

Carrying out the promise of America

*As the USA marks its
250th anniversary,
Girl Scouts work for a
better future for all*

From raising the flag at summer camp to serving their neighbors, speaking up about issues they care about, and building friendships across international borders, Girl Scouts are discovering that being a good citizen means taking action.

As the United States celebrates the 250th anniversary of its founding, the Girl Scout Promise offers a fitting reminder of the importance of service, community, and country. Since the earliest days of Girl Scouting, citizenship and patriotism have been woven into the Girl Scout experience—and those values continue to shape girls today.

At camp, Girl Scouts begin and end each day with a flag ceremony, learning how to properly handle and care for the flag and why those traditions matter. They may serve as a color guard in a parade, participate in town meetings, or learn how voting works and how they can have a voice in local and state government.

These experiences help girls see citizenship as a responsibility. They learn that being a good citizen means understanding how their communities work, participating in civic life, looking out for others, and taking action to make the world a better place.

"I feel like everyone should experience helping their community because it has forever changed my perspective on the way I live my life," said Silver Award Girl Scout Annabelle Moriarity of Amherst, NH.

Finding their voices

Encouraging girls to speak up and advo-



Girl Scouts at Camp Kettleford raise the colors during summer camp. Every day at camp begins with the Pledge of Allegiance and the Girl Scout Promise and Law and ends with the same recitations. (GSGWM photo)

cate for the issues and ideas that matter to them is hardly a new concept for Girl Scouts. Even before women could vote in the United States, Girl Scouts could earn the Citizen badge by demonstrating their knowledge of government and learning ways to become involved in their communities.

For Girl Scouting's founder, Juliette Gordon Low, citizenship was about more than participating in one's own community or country. She believed girls should also understand their place in a much larger world.

In 1913, Low contributed to the original Girl Scout handbook by W.J. Hoxie, which included practical skills and civic responsibilities young women could develop to serve their nation. National service, community service, and patriotism were central to her vision—but so was the idea that those responsibilities could reach far beyond national borders.

"Girl Scouting and Girl Guiding can be the magic thread that links the youth of the world together," Low said. "What you do for your family and your community you do for the world, because the world is, after all, made up of families and communities like yours."

More than a century later, that vision continues to come to life.

Citizenship in action

Today, being a good citizen can take countless forms. Across New Hampshire and Vermont, Girl Scouts are putting their values into practice through service projects that respond to real needs in their communities.

- Dalia Corbett of Loudon, NH, worked to educate students and families about identifying scoliosis in teens.
- Girl Scouts in Bristol, VT, spent the past

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Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains

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year participating in local parades, hosting a service-unit-wide bridging ceremony, and organizing a large World Thinking Day event.

- Brownie Sofia Farland of Shaftsbury, VT, constructed and installed a rain barrel in a community garden while educating others about water conservation.

- Troop 60133 in Brookline, NH, built a gaga pit for their school, creating an improved playground space for students.

Each project looks different, but the lesson is the same: meaningful change often begins close to home.

For Girl Scouts, service is an opportunity to notice what their communities need, identify ways they can help, and then roll up their sleeves and get to work.

A world beyond their back yard

But Girl Scout citizenship doesn't stop at the boundaries of a town—or even a country.

Through travel and international experiences, girls are broadening their perspectives, meeting people from different backgrounds, and discovering how much they have in common with young people around the world.

This past year, Girl Scouts from our council attended the Girl Scouts of the USA Global Citizen Summit in Washington, D.C. More than 100 youth and young adult participants from 11 countries gathered for four days of connection, conversation, and exploration around issues affecting girls and women worldwide.

They explored the city, exchanged stories and experiences, and took part in workshops and discussions. Along the way, they discovered that despite coming from different countries and cultures, they shared a common passion: making the world a better place.

“Being able to attend the summit in D.C. was amazing,” said Eleanor Gorman of Dover, NH. “It was incredible to be able to speak to girls from all over the country and the world and to learn from them. Being able to discuss topics with other participants during the workshops was thought-provoking, and it helped me learn skills like compromise.”

