

Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas (GSNETX)

Volunteer Policies

(Policies Approved by the Board of Directors on June 7, 2008.)
(Revised May, 2009)

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Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas (GSNETX) Volunteer Policies

*(Policies Approved by the Board of Directors on June 7, 2008.)
(Revised May, 2009)*

I. Adult Volunteers

A positive female role model is essential for meeting the Girl Scout program goals and purposes. Each Girl Scout Troop/group must have at least one (1) female adult Girl Scout Leader who is at least 18 years of age, is a registered Girl Scout, has authorized a Criminal Background Check, and agrees to meet the training requirements for the position. The attitudes, appearance and actions of volunteers have a direct impact on the lives of girls.

Male adults may be part of the leadership team for a Girl Scout Troop/group of girls, including being designated as the "01" for the Girl Scout Troop/group. Male Girl Scout Leaders are expected to fulfill the same requirements as female Girl Scout Leaders. The leadership of every Girl Scout Troop/group must include unrelated adults within the team. Specifically, men may not participate alone with girls and will not take girls on overnights, camping trips, extended trips, or events without two female adults.

Adult volunteers who are taking responsibility for girls not of their family should be registered, complete a volunteer application and criminal background check form. Adults participating in an event as a parent with their own daughter (such as Mom & Me or Dad & Me events), and not taking responsibility of girls that are not a part of their family are not required to complete this paperwork.

The council is committed to an environment in which relationships between volunteers, staff, parents and girls are characterized by dignity, courtesy, respect and equitable treatment.

Procedures

Definition of 'Volunteer':

A 'volunteer' is any adult (person 18 years of age or older) who, without compensation or expectation of compensation, performs a task on behalf of the council. A 'volunteer' must be appointed prior to performing the task. Unless specifically stated, volunteers shall not be considered as 'employees' of the council.

Membership Registration:

All adults participating in the Girl Scout Movement must register as members with Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA), except those adults who are working in a temporary advisor or consultative capacity.

Application:

Each candidate for a volunteer position must complete an application form identifying three (3) references, and successfully complete a criminal background check.. The application and criminal background check forms must be submitted to the Girl Scout Service Unit designee. The Girl Scout Service Unit designee has three (3) business days to submit the application and criminal background check forms to a membership staff member or a council service center.

Screening:

A volunteer application process is complete when:

- A minimum of two references are verified.

- A Criminal Background Check is processed and approved.

Criminal Background Check forms:

- GSNETX may re-run a criminal background check at a later date in order to update, renew or extend a volunteer position
- Incomplete Criminal Background Check forms will not be processed.
- Forms received with signature dates older than 45 days will not be processed.
- Information for volunteers immediately determined to be eligible with no restrictions should be available within 3 days.
- Information on volunteer restrictions and ineligibility will be made available only to appropriate GSNETX staff and when applicable, Service Unit Manager and/or Day Camp Director.

Selection:

Each volunteer is selected on the basis of ability to perform the volunteer position, volunteer and council need, ability and willingness to attend training, and qualifications for membership in the Girl Scout Movement. Prior to selection, volunteers will participate in an interview.

Appointment & Agreement:

A volunteer agreement will be completed at the time of appointment to an operational position and will include the terms of the appointment and the signatures of the volunteer and appointer. A job description will accompany the agreement. All volunteers must accept the principles and beliefs of the Girl Scout Movement, and be willing to work within the framework of the council charter, bylaws, policies, standards, affirmative action plan, goals and objectives of GSNETX and GSUSA.

Decisions as to appointing and retaining volunteers must be made on an individual basis. It is impossible for GSNETX to enumerate each instance when an applicant or volunteer is excluded from a position in the council. Volunteers shall be appointed for a period not to exceed one (1) year.

