

Girl Scouts - fulfilling the mission to instill courage and confidence

“I can do it!”

Whether a child is earning their first badge, climbing a bouldering wall, completing an electrical circuit, or reaching their cookie goal, there is nothing so empowering as the feeling of accomplishment. Girl Scouts' entire mission is to encourage girls to challenge themselves, let them dream big, and provide a nurturing environment to try new things.

Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains is leading the way in providing a wide range of opportunities for Girl Scouts across New Hampshire and Vermont in life skills, entrepreneurship, STEM, and the outdoors. Last year, 18 Girl Scouts reached the pinnacle of community service by earning the Gold Award, possible only when a girl has built the confidence, courage, and character to stand up for what she believes in and work to make the world a better place.

Maura Grogan, one of our board members, shares this story.



Maura Grogan

“My dad and I were debating about what shaped my life more, Girl Scouts or playing soccer,” she said. “He was a big athlete growing up, so sports were important to him. I pointed out all the experiences and opportunities Girl Scouts gave me versus

just playing a rec sport, nothing wrong with sports and I think they are excellent for kids as well. But how Girl Scouts helped me find my path in life with those different experiences that just weren't local to our town. After his stubbornness wouldn't give in, I called my mom into the room and I asked without context what



Girl Scouts of all ages stepped up to the microphone at several radio stations this spring to talk about the cookie program, shining with confidence. (GSGWM photo)

youth activity do you think most attributed to my success in life. Without hesitation, my mom said ‘Girl Scouts.’ Soon after that I joined the board and my dad realized more all the doors it had opened for me. Now he talks to every parent of a young Girl Scout he meets about the organization and is probably a real unknown spokesperson for his local council in New Jersey.”



Deb Pawelczyk

Troop leaders tell us over and over how they see their young Girl Scouts blossom and discover their strengths.

“I have one in my troop in Alstead that came to me who had never been in a group situation, and she has

totally blossomed,” said Deb Pawelczyk, leader of troops in Keene and Alstead, NH. “She’s more comfortable being there. She will get up, and she will lead the (Girl Scout) Promise and the (Girl Scout) law and the Pledge of Allegiance. ... She’s come a long way with that, and her family members say that Girl Scouts was the best thing that ever happened to her.”



Brittany Blaisdell

“We’ve seen girls that have come out of their shell, just by being able to talk to people they normally wouldn’t talk to,” said Brittany Blaisdell, leader of a troop in Saint Albans, VT. “It gives them an opportunity to do things

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Creating young women of courage, confidence

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they might not normally do, while also feeling like they're important and also feeling like they're in charge. The girls really enjoy planning those trips and helping with all of the cooking and all the things that come along with what we did. When we were at Twin Hills last summer, we did a start-your-own fire. So they all got to go and collect twigs, and build their own little mini fire, and they loved it! All the girls were shocked that we were letting them use matches ... but they did so great!"

Chris Cox leads a troop in Derry, NH, and shared this story.



Chris Cox

"We had one girl - her mom dropped her off and she said, 'I don't think she'll even talk to you. She's very shy.' I said, 'We can fix that. It's OK.' And so she left, and she came back later at the end of the meeting and said, 'Where's my daughter?' I said, 'She's over there, playing the game with the kids,' and she was in there, and they were all laughing, and they were a little bit loud, but they were playing the game together. She's like, 'That's my kid?'"

Molly Nawrath of Manchester, VT, sees her Girl Scouts gaining business and life skills.



Molly Nawrath

pitch that they do."

April Ouellette has seen the change in her daughter as well.

"Madalyn absolutely loves the virtual Girl Scout programming," she said. "Madalyn has grown so much since starting out as a kindergartener last year. She's not only gained baking skills and confidence, but technology skills from logging in to a Zoom meeting, adjusting meeting views, and managing the mute and camera button. She's very proud of the food items she's made. Madalyn has taken the liberty of rearranging the pantry for easy kiddo access. When I can't find a pantry item, I ask her for help now. Both kids still use the microwave baking recipes. Many microwaved eggs and cakes have been enjoyed by the entire family."