Carrying the flag around the world

International experiences can make the idea of global citizenship especially tangible.

Our council also hosted a Destination—an international travel opportunity open to Girl Scouts from across the country—to England, where participants attended the Poacher Jamboree, an international camp welcoming more than 10,000 girls and boys from more than 20 countries.

The 12 Girl Scouts on the trip represented nine states. During their week at camp, they participated in more than 100 activities while representing Girl Scouts from across the United States.

For London Goodine, a Girl Scout from New Hampshire, the experience included an especially memorable moment: carrying the United States flag during the opening ceremony alongside flags representing countries from around the world. It was a powerful illustration of what global citizenship can look like—being proud of where you come from while recognizing that you are part of something much bigger.

Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains has participated in this global event for many years. Ali Falcone, a chaperone on a previous trip, saw firsthand how international experiences can help girls develop confidence, leadership skills, and a deeper understanding of the world around them.

“The trip was an extraordinary opportunity to see England, and the girls truly led the trip,” said Falcone. “They had worked out their itinerary before they went, budgeted, and handled decision-making if things needed to change in the moment. They worked together, managed disagreements, handled requests to see certain sights, and supported each other with getting the most out of the trip. We came back exhausted and with amazing memories.”

From learning to honor the flag at camp to serving their neighbors, advocating for change, and forming friendships across borders, Girl Scouts are learning that citizenship is more than a word.

It is an action.

And perhaps that is the most enduring lesson Girl Scouting can offer as the nation celebrates 250 years: being part of a community means contributing to it. Being part of a country means caring about its future. And being part of a global community means recognizing that our actions—large and small—can reach far beyond where we live.

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Girl Scouts involved in civics are stronger for it



Dear friends,

What if we considered every Girl Scout troop as a small civic laboratory?

In a troop, girls learn to listen to one another, make decisions together, navigate differences, share responsibility and work toward a common goal. They learn that having a voice also means listening to the voices of others. They discover that leadership isn't about having all the answers,

it is about bringing people together to make something better. These may sound like lessons in leadership, but they are also lessons in citizenship.

Yes, civics is something taught in our classrooms or through Schoolhouse Rock: how government works, what it means to vote, or how laws are made. But becoming an engaged citizen is about much more than knowing how government functions. It requires confidence, curiosity, empathy, critical thinking, and the willingness to participate in solving problems that affect our communities. Girl Scouts provides a place to practice those skills.

When girls decide together where their troop should go, they learn about participation and compromise. When they identify a problem in their community and develop a Take Action project, they learn to understand systems and create solutions. When a Girl Scout stands before an audience, speaks with a community leader, or advocates for something she believes should change, she learns that her voice has value – and that she has the power to use it.

And perhaps most importantly, she learns that citizenship is not something that begins when she turns 18, because it begins when she understands she belongs to a community and has something to contribute to it.

Many of you personally experienced this laboratory through your own Girl Scout experiences -the meetings, campfires, cookie booths, service projects and friendships that seemed, at the time, like individual moments. Looking back, we can see them differently. They were opportunities to practice being leaders, teammates and citizens. Today, our donors make these opportunities possible. Donors are not simply supporting programs. They are helping create spaces where girls can find their voices, practice leadership and discover that they can make a difference.

Girl Scouting is a civics laboratory. And every Girl Scout leaves more confident in her ability to lead, participate and create changes that make our communities, and our democracy, stronger. Thank you for your support and for encouraging our Girl Scouts to make a difference.

Yours in Girl Scouting,

Patricia

Patricia K. Mellor
Chief Executive Officer
Gold Award Girl Scout

GSUSA's five-patch collection marks USA's 250th anniversary

America250 commemorates the signing of the Declaration of Independence, celebrating its 250th anniversary in 2026.

Through a national partnership with America250, Girl Scouts have been invited to engage with this milestone through reflection, learning, and service in ways that feel meaningful to them. Participation is optional and centered on community impact, diverse perspectives, and Girl Scout leadership.

