




girl scouts
in the heart
of pennsylvania

Be Connected

Monthly Newsletter for Girl Scout Volunteers

Dear Volunteers,

Opportunity knocks! We've built our work plan for this coming year around the theme of capitalizing on those opportunities that have the greatest potential for building the membership, visibility and resources of our council. It was exciting to share this year's strategic priorities with those of you who attended at Kick-Off at Camp Small Valley in August. In a nutshell, they are:

1. **100th Anniversary:** The opportunity here is to maximize our celebration of the 100th anniversary of Girl Scouts and attract more girls, more funds and public relations opportunities and of course, have fun!
2. **Partnerships:** We have opportunities to go beyond simple partnerships (for example, using the meeting space of another organization) and develop more meaningful, long term partnerships with organizations whose missions are in line with ours. Think, for example, of the partnerships that some Service Units are building with conservation groups as part of the *Forever Green* initiative.
3. **Outdoor Experience:** With the council on firmer financial footing, we have a good opportunity this year to more thoughtfully incorporate camp and outdoor programming into the life of the council as one of the most distinctive experiences we offer girls.
4. **Sustainable Growth:** Finally, we have

IN THIS ISSUE:

[Troop Pennsylvania](#)

Learn about a special troop which will be made up of women in the State Legislature in honor of our 100th Anniversary!

[Volunteer Essentials](#)

Click here to find out about this new document that will replace *SafetyWise*.

[Forever Green Events](#)

See what events are in store as we launch our *Forever Green* initiative.

[GSHPA Spotlight](#)

See who we're shining the spotlight on this month!

[Volunteer Training updates](#)

We've heard your requests and have overhauled our required trainings based on your feedback!

[Fall Volunteer Training Weekends Set](#)

Sign up today to attend one of our comprehensive training weekends.

[Around the Council](#)

See what's happening throughout GSHPA.

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Mark your calendar with

opportunities to improve our internal systems to support membership, finance and community engagement. For example, over this next year we'll begin to use a new, more flexible membership data base.

these important upcoming dates.

Plus, we invite all girls, troops and service units to capitalize on numerous council-wide activities over the coming year. Some of these are:

- expanded Cookie College (one in each region), January 7, 2012;
- the National Sing-Along in Washington, DC, June 9, 2012;
- the 100th Anniversary Camporee, August 10-12, 2012; and
- opportunities for free books and activities associated with our *Forever Green* initiative.

At Kick-Off as we joined in the traditional recitation of the Girl Scout Promise, we were reminded by the words "...to help people at all times and to live by the Girl Scout Law" about how much we will be able to accomplish this year if we continue pulling together as a team and modeling what leadership is all about for the girls. We look forward to our work together over this next year.

Sincerely,

Kate Crowley
Board Chair

Jane Ransom
President & CEO

Troop PA Investiture Ceremony set for October

Pennsylvania's three Girl Scout councils are kicking off the 100th anniversary of Girl Scouting by establishing Troop PA, an honorary Girl Scout troop made up of the women in the Pennsylvania State Legislature. Senator Pat Vance and Representative Jennifer Mann, the troop leaders, will lead the formal investiture of the troop in a brief ceremony on the steps of the State Capitol Rotunda at 9:00 am on Tuesday, October 18.

One of GSHPA's goals for the 100th anniversary year is to increase the visibility of Girl Scouts. Troop PA will begin that process. In addition, GSHPA hopes to develop greater connections with the legislators in our region of the state as a result of having this honorary troop.

The legislature will be in session on October 18, so the ceremony will be only 15-20 minutes long, in order for

representatives to return to their work in the House and Senate. GSHPA welcomes troops and members to come to the ceremony; however, leaders will need to organize any additional activities for the girls, such as tours or visits with legislators.

Goodbye SafetyWise and VRG, say hello to the new Volunteer Essentials and the Safety Checkpoints!

For years we have relied on the combination of two resources – SafetyWise and the Volunteer Resource Guide (VRG) - to guide our decisions, help us plan our activities and provide us with the basic Girl Scouting dos and don'ts. We are pleased to announce that volunteers can now find all of this helpful information and more in the new Volunteer Essentials resource located on our website at

http://www.gshpa.org/images/volunteer_essentials.pdf.

Complete with a user-friendly quick-start guide, this new resource helps answer even your basic questions without having to page through multiple documents.