With every experience they have, Girl Scouts are constantly building confidence and skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.



Girl Scout Daisy Madalyn Ouellette participated in our virtual Magical Baking series. She said, "I like baking at home with Girl Scouts. The food I make is so good!" (GSGWM photo)

Confident girls are successful women



Dear friends,

Confidence comes in many shapes and sizes, as unique as an individual. Yes, confidence is about feeling secure in your capabilities and skills and understanding your own power. Confidence is grounded in reality, not based on arrogance or brashness. Girl Scouting is focused on providing our members with the skills they need to feel confident in their circumstances, to understand their capabilities, and to help them grow in their abilities to navigate the changing world around them.

Last month, I was enjoying lunch with my mother and older sister talking, as I often do, about Girl Scouting. Our conversation focused on the Cookie Program and the various skills we had all learned. But we also spoke about National Center West and camp. Given my tendency to be animated in my Girl Scout conversations, it was not surprising that our conversation caught the ear of Jan McLaughlin, a Girl Scout alumna. Jan took the opportunity to share with us how Girl Scouting built her confidence to succeed in a male dominated industry, eventually becoming the statewide educational science consultant. It was an amazing story of success! I was so pleased to meet Jan and glad she stopped to introduce herself.

Girl Scouting is proud to have made a difference in millions of lives since our founding in 1912. Whether you became confident enough to give a presentation in public, speak to a stranger, lead the scientific community or take on the US Senate, your growth is a success to be celebrated.

My wish is for every young girl to gain the skills and capabilities to sing out loud the words sung by Juile Andrews in Oscar & Hammerstein's "Sound of Music":

With each step I am more certain
Everything will turn out fine
I have confidence
The world can all be mine
They'll have to agree
I have confidence in me!

Thank you for all you do to grow their confidence! Your support means you also have confidence that the world can all be theirs.

Yours in Girl Scouting,

Patricia K. Mellor
Chief Executive Officer, GSGWM
Gold Award Girl Scout

Girl Scout alums report positive outcomes

The Girl Scout Research Institute has conducted many studies to demonstrate the results of Girl Scout programming. This research shows that participating in Girl Scouts is a powerful factor for developing courage, confidence, and character, which in turn builds a foundation for success in education and careers, enables a lifetime of leadership, and provides high levels of life satisfaction.

Alums say being Girl Scouts set them on a path for achievement, connected them to something bigger than themselves, and helped them develop their passions and interests.

Longer-term participation and engagement in Girl Scouts, particularly for those earning highest awards, are linked to greater perceptions of impact. Seven in 10 alums, or 68%, assert that Girl Scouts has had a positive impact on their lives.

Girl Scout alums take on challenges, persist when encountering failure, and are

determined and motivated to achieve their goals. They are more likely than non-alums to say:

- I learn from failures and setbacks - 75% versus 66%
- I am ambitious - 58% versus 49%
- I take on challenges to improve myself - 61% versus 50%
- I am not afraid to take risks - 48% versus 42%

Girl Scouts provides girls access to new and challenging outdoor experiences, helping them to move outside of their comfort zones and preparing them to be outdoor and nature enthusiasts who take the lead in caring for the environment.

"I can do activities I thought I would be afraid of." —Junior, Girl Scouts of West Central Florida

"I can make a difference as long as I do something." —Ambassador, Girl Scouts Overseas - Stuttgart

"How brave I am." —Daisy, Girl Scouts of Colorado

A well known component of Girl Scouting is the Cookie Program, the largest girl-run business in the world. Through "learning by earning," Girl Scouting aims to empower girls through the development of five essential skills: goal setting, money management, people skills, decision making, and business ethics.

Participating in the Girl Scout Cookie Program helps girls learn skills they need to become successful adults who will contribute to their communities and strengthen the U.S. workforce. Girls who developed the five skills had more fun selling cookies and realized that what they learned in Girl Scouts could help them in other areas of their lives. Learning valuable life skills via the Girl Scout Cookie Program helps girls become successful business leaders, now and in the future.