They earn the patches through joining an event, taking part in a national project, or creating their own project. They explore history, discover diverse stories, and give back through service.

"For more than a century, Girl Scouts have been shaping the future of our nation — one girl, one act of service and one community at a time," said Bonnie

Barczykowski, CEO of GSUSA. "We're proud to partner with America 250 and reflect on this milestone, the part Girl Scouts have played in our history, and how critical they'll be to imagining and building a brighter future."

Girl Scouts are asked to take part in any of the America250 tentpole programs to earn the patches. They can also mark the moment in any way that feels meaningful—create an art piece, take part in a national service project, or express their feelings however they like.

There are still many events that Girl Scouts and the public are invited to explore and participate in around the country. You can see the calendar of events and more on how to participate at america250.org.

It's America's 250th Anniversary.

On July 4, 2026, it will be 250 years since the Declaration of Independence was signed. Girl Scouts of the USA has partnered with America250.org to celebrate this milestone.

To earn your patches, you'll need to complete one activity. Here are some ideas:

- Service Project:** Complete a service project that benefits the community.
- Art Project:** Create an art piece that reflects on the 250th anniversary.
- Learning Activity:** Complete a learning activity about the 250th anniversary.

Visit girlscouts.org/america250 to find out more.

Explore the commemorative five-patch collection.

Leading the way in teaching civic engagement

Girl Scout Troop 60180 of Loudon, NH, is very active in civic education. Primary leader Sheena Corbett works at the State House in New Hampshire and ensures her troop understands how government works. They've visited the state capital, helped at local town meetings and elections, and even persuaded the Town of Loudon to adopt a motto: "Loudon, a welcoming community with a big smile."

Corbett and her co-leaders, Amanda Berube, Amanda Alksnitis, and Stephanie Parker, took their troop to Girl Scouts Unite in Washington, D.C., in July. They were even invited to get a tour of the Capitol from U.S. Rep. Maggie Goodlander, a Girl Scout alum.

"Our girls are very interested in civic engagement," said Berube. "Some of the things we have done as a troop include welcoming a New Hampshire state representative to a meeting to discuss state government and answer questions. We have visited the capitol on multiple occasions, the last time during the 250th celebration, and we received a women's accomplishments-focused tour that was so enlightening and empowering."

Corbett has always wanted to make sure that the girls in her troop know that their voices are important.

"We started off years before I worked at the State House with our civic engagements," she said. "First we started by touring our town offices. So we toured, learned about voting, paying property taxes, registering our vehicles and how the town offices run. Next we started making sure we were involved in town-wide events, parades, town meetings and more. This led to us being asked to open the polls for town voting."

Corbett works at the New Hampshire State House. She encourages all troops to reach out to Virginia Drew in the State House Visitor Center.

"We recently went on an amazingly informative 250th anniversary tour to learn all the connections New Hampshire has to the birth of our country," she said. "Not only that, but she curated a special Women of the State House tour and taught us about all the women you can find in the walls of the State House and some of the



Troop 60180 stands in front of the Portrait Monument of the Pioneers for Woman's Suffrage. The mound on the top is left unfinished to remind all girls and women that they could be the next trailblazer for women's rights. "It was my favorite sculpture at the U.S. Capitol," said troop leader Sheena Corbett, standing far left. (Courtesy photo)

important women that have helped New Hampshire history. We also saw rare documents that were up for July 4th, for preparation of seeing similar documents when we got to Washington, D.C., a couple of weeks later."

At Girl Scouts Unite, they heard inspiring speeches and participated in workshops. They saw statues of people from New Hampshire; the location of the desk of New Hampshire's only president, Franklin Pierce; saw original chambers for the House, Senate and Supreme Court; the Lincoln Memorial; the National Archives to see the Declaration of Independence, Bill of Rights, and Constitution.

"We were moved to see the 19th Amendment," she said. "Looking at the document that gave women the right to vote with the next generation's future voters was a truly moving experience for us leaders."