To help even the busiest of leaders plan their upcoming troop outing, we are also pleased to unveil the new Safety Checkpoints. The Checkpoints are activity specific guides on everything from the prep work that you and your girls need to do ahead of time as well as the safety precautions you need to take and permissions you need to receive both prior to and once you've arrived at your destination. Check out the complete list of Girl Scout approved activities by [clicking here!](#)

Forever Green Upcoming Events

Girl Scouts in the Heart of Pennsylvania are encouraged to be *Forever Green* by getting involved in our council-wide initiative focused on increasing environmental awareness. Upcoming opportunities include:

The EcoFootprint Challenge

Join our EcoFootprint Challenge and reduce your ecological footprint by 10 percent! Visit www.gshpa.org and click the "EcoFootprint Challenge" link. You will get access to an interactive, kid-friendly footprint calculator, which will help you learn more about the impact you have on the environment and how you can reduce the amount of resources you use. Volunteers working with Daisy, Brownie, and Junior troops should involve girls and parents in this activity. Younger girls will need help answering questions about household energy use. Also, take the *Forever Green* Pledge. All participants will be eligible to receive the 2011-2012 Forever Green Patch!

Visit <http://shop.gshpa.org/store/product/14260/GSHPA-Forever-Green-patch/> for more information. Participants will be asked to complete the ecological footprint quiz again in April 2012 and together we will celebrate a 10 percent reduction on Earth Day 2012.

Daffodils for Daisies

This fall, daisy troops will have an opportunity to participate in "Daffodils for Daisies," a program that will reinforce their natural curiosity for plants and animals and encourage them to share what they learn with other daisy scouts. Participating troops will get a supply of daffodil bulbs that they can plant somewhere in their local communities. Troops should vote on a location, get permission, and plant the bulbs between October 15, 2011 and November 15, 2011. They may get a chance to beautify a public place and make the event a service project. During the months of March and April 2012, when daffodils begin to bloom, troops will be encouraged to take photos and share information about the growth of their daffodils with other participating troops. The project will strengthen girls' basic science and math skills and provide an opportunity for our youngest scouts to discover, connect, and take action. Troop leaders will be able to register for this activity via the e-council calendar at <http://www.gshpa.org/girls/programeventscaendar.html> until 10/1/2011.

And don't forget, the *It's Your Planet, Love It Journey!*

If your troop has not yet completed the *It's Your Planet, Love it!* leadership journey, this is the year to do it! Get ready for the journey with a FREE book set (one girl and one adult guide) to use with your troop. Girl Scout leaders who have already registered for the 2012 year, should ask their Membership Associates for details.

Look for more exciting Forever Green activities in future issues of this newsletter!

GSHPA Spotlight: 2011 Annual Kick-off



Close to 200 volunteers turned out at the 2011 Annual Kick-Off event to help GSHPA get our 100th year of Girl Scouting off on the right foot.

Nearly 200 volunteers joined GSHPA staff at Camp Small Valley in Dauphin County to get a head start on the 100th Girl Scout year at this year's Annual Kick-Off event. The event began with opening remarks from GSHPA Board Chair Kate Crowley and an update from President and CEO Jane Ransom that included a preview of our council's plans to celebrate this very important year in Girl Scout history and to set the stage for the next 100 years of Girl Scouting.



GSHPA President and CEO Jane Ransom updated volunteers on the council's plans for the year ahead.

Ransom specifically highlighted aspects of the operating plan for the new fiscal year that focus on the following priorities: 100th Anniversary, Partnerships, Outdoor Experience, and Sustainable Growth.

During her update, Ransom also introduced some of the recipients of the Forever Green Service Unit Mini Grants and gave them the opportunity to share the projects they are planning to work on in their communities using the

money they received. "These projects exemplify the 100th Anniversary and what Girl Scouting is all about by encouraging our girls to care about the environment and give back to their communities," Ransom added.

Following Ransom's update, attendees had their choice of nine workshops ranging in topics from our council's new volunteer resources, improvements to our volunteer development program, our *Forever Green* environmental signature programming initiative and the upcoming 100th Anniversary Camporee slated for August 2012.



GSHPA Program Coordinator Lori McCracken conducted a workshop to educate volunteers about the Forever Green initiative.

Volunteers who attended also had a chance to visit the council store and plenty of opportunities to meet with other volunteers from across the council's 30-county footprint during lunch.

"It was inspiring to see so many volunteers at this year's Kick-Off Event," said Ransom. "It's always great to have this many of our volunteers here to help us get ramped up for the year ahead, especially when it's a year as significant as this, our 100th year of Girl Scouting!"



The day ended with a closing ceremony in which volunteers and staff formed a friendship circle.

