more at home when they did their winter lodge retreat in January, said troop leader Dr. Patricia Edwards. "Many of our girls have gained sewing skills through our service projects in the past such as making T-shirt bags for the homeless to carry things in," she said.

The Silver Award is the highest possible recognition for a Girl Scout Cadette, those in grades 6-8. The Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards are bestowed on Girl Scouts in grades 4-12 who take action to make the world a better place. All three awards are the mark of the truly remarkable.

Girl Scouting continues despite pandemic

As families were instructed to stay home and avoid the spread of the COVID-19 virus, Girl Scouts of the USA and our council have been using all our resources to reach out to our membership and beyond to provide some sense of normalcy through online programming and virtual troops.

Our chief priority is the health and safety of our girls, families, volunteers, and staff. Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains suspended all in-person programming and troop meetings in mid-March and for the foreseeable future.

But the Girl Scout motto is "Be prepared," and we are! Our council has already provided virtual programming for our members who don't necessarily have access to a lot of resources and partners. We are transforming even more of the programs that make us the world's best leadership development program for girls into online offerings. We are doing Facebook Live

sing-alongs and dancing, and Girl Scouts can earn badges like First Aid, Drawing, Celebrating Community, and Inside Government. We are even providing virtual troop meetings that meet weekly with fun, interactive activities through a video chat platform. To make sure girls enjoy nature, we've created the Girl Scouts Get Outdoors More Challenge.

We are reaching out to our leaders and other volunteers, and have given parents information to help cope, too. We recommend talking to children about the situation we all find ourselves in by staying calm and giving age-appropriate information. Keeping to family routines can make all the difference. Children can ask questions and express their feelings, and it's OK to admit you don't have all the answers.

You can see all the opportunities we are making available at our website, girlscoutsgwm.org/VirtualPrograms.

Girl Scouting imparts vital life skills



Dear friends,

Since our last issue, our world has changed tremendously. Our children's schools have closed, communities have been quarantined, and many have transitioned to working from home. We were forced to close our offices, cancel programs, and stop all in-person troop meetings.

This is why life skills are so vitally important. Girl Scouting provides skills to allow girls to cope, to make good decisions based on the information they have, and to take the lead in keeping themselves and their communities safe. Our members have been called upon to take care of others, make decisions for themselves and their families, and find new ways to learn.

Today, we must continue working in partnership with our governments, our health care providers, and each other to strengthen our communities. Though we have seen actual borders close, the sisterhood of Girl Scouting and Girl Guiding continues in the virtual sphere. We have mobilized to work in new ways and to provide new programming oppor-

tunities. Some we will continue into the future as a new normal, while for others we cannot wait to return to the traditions of just a few months ago.

Throughout this issue, you will read about ways our members have advanced their life skills to make our world a better place. Whether they have taken the lead in civic engagement, used essential first aid skills to further a career, or prepared themselves for college, Girl Scout programming has provided them with a road map for success.










I'd like to thank you for being a part of our international sisterhood. We have learned first-hand how much our lives are intertwined and how we impact each other, whether knowingly or unknowingly. Please know that your support and leadership make a huge impact on our program and members. We could not achieve our success without your partnership.

Yours in Girl Scouting,

Patricia K. Mellor
Chief Executive Officer
Gold Award Girl Scout

Girl Scout Life Skills badges and Journeys

With 279 badges and Journeys available to Girl Scouts, there's bound to be a topic that will be interesting to every girl! Every one of them guarantees that a girl will learn useful life skills, from Daisy to Ambassador levels. Here are just a few badges that ensure our Girl Scouts will be well prepared in life.

Brownie		Fair Play – Playing by the rules and giving everyone a fair chance in sports teaches girls how to be part of a team, include everyone, and enjoy fair competition.	Cadette		Public Speaker – Being able to speak up, whether one on one or in front of a group, allows a girl to find her voice. Whether performing onstage or just at a meeting, these skills help throughout life	
		First Aid – teaches girls what to do in an emergency, including calling 911, making a first-aid kit, and treating minor injuries.		Senior		Car Care – Everyone wants to keep their car in top shape. Girl Scout Seniors learn basic car maintenance, vehicle safety, safe driving practices, what to do in an emergency, and how to drive for a greener world.
		Simple Meals – Everyone should have basic cooking skills, and Girl Scout Juniors can learn how to make a healthy meal for themselves, family, and friends.			Ambassador	
Junior		Independence – Independence creates a capable and confident person! This badge teaches girls how to help around the house, break a bad habit, make clothes look great, and be transportation smart.	Cadette			Dinner Party – Social gatherings are a big part of our world. Girl Scout Ambassadors earn this badge by creating a menu, making a budget and shopping list, presenting their meal, and hosting a party.
		Woodworker – Girls learn to be confident with basic tools through woodworking projects, becoming skilled with a hammer, level, screwdriver, and more.			College Knowledge – Understanding the steps in the college admissions process are the first steps to success in higher learning. Girls explore their options, make a financial plan, and prepare for attending the school of their choice.	

