

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

GIRL SCOUT FOREVER GREEN COMMUNITY ACTION PROJECT

1. How was the project selected?

The recommendation to launch an annual, nationwide signature Community Action Project, focused on the environment, was made after interviews with and surveys of several thousand girls, volunteers, council staff and board, and GSUSA staff and board.

This recommendation was approved by the Senior Leadership Team at GSUSA, and they appointed a Selection Committee of council CEOs, board chairs and program directors; GSUSA staff and board; Girl Scout Alumnae; and two Girl Scout interns.

The Selection Committee met over a four-month period and considered six different project concepts against a set of fourteen selection criteria. The committee consulted with Columbia University and many other environmental experts. They also surveyed some 700 girls (both Girl Scouts and non-Girl Scouts) and over 6,000 Girl Scout Alumnae. The concept of helping schools “go green” was the number one choice of those surveyed and was also the unanimous choice of the Selection Committee.

2. Aren't most schools already “going green”?

No. According to the U.S. Green Building Council, there are only 120 LEED or LEED-EB Certified schools, and less than 1,000 LEED or LEED-EB Registered schools, out of a total of 125,000 public and private schools in the country (grades K-12). That means that less than one percent of all schools are either LEED or LEED-EB Registered or Certified.

3. How does the project fit within the new Girl Scout Leadership Experience framework of Discover, Connect and Take Action?

The Community Action Project will be an excellent vehicle for showcasing the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

At each grade level, the Community Action Project will give girls opportunities to explore the Girls Scouts' three keys to leadership—**Discover, Connect, and Take Action**.

Girls will first **Discover** themselves and their values by seeking challenges in the world related to the environment. This means they will, according to their

grade level, learn and explore new skills and ideas, and, as appropriate, set challenging goals for themselves.

As girls assess where their schools are with regard to environmental issues and then pursue a specific project, they will naturally **Connect**—care about, inspire, and team with others locally and globally. Specifically, they will promote cooperation and teamwork (and resolve conflict as needed) and feel connected to their communities, locally and globally. As their projects reach out to alumnae, parents, businesses, and other community and government leaders, whether locally or globally, the girls will also, at times, advance diversity in a multicultural world.

Through their chosen projects, the girls will **Take Action**—they will act to make the world a better place. This means they will be resourceful problem solvers, and they will advocate for themselves and others, and educate and inspire others, in ways that aim for sustainable change. As the girls present to school boards, local governments, and the like, their advocacy efforts may lead to influencing education budgets and policies. They will feel empowered to make a difference in the world.

In the end, the girls will come back once again to **Discover** themselves and their values: They will reflect on the positive values and the strong sense of self they developed through their projects.

4. If my council is not currently a Community Action Project pilot council, is there something we can do to prepare the way for its future participation?

Yes, all councils can begin to assess their own facilities (service center, camps, etc.) and make a plan to “green” these facilities.

Councils may also want to identify potential school partners and begin to cultivate those relationships.

If there are councils who want to get started right away, GSUSA will provide them all the materials being provided to the pilot councils.

5. Will there be flexibility in the project? For example, what if our local schools won't work with us? How can home-schooled girls get involved?

Yes, councils can partner with local community centers, libraries, or other public facilities.

6. Will there be differentiation by age level?

Yes, there are projects that are age-appropriate for implementation in elementary, middle and high schools.

7. Will we measure the environmental impact?

Yes, we will, and the EPA is providing technical assistance to us.

8. Will there be volunteer opportunities? How can we engage Alumnae?

Yes, every pilot will have a plan for how to engage volunteers, especially Girl Scout Alumnae. One example is that there will be a capstone event in the spring when volunteers can engage in a specific environmental project at selected schools.

9. Will there be funding opportunities?

Yes, the Community Action Project promises to be an excellent funding opportunity for both GSUSA and Girl Scout councils. Please note that councils will *not* be expected or encouraged to raise money to be spent directly on the schools that partner with councils as a part of this project. However, as is the rule in Girl Scouting, if girls in a given troop decide to do so, they can designate a portion of their troop funds to this project.

10. Are there opportunities to partner with other organizations?

There are many opportunities to partner with other organizations. The U.S. Green Building Council, the EPA, the departments of education, Green the Capitol, EarthDay Network, the Future of Life, National Wildlife Federation, World Water Monitoring Day, and many others.

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