Performance Review:

Each volunteer will receive a periodic performance appraisal and evaluation. The performance appraisal will include both a review of the volunteer's performance of position responsibilities and a discussion of any suggestions that the volunteer may have concerning the position or project with which the volunteer is connected. The performance appraisal session should also be utilized as an opportunity to ascertain the mutual interest of the council and volunteer in the volunteer's continued service in her or his position. It shall be the responsibility of each staff person, or designated Administrative Volunteer, in a supporting relationship with a volunteer to schedule and conduct the performance appraisal.

The position description and key accountabilities of performance for a volunteer position should form the basis of the performance appraisal. Copies will be distributed to the volunteer, the Girl Scout Service Unit and a council service center.

Reappointment:

Prior to completion of her or his term, each volunteer who is to be reappointed to the same position or rotated to a different position, will receive confirmation from their appointer of such reappointment or rotation. Reappointment is based on past performance, adherence to GSNETX and GSUSA policies and standards, support of the Girl Scout purpose, values, and council goals, as well as positive relationships with the community, parents, other volunteers, and council staff. There must be mutual acceptance of position accountabilities, expectations, and time commitments.

Adult Uniforms:

A uniform is not required for participation in Girl Scout activities. When volunteers choose to wear a uniform, the Girl Scout pin – full size or miniature – is the only requirement. When uniforms are worn, they should follow GSUSA guidelines.

Dress Code:

We ask that volunteers remember at all times they are serving as role models for girls; therefore, their dress should reflect that in both modesty and appropriateness for their position and/or situation.

Conflict Resolution:

Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas encourages volunteers and staff to take positive actions to resolve conflicts quickly. We believe a personal phone call or meeting to be the most effective and positive action step. Due to potential escalation of conflicts, email exchanges to resolve issues are not recommended by council.

1. If, for any reason, a seemingly irresolvable conflict arises between individuals or an individual and the council, the circumstances surrounding the conflict should be discussed with the immediate supervisor (Girl Scout Service Unit Manager, Membership Specialist Staff Member, Committee Chair, etc.) and all parties involved.
2. The person shall put her/his grievances in writing within ten (10) working days of the incident/conflict or decision. The signed and dated statement is sent to the appropriate employed staff member. A copy will be sent by council to the person against whom the grievance is registered.
3. Within five (5) working days after the copy of the written statement is received, the appropriate employed staff member will call a conference of the parties involved to resolve the conflict. A written summary of the conference will be distributed to the parties involved, with a copy sent to the council's Chief Program Officer.
4. If this group does not reach a solution, the unresolved conflict may be taken to the next level of supervision, the steps outlined above having been followed and a written summary provided for all parties.
5. If, despite the preceding steps, the conflict remains unresolved, any of the involved parties may request that the conflict be presented to the council's Chief Program Officer.

Public Display of Affection (PDA):

Girl Scout volunteers must refrain from lewd or inappropriate affection (kissing, fondling, etc.) toward other adults/spouses/partners while working with Girl Scouts or representing the Girl Scout organization. Any infraction will be subject to prompt review under council volunteer disciplinary guidelines.

Representing Girl Scouts:

When a Girl Scout or Girl Scout volunteer is representing Girl Scouts in any way they must behave in an appropriate, mature manner that fairly represents the Girl Scout movement. If a Girl Scout and/or Girl Scout volunteer acts in violation of this procedure, they may lose their membership privileges.

II. Health Issues

Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas recognizes that health issues may arise and encourages programs that enhance the physical, emotional and mental well-being of our membership.

- *Chronic Illness:* No girl or adult will be denied membership in Girl Scouting due to health issues. This includes AIDS, Hepatitis B, and any other catastrophic illness which disables or handicaps.
- *Alcohol:* Alcoholic beverages will not be permitted on any Girl Scout property or at any Girl Scout activity involving girls, including trips. Any infraction could lead to the release from the position or assignment of the individual.
- *Smoking:* There will be no smoking on council properties except in designated areas. There will be no smoking in the presence of girls.