Girl Scouting promotes financial literacy

Financial literacy is among the most foundational life skills girls need in order to become successful and independent adults. Financial education, however, is not currently a standard component of the K–12 education curriculum in the United States, and thus, the responsibility for teaching these skills has fallen to parents, families, and out-of-school-time programs. Further, recent research suggests that, while girls expect to be independent and financially empowered, with high expectations for their future financial lives, important gaps nevertheless persist in their financial acumen.

Girl Scouts has stepped up to fill this gap, providing outcome-based and research-backed financial literacy curriculum tailored for girls. The need for effective financial literacy programming is critical, with studies showing that, while the women’s labor participation rate is growing in New Hampshire and Vermont, like the rest of the country, women still earn less than their male counterparts. In Vermont, 43% of women who work full time do not make enough to cover basic living expenses. Further, more girls in New Hampshire



Even Daisies learned about making wise financial decisions at a Fidelity Investments workshop in the past year. (Courtesy photo)

and Vermont are living in low-income households today than ten years ago. Poverty is one of the most widely used indicators of child wellbeing and by providing financial literacy programs, we can lay the foundation for breaking the generational cycle of poverty through empowerment.

In order to offer girls the best financial literacy activities possible, we have forged partnerships with two key financial institutions in order to harness the power of the experts: Citizens Bank and Fidelity Investments.

Now in our fourth year partnering with Citizens Bank, we are able to deliver Girl Scouts’ nationally recognized financial literacy curriculum to marginalized and underserved girls through the Outreach Troop program. This program brings the Girl Scout troop experience and leadership development curriculum to underserved and low-income girls participating in afterschool programs at local schools. Partnering with Citizens, we are able to bring the excitement of the Girl Scout Cookie Program to these girls in the safe and familiar environment of their after-school program. These girls are able to work with their peers to become Cookie Program entrepreneurs, learning how to create smart business goals, engage customers, create targeted marketing efforts, design and implement booth sales, and more. The girls we serve in these Outreach Troops, who represent the most marginalized girls in their communities, consistently rank the Cookie Program as their favorite part of the year, demonstrating the deep and empowering impacts of these activities on at-risk girls in particular.

Fidelity Investments has become another important financial literacy part-



Molly DiTrolio of Hollis, NH, started a cupcake business in fifth grade. (Courtesy photo)

ner. Piloting the “Let it Grow” Investment Patch Program in January 2019, GSGWM is able to offer girls innovative investment curriculum for every age level. Girls learn to think about and save for the future, as well as how to help others, explore investing in business and a home, and gain practical knowledge in funding a college education and retirement.

We are proud of this partnership which has now extended beyond our local council, with the “Let it Grow” Patch being rolled out this year to Girl Scouts in Rhode Island, Kentucky and North Carolina. Fidelity Investments is also offering their program virtually in the month of May for girls to participate in from home.

Our financial literacy programs are strong, our partnerships are powerful, and our girl members are being empowered. We know that with Girl Scouting as their foundation, girls across Vermont and New Hampshire will have the skills they need to be tomorrow’s business leaders and change-makers.

Alum Profile: Linda Hokit puts Girl Scout skills to work at Red Cross Disaster Services

Linda Hokit has been putting the life skills she learned in Girl Scouts to use all her life. She is currently the Regional Disaster Workforce Engagement Manager for the American Red Cross, where she manages the recruitment, engagement, and support of the American Red Cross Disaster Services volunteers in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

Hokit, of Williston, VT, earned her First Class designation as a Girl Scout, which today is considered to be a Girl Scout Gold Award. As a child, she was a Girl Scout in Southern California, Mississippi, Alaska, and Colorado. As an adult, she has served in North Carolina, Georgia, Alaska, Massachusetts, and British Columbia.

Early on, Hokit began honing her life skills. She was a Program Aide and CIT in her teens, which put her in a position to teach and lead.

“I started out teaching knot tying and fire building and then moved on to song leading and unit staff,” she said. “I learned, when I had a skill, how to share it - with confidence and respect for those I was teaching.”