"Knowing civil engagement is knowing that your voice matters," said Alksnitis. "That the needs of the people are heard and to stand up for what is right. Knowledge and the willingness to participate in civic engagement means you understand what the government is choosing for you and, when change is necessary, you have that power to make change. This is the exact premise our country was founded on."

Corbett agrees.

"Every leader in Troop 60180 knows that civic engagement is important," she said. "We want our girls to grow up knowing if they want a place in government, big or small, they can have it and if they don't want to be in government they should still have an idea what is going on in their world and how it will affect them."

Representing our council on the national stage

Ursula Olender is a Girl Scout volunteer who leads Troop 51876 in Middlebury, VT, and she was part of the delegation Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains sent to Washington, D.C. for the 58th National Council Session and Girl Scouts Unite convention.

Olender said it was an extraordinary honor to represent the council and gave this report:

The National Council Session is Girl Scout democracy in action. Delegates from councils across the country and USA Girl Scouts Overseas gather to discuss, debate, and vote on matters affecting the future of our Movement. Girl delegates participate alongside adult delegates, with an equal voice in shaping the future of Girl Scouts.

During the session, we considered and adopted proposals related to fundraising by Girl Scouts pursuing the Highest Awards and procedures governing membership-dues increases. Delegates also elected the 2026–2029 National Board of Directors and National Board Development Committee, including incoming National President Telva McGruder.

What moved me most was that much of the debate was led by incredibly engaged, thoughtful, and persuasive girl members. They asked challenging questions, spoke confidently about their values, listened respectfully to opposing viewpoints, and advocated passionately for the future they want to see. Watching them lead gave me tremendous hope—not only for the future of the Girl Scout Movement, but for humanity more broadly.

In the months leading up to the NCS, delegates participated in informational webinars to develop the background knowledge needed to debate and vote on the three proposals. At the NCS, each delegate also took part in roundtable conversations focused on two strategic discussion topics.

“Amplify Impact—Building Connection with Our Communities” invited delegates to explore what current and prospective Girl Scout families are seeking, how consistency and flexibility can strengthen their experiences, and how we live our Girl Scout values while ensuring that all



Attending the 58th National Council Session of Girl Scouts of the USA in Washington, D.C., were, from left, Kristel Rigoli, Peggy Piette, Patricia K. Mellor, Ursula Olender, Veronica Galdieri, Courtney Morin, and Katelyn Hudson. (Courtesy photo)

girls and families feel welcome. We also discussed the support members need to promote and deliver the Girl Scout experience effectively in their communities.

“Revolutionize Engagement—Girl Scouts Her Way” focused on how the Movement must evolve the ways girls and families connect with our mission and increase access to Girl Scouting. Delegates considered research about how families want our offerings to develop, how we can make it easier to join and remain involved, and how future GSUSA pilot programs might respond to those needs.

The issues were complex, but throughout the experience, I tried to let the Girl Scout Promise and Law guide my participation and voting. Representing our council meant listening carefully, weighing different perspectives, and considering what will help Girl Scouts remain strong and relevant for generations to come.

Following the NCS, Girl Scouts Unite brought together thousands of Girl Scouts, volunteers, alums, and caregivers for workshops, hands-on activities, inspiring speakers, performances, and celebrations of girls making history. Some of my favorite moments were the simplest and most joyful: exchanging SWAPS with girls from across the country, singing beloved Girl Scout songs with the Troubadours, seeing

the smile on Veronica Galdieri’s face after she met U.S. Women’s Ice Hockey Olympian Megan Keller, and experiencing the instant connection that comes from being part of this remarkable sisterhood.

The week was also a wonderful opportunity to deepen relationships within our own council. I especially valued getting to know GSGWM board members and delegates Peggy, Claire, Katelyn, Kristel, and Veronica. I loved spending time with Tricia and Jennie—and being surprised and delighted to encounter girls from our own service unit and council at Girl Scouts Unite.

If you care about the future of Girl Scouts, consider how you can make your voice heard. Welcome new girls into your troop. Invite friends to join as members or volunteers. Share your own Girl Scout experience with anyone who will listen. Support our council and local service units with your time, talent, and treasure. Stay informed about GSUSA governance, attend council volunteer meetings, and consider applying to serve as a delegate to the next National Council Session.