- *Federally Prohibited Substances:* These substances are against the law and, therefore, are prohibited under all circumstances.

In support of this goal, the presence of an adult with a current first-aid and CPR certification is necessary when required by *Safety-Wise*. This training should include information on allergies of all types and the proper response to allergic reactions.

Procedures

Infractions:

Any infraction of the Health Issues Policy will be subject to prompt review under council volunteer disciplinary guidelines. The volunteer will be removed from their responsibilities at the activity.

Incident Reports:

All medical incident reports will be maintained by council headquarters in compliance with HIPPA regulations.

Medication:

Medication must be in the original container and cannot be expired. Volunteer must have written permission from the parent/guardian to dispense the medication to a Girl Scout or individual under the age of 18 who is participating at a Girl Scout event or activity.

Confidentiality:

All health related information will be maintained in a confidential manner in accordance with state and federal laws.

Allergies:

Allergies requiring any accommodations must be disclosed in advance in writing to a council Program staff member.

III. Child Protection

It is the policy of the council to provide an environment that is free of child abuse and that safeguards the health and well-being of all girl members of GSUSA, as defined by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. The following is therefore prohibited by all adults and girls in the program:

- *Physical Punishment:* Volunteers cannot restrain, spank, or use any other physical engagement to punish a child.
- *Physical Abuse:* Any action that causes harm or injury to a girl, such as hitting, hazing, kicking, and other inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated.
- *Sexual Misconduct:* This includes any inappropriate sexual physical contact, lewdness or communication in words, print or images.
- *Physical Neglect:* This includes failure to give supervision, failure to provide for safety during activities or time of danger, or failure to meet medical needs.
- *Emotional Abuse:* This includes verbal attacks, anger outbursts, hostility, humiliation, hazing or socially inappropriate language such as cursing.

The council reserves the right to refuse membership endorsement or reappointment, and to dismiss or exclude from affiliation with the council, any volunteer implementing the Girl Scout program who is found guilty of child abuse and neglect or has been convicted of child abuse and/or neglect.

Procedures

Texas Family Code, Chapter 261, Subchapter B “Report of Abuse or Neglect”, Section 261.101 “Persons Required to Report; Time to Report”:

“(a) A person having cause to believe that a child’s physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person shall immediately make a report as provided by this subchapter.”

Definitions of abuse and neglect may be found in Texas Family Code 261.001, <http://tlo2.tlc.state.tx.us/statutes>.

Reporting:

In the state of Texas, reports of abuse or neglect should be made at www.txabusehotline.org. It may take 24 hours to process reports of abuse and neglect made through the Internet. If, as a volunteer you are unsure, contact your local Child Protection Services Agency to describe the situation.

Reports should include:

- The name and address of the child and her/his parents/guardians or person(s) having custody of such child, if known.
- The child’s age and the nature and extent of the child’s injuries, abuse or neglect, including any evidence of previous injuries, abuse or neglect.
- Other information that might help in establishing the cause of the injury, abuse or neglect.
- Record the name of the intake worker who takes the report and note the date that the report is made.

Call Statewide Intake at 1-800-252-5400 if:

- the situation you are reporting is an emergency;
- you prefer to remain anonymous;
- you have insufficient data to complete the required information on the report; or
- you do not want email confirmation of your report.

Emergency:

Call your local law enforcement agency or 911 if the situation is an emergency.

Providing Information:

Although reports may be made anonymously, immediately notify Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas of any reports of suspected abuse or neglect involving either adults or youth in Girl Scouting made to your local Child Protection Services Agency or state intake number.

- Provide a written or verbal notification to the Chief Program Officer at Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas at 972-349-2400 or 1-800-442-2260 within 24 hours after making a report.

Confidentiality:

Do not share this information with anyone other than the local Child Protection Services Agency and the Chief Program Officer at Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas unless instructed by law enforcement.