Debbora Losch – Promoting women in aviation

Nothing is impossible. That is the defining quality and attitude that Debbora Losch lives by. This Girl Scout alum has overcome long odds to pursue her dreams of flying and is now the education director at the Aviation Museum of New Hampshire, where she is sharing her love of aviation and helping young people enter the field.

Losch, 30, of Merrimack, NH, was a Brownie as a young child, thanks to her aunt, who helped her join her cousin in a troop. Growing up in difficult circumstances, Brownies allowed her to have a safe space outside her home, taught her independence, and was where she met her best friend.

From a very young age, Losch was interested in going to space, and said she likes seeing the STEM-related programming Girl Scouts offer. As a young girl, her grandparents took her to the Kennedy Space Center for a “Meet An Astronaut” event, where an older man sat next to her.



Debbora Losch

“So he starts talking to me and my grandpa about space,” she said. “And all this really cool stuff about the moon. And I was fascinated. My 7-year-old mind was blown. But it wasn’t until he was like, ‘All

right, I gotta go.’ And I was like ‘Where are you going?’ It just hadn’t started yet, and he got up and he gets on stage, and he’s like, ‘Hi, everybody! I’m Buzz Aldrin.’ I remember looking at my grandpa after he left, and he was just white, and he’s like, do you know who that was?”

After that, she knew she wanted to go to space and learned about all the necessary steps, including becoming a pilot.

“The only downside was my family was the kind of poor where you eat ramen or peanut butter sandwiches, or if you’re really, really lucky, you can get spaghetti for dinner. That was the situation we were in,” she said.

Her family could not afford the NASA summer camp, even with saving money or with financial aid.



Debbora Losch recently got together with her first mentor, Michael Shalbetter, who took a chance on her and allowed her to learn the basics of aircraft maintenance. The Piper Cub airplane holds special significance to Losch since it’s the first plane she ever flew in. (Courtesy photo)

“I felt kind of hopeless,” she said. “So I actually stopped caring, completely.”

Fortunately, the MacDill Aviation Academy in Tampa, Florida, where she lived, offered a free program to build an airplane, which she took part in. She also joined a national rocketry team. After high school, she decided to knock on doors until she was finally invited to help refurbish an antique aircraft.

Realizing the high cost of college was a barrier, Losch later enlisted in the Army and became an Apache helicopter mechanic. She then went on to college, earning her bachelor’s degree in world history and a master’s degree in world history and education. Now she is teaching at the museum.

“I knew I wanted to teach,” she said. “And now I have the dream job for someone like me. Because I’m not only teaching, which I love doing, but I’m teaching kids about aviation, which is something I’m passionate about. And because I work for a non-profit, I have the ability to really help students. All of our programs, our summer camp, everything is barrier-free. I will never turn down a kid, a school, a group, an organization, because they can’t afford it, ever. So. It’s been quite the progression.”

Jeff Rapsis, executive director of the Aviation Museum, praised Losch.

“As education director of the Aviation Museum of New Hampshire Debbora Losch helps young people chart their courses into the fields of aviation and aerospace. She’s very good at this because she made the journey herself, overcoming barriers of income and gender to work on repairing and restoring antique planes while still in high school, and later maintaining Apache helicopters for the U.S. Army. Because of her background and experience, Debbora has a lot to offer young people interested in aviation and aerospace. She’s been there, and she’s passionate in her belief that a career in aviation and aerospace should be open to everyone.”

Her advice to anyone?

“All I had to do was just not give up,” she said. “Because I could have, easily, after I just continued working as a waitress. But I didn’t give up. I decided to go to those hangars, knock on those doors, even though everyone kept telling me ‘No.’ I continued in school, even though I could have easily dropped out and got a job, and it would have made my life a lot easier, so I think just anything is possible. Do not give up. It’s not worth it to give up.”

Tara Pacht - leading by her example of confidence

Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains is fortunate to have Tara Pacht as Chair of its Board of Directors. Pacht, of Thetford, VT, is a shining example of leadership, courage, and confidence.