Each of us can help ensure that more girls have the opportunity to discover their strengths, develop their voices, and make the world a better place.

50 Students, 50 Stars! honors civic engagement

Over a third of the 50 New Hampshire students recognized by Secretary of State David M. Scanlan for Civics In Action: 50 Students, 50 Stars! program were Girl Scouts. Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains congratulated these go-getters whose efforts to make the world a better place earned them recognition May 27 at the New Hampshire State Archives.

The program celebrates the 250th signing of the Declaration of Independence by honoring public, private, and homeschooled students in grades K-12 who have applied foundational civic knowledge to a civic engagement activity that enhances the lives of others.

"We are so proud of the many ways our Girl Scout members make the world a better place. It was an honor to celebrate their achievements and join the Secretary of State in recognizing these amazing Girl Scouts," said Carrie Green Loszewski, Chief Engagement Officer for the council.

The Girl Scouts honored included:

- Olivia Alicea, 15, of Salem, who taught Daisies how to care for the environment, community, and one another.
- Julija Alksnitis, 9, of Pembroke, whose troop persuaded the town of Loudon to adopt a town motto and spoke at Town Meeting.
- Alex Berube, 10, of Loudon, whose troop persuaded the town of Loudon to adopt a town motto and spoke at Town Meeting.
- Amy Campbell, 18, of Merrimack, a Gold Award Girl Scout who restored a historic stone wall in Hudson and taught the community about erosion.
- Madison Duffy, 17, of Concord, a Gold Award Girl Scout who worked to make teenagers aware of the dangers of tanning and avoid melanoma.
- Isabelle Fencer, 12, of Alton, a Bronze Award Girl Scout who created a website to highlight local dog sitters, groomers and veterinarians.
- Juliette Flanders, 9, of Loudon, whose troop persuaded the town of Loudon to adopt a town motto and spoke at Town Meeting.



Nineteen current Girl Scouts and two former Girl Scouts were honored May 26 at 50 Students 50 Stars for their contributions to civic knowledge. (GSGWM photo)



- Kaelyn Gagnon, 18, of Manchester, a Gold Award Girl Scout who created an inclusive sports program for young children.
- Eleanor Gorman, 15, of Dover, a Silver Award Girl Scout who created a voting rights patch program called They Are Your Rights, Use Them.
- Olivia Grobecker, 10 of Merrimack, who created a Vote Today poster for town elections in April.
- Piper Hardy, 13, of Merrimack, who earned the Girl Scout Democracy badge, attending government sessions to learn about them.
- Tanah McNally, 10, of Bedford, a Bronze Award Girl Scout who created a sensory board for the Intensive Needs program in her school district and aids children with disabilities.
- Elliot Medeiros, 10, of Nashua, who helped the Nashua Soup Kitchen by collecting and donating food and hygiene items.
- Magnolia Moriarity, 12, of Amherst, a Bronze Award Girl Scout whose troop assembled a book of information on Amherst's Revolutionary War heroes and mapped their burial sites.

- Lily Rose Oberlander, 13, of Salem, who showed the Daisies in her troop how to care for the environment, community, and one another.
- Laurana O'Donohoe, 13, of Andover, who researched New Hampshire veterans and authored biographies preserved in two national databases, helping to honor local service members and preserve history.
- Elizabeth Parker, 10, of Loudon, whose troop persuaded the town of Loudon to adopt a town motto and spoke at Town Meeting.
- Nicole Pinksten, 9, of Nashua, who helped the Nashua Soup Kitchen by collecting and donating food and hygiene items.
- Arwyn Westbrook, 11, of Amherst, a Bronze Award Girl Scout whose troop assembled a book of information on Amherst's Revolutionary War heroes and mapped their burial sites.

Education and activism in the area of civics is an important part of Girl Scouts. Starting as young as kindergarten, Girl Scouts learn to take action by stocking local food pantries, helping animal shelters, lobbying for change at government meetings, and more. Girl Scouting's highest awards – the Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards – recognize a Girl Scout's work to make sustainable change to make the world a better place.