She later became a Girl Scout trainer and taught her first class as a sophomore in college more than 40 years ago. Her first job was as a Girl Scout field executive and training director, which led to teaching English as a second language for 20 years. Later, she had a job that required speaking before crowds of all ages, from just a few people up to thousands, as often as 50 times a year.

Imparting life skills to others has been a huge part of Hokit’s life and career, and she’s had many meaningful ex-



Linda Hokit is a Gold Award Girl Scout who trained Girl Scout volunteers and now works with the Red Cross. (Courtesy Photo)

periences through Girl Scouts. Along with learning to respect the impact of our lives on nature, she learned to be a team member and how important a part she played.

“I learned to be quiet and to reflect,” she said. “I learned I could do things I never imagined I would do simply because I was with a group. I learned if I did not gather the wood, I would not have dinner!”

One Brownie at camp left a big impression on her.

“We have a tradition called a Scout’s Own,” Hokit said. “It’s a girl-led reflective time often experienced as a group,” and she sometimes encouraged her Brownies to plan the observance.

“I remember how one of our youngest Girl Scouts led the most meaningful Scout’s Own I have ever experienced. She led us down a trail and told us to

be quiet after we passed the “Quiet Tree.” She led us into the Scout’s Own area nestled in the trees and looked out over the lake. She then sat down with us. Just about the time we wondered if we should do something, she got up and went to the front, saying, ‘We will now sing Make New Friends,’ so we did. Then she said, ‘I am happy you are all my friends. Thank you for coming,’ and sat back down. I don’t mind telling you, we lingered there a while.”

Hokit encourages us to take on any challenge, and help young girls become women who discover, connect, and take action. “Don’t look at the mountain,” she said. “Follow the path step by step and soon you will be able to see how far you have come. Secondly, always watch for ways to enhance someone else’s life and you will not focus on your challenges.”



Linda Hokit is pinned at Pax Lodge last April during the alumnae trip. (Courtesy Photo)

Girl Scouting builds the life skills girls need to be successful in today's changing world

Anyone paying attention to the accomplishments of local New Hampshire and Vermont Girl Scouts can clearly see that Girl Scouting prepares girls for life in ways that no other organization does - and especially so during the difficulties presented by the pandemic.

Our Girl Scouts are taking action to create personal protective equipment for healthcare workers; showing support for first responders and front-line workers; and finding ways to continue their education and Girl Scout meetings online.

Many girls are taking advantage of our new online badges and Journeys, such as the Brownie Philanthropist badge or the Cadette Financing My Dreams badge. GSUSA's new Girl Scouts at Home initiative is also offering a wide variety of badges, Journeys and highest awards online.

Girl Scouting is giving them the essential building blocks to become dynamic, engaged, and civic-minded individuals.

The power of our programming comes from national research designed to tap in to what makes girls tick. It is through such rigorous research that GSUSA defined the four key Girl Scout program pillars: STEM, Outdoors, Entrepreneurship, and Life Skills. Life skills may seem vague, perhaps even a convenient



Girl Scouts of Troop 30356 in Lunenburg, VT, decided to show their appreciation for those both out of work and those working in critical job roles with this collage. This active troop also participated in a unique bridging ceremony where each girl was driven across the Mount Orne covered bridge to stay safe during the pandemic. (Courtesy photo)

“catch-all” for the program activities and badges that don't fit nicely into the other, more well-defined pillars. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The idea of “life skills” and their importance in education and youth development represents a critical focus of study for academics, youth organizations, community groups, and social justice advocates. Experts are seeking to answer the challenge of having a socially responsible system of education that bridges the gap between basic functioning and life capabilities. UNICEF and the World Health Organization emphasize that life skills education is critical in not only equipping individuals with appropriate knowledge on risk-taking behaviors, but also for developing skills such as communication, assertiveness, self-awareness, decision-making, problem solving, and critical and creative thinking to protect them from abuse and exploitation.

At Girl Scouts, prioritizing life skills as a key program pillar reinforces that we

seek to empower the whole girl, not just her academic competencies. Grades, while important, are just a fraction of what contributes to girls being confident, successful, and well-rounded adults.

Girl Scouts' life skills programs allow girls to partake in activities that enhance the academic skills learned in school through topics such as civic engagement, healthy living, communication skills, financial literacy, and global citizenship. These programs give girls opportunities to take risks, confront challenges, and learn from failures in ways designed to build both their confidence and their competencies.