“Well, I can tell you (as much as my family can) that Girl Scouting has *absolutely* given me so much personal growth,” she said. “First I found my voice, something I did not have before rejoining Girl Scouts as an adult, which led to a sense of calm and peace. I found a true calling and passion and I cannot seem to share this enough to everyone around me. *Everyone* should know what Girl Scouting can do for the girls, the adults, their communities and the world.”

Pacht said Girl Scouts has given her many opportunities for personal and professional growth.

“Making the switch from being an operational volunteer to a governance volunteer aided in my professional growth in ways I didn’t think was possible,” she said. “Being able to see a bigger goal than the day-to-day needs, and how to set and review policies to risk assessments to fundraising. How do we take what girls are needing and asking for and plan out how we will be able to provide that for them, whether it is our property needs or the monetary needs of the staff to provide quality programs, how do we as a board ensure that we are here for another 112 years and beyond.”

From there, she said, she shifted this passion into her job at a tomato farm.

“I use all of my people skills, marketing, HR and safety skills, etc., I learned and fine tuned in Girl Scouting and turned it into my focus at work. I would not be in my current position if I was not a lifetime Girl Scout and lifelong learner. If we are open to learning that spark will ignite a flame in us just like it does for our girls!”

Pacht especially believes in the value of travel for Girl Scouts.

“I did not have the opportunity to travel far from home as a girl myself, so when our daughter joined Girl Scouts we knew that this was her time to grow! She started the progression with troop travel, camp, and then to joining travel troops and NCS, to her going on a destination which includ-



Naema, Chancealine, Tara Pacht, Gabriella, and Aria at the Global Leadership Conference in Rhode Island, hosted by Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains the weekend of March 8-10. (Courtesy photo)

ed her first solo flight. Knowing that we were leaving her with well trained adults, that she was part of the planning process, fundraising and outcomes gave us comfort to watch from the wings so she could learn to navigate the world she wanted to explore.”

Pacht attended the Global Leader Conference in March, her 15th year. The conference gives girls an opportunity to travel, with girls from 21 councils this year and six countries.

“This year was extra special on a personal note for me as this year, my daughter Gabriella (alumna to the conference herself) and three of our granddaughters were able to attend as well, for the first time - all three generations,” she said. “I am so proud and excited to watch the family pass along this tradition of Girl Scout travel to the newest generations. I cannot wait to see where it will take them!”

Global Leadership Conference inspires girls

The 37th Global Leadership Conference took place at Salve Regina University in Rhode Island March 8-10. Girl Scouts both local and from around the world attended to learn about and discuss global issues. Participants learn skills that help them understand the world and enable them to feel confident in working to make the world a better place.

Here’s what some had to say:

“Use your powers for good. Your actions, no matter how small they may seem, can be the change. Together we are stronger than we are alone.”
- Alicia, keynote speaker

“I met someone working in the field I want to pursue. Seeing what my future can really look like was cool.”
- High school attendee

“I’m inspired to teach my preschool class students to be kind to each other and make the world a better place.”
- High school attendee

“This was a wonderful weekend of memories! We had members from three Circle of Friends Girl Scout troops attending... I am so proud of each and every one of our Girl Scouts ... They were kind, polite, inquisitive, and represented our Circle of Friends community extremely well.”
- Troop leader

Create your legacy with a gift to Girl Scouts

You believe in the power of Girl Scouts.

You can create your legacy with a planned gift to Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains.

The first planned gift in the Girl Scout Movement came from our founder, Juliette Gordon Low. After converting the carriage house of her home into the first Girl Scout national headquarters, she gifted the property to Girl Scouts in her will. You can carry on her legacy and make Girl Scouts a beneficiary of your estate plans when you become a member of the Juliette Gordon Low Society.

Alum Cheryl Heneveld said “I believe in the mission of Girl Scouting, its promise and law which builds girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place. My support and that of other alumnae will see that Girl Scouting continues in the future.