Girl Scouts clean gravestones, preserve history

Those visiting Evergreen Cemetery in Rutland, Vermont, may notice that the gravestones there are now easier to read, thanks to a pair of Girl Scouts who wanted to improve the cemetery and educate people on the history of those buried there. Ariana Himes and Adara Catellier are now Silver Award Girl Scouts, having earned the highest honor possible for Girl Scouts in grades 6-8 with their project.

Ariana, 14, of Proctor and Adara, 16, of Cuttingsville, completed their work in September 2025 and were awarded their Silver Award certificates at the Young Women of Distinction ceremony on June 28.

For their project, they learned how to safely clean the gravestones, taught others how to do it, and inspired community members to help them on a cleaning day.

The girls said it matters that cemeteries are kept up because the history of those buried there could be lost. They realized that towns do not always have the equip-



Ariana Himes and Adara Catellier earned the Girl Scout Silver Award for restoring gravestones. (Courtesy photo)

ment and funding to keep the property maintained.

"While completing this project," Adara said, "I found out that I am OK at public

speaking. I also found out that I am good at demonstrating how to use supplies as well as helping others when they didn't fully know what to do."

Ariana discovered that "I like to give instructions because I am a very loud person and that's just natural." She added that giving instructions clearly and being able to speak to new people will help her when giving presentations.

Adara and Ariana created informational brochures to teach community members about their work and how they can sustain the concept by learning how to clean gravestones elsewhere.

"It's going to benefit the people who visit the cemetery to see loved ones and it will also benefit the people who track family history," they said. "The community will benefit because they will want to visit the cemetery more often to see loved ones and learn about the history that lies there."

Gift of Caring benefits hometown heroes

Gift of Caring is a special way to say thank you to our local veterans and essential workers who give so much of themselves while protecting the health and safety of our communities.

Gift of Caring cookie purchases are delivered by girl members, council staff, and volunteers to area hospitals, retirement and medical facilities, shelters and food banks, local police and fire stations, as well as veterans organizations and local U.S.

servicemen and women who are actively serving in our military.

Last year, over 71,000 packages of Girl Scout cookies were donated through Gift of Caring, equaling over \$420,000 donated to this unique program.

We are grateful to our staff, volunteers, alums and members who have served or are currently serving in our military, and those working in our communities as critical professionals taking care of us all.

Gift of Caring



We thank the following donors for their generous Gift of Caring contributions in the past year:

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Celebrating America's 250th anniversary

Girl Scout troops mark Independence Day



Troop 30121 of Cambridge, VT, celebrated the 250th anniversary of America by attending their town fireworks on July 3, then the next morning, July 4, they gathered to decorate their "Wicked for Cookies" float in pink and green for Glinda and Elphaba, and then participated in the town parade. The girls chose to give out bubble wands instead of handing candy off the float. (Courtesy photo)



Troop 63730 of Tamworth, NH, had a float in their town's 250th parade and won a trophy for the best 250th theme. They handed out keepsake magnets that had 250th designs donated by Eastern Propane, which also drove their float. (Courtesy photo)



Troop 62764 and Service Unit 216 marched in the 250th parade in Lee, NH, on June 27. (Courtesy photo)

Troop 58007 of Shaftsbury, VT, was part of the Bennington Battle Day Parade in Bennington, VT on August 15. They received third place for a service club and/or float. (Courtesy photo)



New Hampshire and Vermont troops featured on CNN July 4

Girl Scouts from around the USA were highlighted on special Independence Day programming on CNN on July 4. Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains was invited to submit videos for

both New Hampshire and Vermont. Several troops were involved in the New Hampshire video. Troop 64100 did the video for Vermont. Both videos can be viewed at <https://bit.ly/4whlADc>



A group of Girl Scouts from several different troops came together at the council office to record their video for CNN in front of the STEM on-the-go van.



Troop 64100 of Essex Junction, VT, submitted this video to run on July 4 for a CNN special program.