The day wrapped up with all the volunteers and staff members in attendance gathering in the field at Small Valley to form a Friendship Circle and share a squeeze as they each thought about one thing they will do to help make our 100th Anniversary year a success.

Required Volunteer Trainings – Updated with You in Mind

Welcome to Girl Scouts, Part 1, Welcome to Girl Scouts, Part 2, Leadership Essentials, Ready, Set, Go!, Firebuilding 101 and more..., “which training do I take and when am I going to squeeze it in?” was a question many new and returning volunteers had. The feedback we received from the majority was that our training was time consuming, not always applicable and, at times, redundant and out-dated. With this in mind, we are pleased to announce that we have updated our required trainings to include the following:

Volunteer Orientation: This hour-long in-person course introduces volunteers to the Girl Scout Movement. All new volunteers must complete this training prior to starting in a volunteer position.
Prerequisite: none

Leadership Essentials: This online course presents an overview of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and ways adults can facilitate girl-led experiences. Included in this course is an opportunity to explore grade-level Journey Books and Guides for leaders. Troop leaders must take Leadership Essentials within the first three months of their first troop meeting. If you do not have internet access, please contact your local Membership Associate.
Prerequisite: Volunteer Orientation

Council 101 - Sections 1 - 5: Course Overview - This online course outlines basic elements, policies, and services provided by Girl Scouts in the Heart of Pennsylvania. For your convenience, Council 101 is divided into five sections which may be completed all at once or one section at a time. At the end of each section, there are five wrap-up questions for you to answer and email to your council contact.

Council 101 - Section 1: About GSHPA - Section 1 provides an overview of Girl Scouts in the Heart of Pennsylvania and its basic structure. All new volunteers must complete this section prior to volunteering.

Council 101 - Section 2: Council Policies & Volunteering - Section 2 outlines basic Girl Scout policies, standards, and procedures. All new volunteers must complete this section prior to volunteering.

Council 101 - Section 3: Troop/Group Finance Policies - Section 3 provides the policies and how-to for setting up and handling troop/service unit/group finances. Any volunteer who has the potential to handle an account that is associated in any way with Girl Scouts in the Heart of Pennsylvania must complete this section of Council 101, prior to working with that account.

Council 101 - Section 4: Troop Management & Support - Section 4 describes troop leadership requirements and the support system that is available to those volunteers participating in the troop pathway. All new troop leaders and assistant troop leaders must complete prior to their first troop meeting.

Council 101 - Section 5: Troop/Group Travel - Any troop/group planning to take any form of a trip must have at least one representative complete Section 5 to serve as the Travel Certified Adult.

Camping 101: Any troop/group planning to go on an overnight to a modern camping facility or any troop/group that would like to build a fire must complete this section. This in-person 3 – 4 hour course certifies an adult to build a basic fire and roast marshmallows. NOTE: Those traveling and wanting to go tent camping and/or cooking over a fire must take Outdoor Skills; this includes travel to any GSHPA sites and staying in platform tents. A modern camping facility is defined as a year round indoor unit. **Prerequisite:** Volunteer Orientation, Council 101: Sections 1, 2, and 5

Outdoor Skills: At least one representative from a troop/group wanting to go tent camping and/or cook over a flame must take this weekend-long course to serve as the Outdoor Certified Adult. This in-person course must be taken prior to the trip and is an overnight learning experience. **Prerequisite:** Volunteer Orientation, Council 101: Sections 1, 2, and 5

Already trained? No need to panic – any previously completed GSHPA required training still counts. To find out more, please visit <http://www.gshpa.org/volunteers/adultlearningtraining.html> or contact your membership associate.

Volunteer Training Weekends Continue this Fall

Don't miss out on the great training opportunities we have available throughout September and October. What a great time to participate in the updated council-required trainings and/or get some new ideas from a plethora of enrichment courses.

- September 17 – 18, 2011 at Camp Louise*
[Click here to register by September 8!](#)
- September 24 – 25, 2011 at Camp Archbald*
[Click here to register by September 15!](#)
- October 1 - 2, 2011 at Camp Small Valley*
[Click here to register by September 22!](#)
- October 15 - 16, 2011 at Camp Echo Trail*
[Click here to register by October 6!](#)
- October 22 – 23, 2011 at Camp Golden Pond*
[Click here to register by October 13!](#)

**The five council-run volunteer weekends are free to all participants and will only require a \$25 deposit for First Aid/CPR training that is refunded upon completion of the course.*

The Lebanon County-based service units have also come together to offer a similar volunteer training weekend again this Fall on September 23 – 25, 2011 at Camp Furnace Hills. [Please click here for registration info for this specific weekend.](#)

Join the Nature Explorers!