“I have just finished reading, along with our council-wide alumnae book club, a biography of Juliette Gordon Low— Daisy as she was called. What a dedicated woman she was! Her ideals, based on friendships, have continued to this day in the troops and councils around the



Cheryl Heneveld extolled the virtues of joining the Juliet Gordon Low Society at last fall's recognition ceremony at Farnsworth Weekend. (GSGWM photo)

United States and the world. I am happy to continue to be a part of these circles of friendships now and in the future beyond my own lifetime!

“The council produced a memory book in 2011, ‘In Your Pictures and Words,’ that is inspiring to look through. I am fortunate to be part of the history and the legacy of Girl Scouting and our council of the Green and White Mountains.”

Council staffer Robin Boyd agreed with that sentiment.

“The Girl Scout program has been a positive part of my life since childhood,” she said. “The experiences I had as a girl have had a tremendous impact on my adult life. It is important to me that I know young girls in the future will have similarly rewarding opportunities. The Juliette Gordon Low Society is one way I know I can help Girl Scouting to thrive for generations to come.”

Alum Debbie Drake said she believes in the mission of Girl Scouts.

“Being a Girl Scout has had a positive impact on my and my daughter’s lives as well as the lives of so many other girls and women I know. Planned giving is my way of giving back to ensure Girl Scouts continues to be a powerful leadership program for future generations of girls.”

The council thanks its current members. We are grateful for their long-standing commitment to our mission and for their vision by including Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains in their legacy plans.

Please reach out to us at advancement@girlscoutsgwm.org for enrollment information.

Juliette Gordon Low Society Members

Erik and Eva Andersen Girl Scout
Movement-wide Challenge
Planned Gift

Anonymous members

Stephen August

Susan Bates

Dianne Belk and Lawrence Calder
Girl Scout Movement-wide
Challenge Planned Gift

Robin Boyd

Stephen Boyd

Sarah Brown

Mary Louise Brozena

Betsy Bugden

Mary Burchard

Asha Carroll

Patricia Casey

Paul Casey

Sarah Chaffee

Jennie Clarke

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Sherry and Louis Edmonds

Maura Grogan

Cheryl and Ward Heneveld

Mary Ellen and Scott Hettinger

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Amanda and Craig LaClair

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Tara Pacht

Julie and Peter Parker

Karen M. and Bruce A. Pehrson

Peggy and John Piette

Carolyn Pine

Danielle Pray

Stephanie Romero

Deborah Rossi

Carl Thompson

Girls gain skills through entrepreneurship, outdoors

Girl Scouts blossom in the outdoors and learn valuable life skills through the Girl Scout Cookie program, giving them the confidence to become their best selves.

“We’ve seen girls that have come out of their shell, just by being able to talk to people they normally wouldn’t talk to,” said Brittany Blaisdell, a troop leader in Saint Albans, VT. “It gives them an opportunity to do things they might not normally do, while also feeling like they’re important and also feeling like they’re in charge.”

Selling Girl Scout Cookies set Laura Gingas up for great success as the vice president of philanthropy and community relations for Monadnock Community Hospital in Peterborough, NH.



The Girl Scout Cookie program is designed to teach five important life and business skills - goal setting, money management, decision making, people skills, and business ethics. (GSGWM photo)



Whether shooting an arrow for the first time, conquering a climbing tower, or just spending a night away from home, the outdoors offers Girl Scouts a chance to stretch their wings. (GSGWM photo)

“I would take my little sister, and we would just go door to door to door,” she said. “that translated into when I was president of my class in high school, and I always love going door to door with the calendars, or whatever it was we were selling.”

The confidence allowed her to raise enough money to pay for a class trip to Disney World as a high schooler, as well as become a successful fundraiser for her hospital.

Jan McLaughlin of Londonderry, NH, said Girl Scouts was important to her development. She has spent a lifetime involved with Girl Scouts including as a trainer for adult volunteers.

Girl Scouts “certainly made a difference as far as taking a leadership role,” she said. “I’m retired now but my last job was as state science consultant for the state of New Hampshire.”

One of McLaughlin’s teachers tried to talk her out of taking a field biology class, saying that typing would be more practical.

“I took field biology and it changed my trajectory,” she said.