The fundamental ethos of Girl Scouting is rooted in the building of confidence and leadership skills in girls. We view life skills as essential to this. There is a well-recognized truth that parents have been confronted with for generations: as puberty sets in, girls' confidence

Girl Scout badges, beginning with Civic Engagement and expanding to Healthy Living, Communication Skills, Practical Skills, and Global Citizenship, form the foundation of activities that help girls grow as Girl Scouts.

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plummets. Girls who were once audacious and full of adventurous zeal hit their tweens and teens and transform, becoming dramatically less self-assured than their male counterparts. For many girls, this transformation can last through to adulthood. Crucially, the same research shows that, while tween and teen girls generally outperform their male counterparts in academics, these girls nevertheless suffer far more hits to their confidence.

One of the most important ways girls in these turbulent years can build their confidence and combat negative self-perceptions is through taking risks. When girls don't have the opportunity to take risks and see the payoffs, risks are then avoided and confidence isn't being built. Data consistently shows that when young women experience failure and resilience, they move out of their comfort zones through a process of struggle and mastery, and confidence is usually the result.

We encourage girls to take age-appropriate risks and engage in challenge-seeking activities beyond what is afforded in school. Girl Scouts take themselves out of their comfort zones as they travel, organize a community service project, take a babysitting course and book their first job, take on relational aggression and bullying through difficult conversations with peers, or work with a vocal instructor to earn their public speaking badge.

"Life Skills" are gained when girls move beyond their comfort zones, take risks, and build the confidence that will last them a lifetime and make an impact in the wider world.

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Thank you to the following donors for their contributions to our Operation Cookie campaign.

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Unleashing Her Potential campaign wraps up

GSGWM's Board of Directors is pleased to announce the successful conclusion of the Unleashing Her Potential (UHP) Campaign. This multi-year effort was achieved thanks to the support of 549 donors whose support resulted in deep and lasting impacts to our organization's physical and programmatic operations.

The UHP Campaign, launched in 2016, addressed a number of physical improvements at camp facilities and investments in program innovation and expansion. The results have reverberated far beyond what we could have imagined at the outset of the campaign. We are excited to report on some of the ways that our organization has been forever impacted. Among them, GSGWM has:

- **Invested in camp improvements.**

The largest of these projects took place at Camp Farnsworth (Thetford, VT), where we renovated the dining hall, installed a swimming pool, and built a year-round bunkhouse. We also completed work on a large-scale project at Camp Seawood (Portsmouth, NH), replacing an eroding latrine built in the 1980s and installing an environmentally friendly subsurface system. The project addressed safety concerns and supports our long-term vision of expanding services at Camp Seawood by increasing the service capacity.

These improvements have had significant impacts on our ability to better serve girls programming. We have already seen the direct results of this work. In the first summer after the camp improvements, we saw more than a 30% increase in camp enrollment.

- **Launched the STEM On-the-Go van.** One of our most exciting program innovations to date has been the launch of the STEM On-the-Go van. Outfitted and customized with WiFi, a SmartTV monitor, tablets, microscopes, a 3D printer, solar panels, and more, this lab-on-wheels delivers STEM programs to girls in every corner of the council, from the upper reaches of Vermont, down to southern New Hampshire and everywhere in between.

- **Strengthened leadership programs.** UHP allowed us to invest in new programs. We added new STEM curriculum and badges through both local and national partnerships, created new outdoor wilderness adventures, increased sport program opportunities, added new and diverse virtual programs, enhanced volunteer training to be more accessible and user-friendly, and more. The result is a strong foundation that not only adds to our catalogue of program opportunities, but also makes a long-term impact by empowering leaders and girls for long-term success.

As we reflect on the impacts of the Unleashing Her Potential Campaign, we are grateful for our donors who have made this work possible. The cam-

paign investments have strengthened our organization now and for years to come. Thank you.



GSGWM's STEM On-the-Go van was unveiled at the G.I.R.L. Expo in October 2019 (GSGWM Photo).



The Unleashing Her Potential campaign has allowed GSGWM to invest in new programs, including a partnership with ARMI/BIOFAB. (GSGWM Photo)



The installation of a saltwater swimming pool was one of the improvements made at Camp Farnsworth. (GSGWM Photo)

IF YOU ARE ABLE TO HELP

GSGWM will be grateful for any donations to support our virtual programming. If we reach \$25,000 in donations by June 30, your generosity will earn us an extra \$5,000 matching gift. Donations received through the enclosed remittance envelope will support our virtual programming. For additional information on this campaign, visit girlscoutsgwm.org/donate.