Attention nature lovers! You are invited to join Nature Explorers, a team of Girl Scout adults who have been trained as facilitators to present programs in nature study. Through hands-on activities they help girls of all ages understand the natural world, appreciate nature,

learn about current ecological problems and become aware of how they can have an impact as stewards of the environment. The program is presented at Nature Explorer events, day camps, and encampments.

Basic Nature Explorer facilitator training will be held on Saturday, September 10, 2011, 1-5 pm in Dover, PA. To complete training, facilitators will attend the annual facilitator enrichment weekend at Camp Small Valley from September 30, 2011 - October 2, 2011. Then they will complete an apprenticeship with an experienced facilitator at an event.

For more information or to register for Basic Nature Explorer Facilitator training, contact Judi Burnett at Judicreek@aol.com by September 5, 2011.

The New *Girls Guide to Girl Scouting* is almost here!

Much anticipation and buzz has been created about this new resource, and the wait is almost over. The new *Girls Guide to Girl Scouting* should be available as early as later this month. This new grade-level specific, colorful notebook includes information about Girl Scouts, our history, traditions and sister Scouts abroad, new and legacy grade-level badge earning information and more. No need to wonder what to do while we wait, we have until September 30, 2012 to switch to this new resource. While we wait in anticipation of its arrival, why not start a Journey or check in with the council store to see which discontinued badges they still have in stock so your girls can add it to their vest or sash before it's retired? Check out www.gshpa.org and future issues of this newsletter for more information or contact your membership associate to see if you can organize a sneak peak!

Around the Council

Girls

- Daisy Girl Scout from Frackville Troop 31122, Ava Grace Kaplan, recently took a family trip to Washington D.C. and got to see the Nation's Capitol in style. She took a personal tour of the Capitol and later got to meet none other than Vice President, Joe Biden. Not only that but she made the NPR news. What an exciting day for a future leader, and maybe even a future president!
- Troop 50234 in service unit 504 recently prepared

and served meals at the Scranton Rescue Mission. In addition to serving they also donated 34 boxes of Girl Scout cookies.

- Cadette Girl Scout Troop 41162 is taking action to recruit girls and volunteers to Girl Scouting in their Centre County service area. The troop has taken on the task of handling all recruitment events for SU 416 as their Silver Award project. The troop has planned program activities for girls who attend the events and recruited adults to talk to parents about the value of volunteering. The troop has already scheduled four Back to School Night presentations and are busy scheduling Recruitment Nights.

Volunteers

- Volunteer Dawn Wallace from SU712-Riverview Service Unit (Lancaster PA) recognized a need for a leader to work with the 6th grade Cadette troop in Columbia, and she eagerly stepped up to the challenge. The troop will start the year off by working on the *It's Your World – Change It!* aMaze Journey. Throughout the year Dawn will also focus on helping the girls prepare for their transition to high school next year. Later in the year the girls will plan activities to complete the *It's Your Planet – Love It! Breathe Journey*, as well as work with the seventh/eighth grade Cadette troop to plan some fun outings together.
- On Tuesday, August 23, Theresa Wranitz was awarded by her membership associate, Andrea Zajac, the Girl Scout Appreciation pin at Service Unit 324's first meeting of the year. Theresa was unable to attend the annual meeting to receive her award, so it was a nice way to start the year as she was recognized for her volunteer work with her two troops and the service she has provided to the service unit over the past few years from helping with their SU encampment and helping on the team in various positions.

Save the Date!

- **September 17 – 18, 2011** – Volunteer Training Weekend at Camp Louise
- **September 24 – 25, 2011** - Volunteer Training Weekend at Camp Archbald
- **September 23 – 25, 2011** – Volunteer Training Weekend at Camp Furnace Hills
- **October 1-2, 2011** – Volunteer Training Weekend

at Camp Small Valley

- **October 10, 2011** – State College Delegates Meeting
- **October 11, 2011** – Montoursville Delegates Meeting
- **October 12, 2011** – Scranton Delegates Meeting
- **October 13, 2011** – York Delegates Meeting
- **October 15-16, 2011** – Volunteer Training Weekend at Camp Echo Trail
- **October 17, 2011** – Harrisburg Delegates Meeting
- **October 19, 2011** – Delegates Meeting via Webinar
- **October 22 – 23, 2011** – Volunteer Training Weekend at Camp Golden Pond
- **June 9, 2012** – Girl Scouts Rock the Mall 100th Anniversary Sing-Along