Across the 2018–19 program year, the Girl Scout Research Institute conducted a study of 227 troops to assess the role of Girl Scouts in helping them attain the four outdoor leadership outcomes, as well as other ways girls benefit from participating in the Girl Scout national outdoor program. Findings from nearly 1,700 girls and their troop leaders demonstrate that Girl Scouts gets girls outdoors, exposes them to new and challenging experiences, and helps them develop outdoor leadership skills that will enable them to engage responsibly with nature throughout their lives!

Another GSRI study found that by encouraging girls to enter the entrepreneurial space with the socially minded outlook so many already possess, we’re not just preparing them for success in the marketplace but also giving them the tools to solve problems generally. We can transform what leadership looks like in the country by ensuring girls have the mindset and important business skills they need to succeed and by breaking down barriers to entry and success by removing the obstacles that girls themselves identify.

A personal reflection on reaching out to all girls

Catherine Deiley is a council staff member who has concentrated on making sure every girl has the chance to take advantage of our empowering programming. She shares her personal experience.

Let me set a scene for you: on a day between snowstorms in March, I ran my first staff-led troop cookie booth. The weather was balmy in a sneaky way—too warm for a coat in the sunlight, too cold for no coat with every gust of wind. The blacktop playground outside of the Nashua elementary school buzzed with kids heading home for the day, their parents, and the teachers who came to seek their treasures—Girl Scout Cookies.

This particular troop was a big one, with a lot of personalities that made each meeting fun and active, a daunting challenge with any number of kids. I wasn't worried, per se, but I knew there would be much to handle.

In retrospect, if I needed confidence, I just should've looked to the girls for inspiration.

The council's staff-led and funded troop program builds confidence in all sorts of surprising ways. Thanks in part to a partnership with 21st Century Afterschool Programs across our jurisdiction, the outreach team provides a full Girl Scout experience to girls who may not have considered Girl Scouts or come from underserved areas. Each troop meets weekly during the after-school program for the entire school year, and the girls do all the things Girl Scouts do, like selling cookies, earning badges, completing journeys, and even going to camp.

When working with girls over an entire school year, it's common—expected even—to watch girls gain academic and communication skills, which are relatively easy to track, but how do we measure a girl's growth in confidence? Is it by her willingness to speak out loud in front of her peers when she might've been nervous about that at the start? Is it by her ability to take on challenges, even if she's afraid of them? Or perhaps by her ability to stand up for herself and her beliefs?



Catherine Deiley gets a group hug from the Girl Scouts who participated in our summer program in Nashua. (GSGWM photo)

Confidence is a nuanced thing, and it doesn't look the same for everyone. During that first cookie booth, I was worried we'd have meltdowns and overstimulated, cookie-crazed kids running around outside where I couldn't see them. But that was not the case. With little direction from me, the girls kept the table freshly stocked, keeping track of what we had sold and what we had left. The oldest girls in the troop had started learning multiplication tables that year and were eagerly teaching the younger girls about math facts. During lulls in sales, they made a team to color and personalize thank you notes given with every customer. Up until this point, this particular troop had not worked together quite so well, but with the drive of the cookie sale and their excitement for it, everything fell into place, because Girl Scouts had given them space and encouragement.

Everybody, especially children who are learning the confidence to navigate the world, requires a safe place where they can be themselves and talk about tough things going on in their lives without fear but still be challenged. Girls in this lovely troop

had seen it all—foster homes, moving to different countries, homophobia, death, and more. These have always been things girls pick up on when they witness them, and they're really confusing concepts, even when you're not a kid, and my deepest prides occurred whenever one of those girls came to me with a question they were scared to ask, about themselves, about their friends, about their parents, about their world. I watched them build the confidence to talk about these things rationally and learn from one another.

So, it shouldn't have been a surprise when this group of girls absolutely crushed their first cookie booth, but ironically, I had to learn to be confident myself, not just of the girls, but of my abilities working with them. Since Girl Scouts gave these girls a chance and place to be themselves, our collected confidence had only been growing since we started meeting. As an adult, it's easy to think I've already learned these lessons, but working with the outreach program makes me confident I will always grow and keep learning, as a Girl Scout does.