IV. Affirmative Action

The Board of Directors of the GSNEX reaffirms its support of the following GSUSA policies and the development of an affirmative action plan for volunteers and staff within GSNEX’s jurisdiction.

Affirmation Action for Volunteers: There shall be no discrimination against an otherwise qualified volunteer by reason of disability or on the basis of age. Furthermore, there shall be no discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, sex, creed, national origin, or socio-economic status. In addition, to ensure full equality of opportunity in all operations and activities of the organization, Affirmative Action Policies and Procedures shall be utilized in the recruitment, selection, training, placement and recognition of volunteers. Special emphasis shall be placed upon securing representation of under-represented population groups.

Pluralism and Diversity in Girl Membership: All Girl Scout councils shall be responsible for seeing that membership is reflective of the pluralistic nature of their populations, and that membership is extended to all girls in all population segments and geographic areas in their jurisdictions.

V. Harassment

GSNETX is committed to an environment and climate in which relationships are characterized by dignity, respect, courtesy and equitable treatment. It is the policy of the organization to provide all volunteers with an environment free from all forms of unlawful or unwelcome harassment, including implied or expressed forms of sexual harassment. The council reserves the right to refuse membership endorsement or reappointment, and to dismiss or suspend from affiliation with the council any volunteer who, in conducting Girl Scout program, harasses another volunteer, employee or Girl Scout member.

Procedures

Any volunteer who feels that she or he has been subjected to harassment of any type, whether by another volunteer, council staff member, or any agent of the organization should promptly report the incident to their appropriate Girl Scout Service Unit Team member or appropriate staff member. The individual contacted will take measures (see Conflict Resolution Procedure under the Adult Volunteer Policy) to follow up on all incidents in an expeditious manner.

VI. Risk Management

The council recognizes that, through its varied activities, there is substantial exposure to various risks associated with its operations. In order to provide a safe organizational environment for youth, volunteers, and employees, the council will take reasonable and prudent steps to limit potential organizational liabilities through a program of risk management which includes, but may not be limited to, maintenance of a comprehensive liability insurance program, compliance with all regulatory requirements, and organizational standards, continuing education of employee and volunteer personnel, and regularly scheduled review and assessment of the program's effectiveness.

Procedures

Non-members:

Non-member insurance may be purchased for all events at which non-members are present.

Activity Approval Request Notification:

Notification of council will be through Activity Approval Request Notification. (See Policy X: Program for details.)

Certifications:

Maintain current certification of all required adults to meet *Safety-Wise* requirements.

Child Safety:

6/23/2009

Comply with State Health regulations when using any council facility with regards to food handling or child safety. All cleaning materials must be stored outside of reach of children and should be kept under lock and key at council facilities. Children will be supervised by an adult while cleaning supplies are in use.

Emergency Procedures:

In the event of an emergency, the volunteers must:

- Provide care for the ill/injured persons.
- Call 911/emergency medical care.
- Notify the child's parent or guardian.
- One adult must stay at the scene. Do not disturb victim or surroundings until assistance arrives.
- Report the emergency to council.
- Make NO statement of ANY KIND to the media. DO NOT give out any names or information. Ask them to contact GSNETX headquarters (972-349-2400 or 1-80-442-2260).
- Secure/maintain all permission forms and medical records to turn into a GSNETX service center.

Incident Reports:

In the event of a medical incident, an *Incident Report* must be filled out within 48 hours and sent to council headquarters. All medical incident reports will be maintained by GSNETX headquarters in compliance with HIPPA regulations.

VII. Public Relations

The public impression of Girl Scouts is affected by the activities of everyone in the Girl Scout Movement. Keeping positive, consistent messages before the public is primarily the function of the council's Marketing/Communications Department. By coordinating communications, Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas will provide strong, consistent messages to external and internal audiences. The Marketing/Communications Department will handle all broadcast media (television and radio) and the *Dallas Morning News*, as well as collaborate with the Girl Scout Service Unit PR Specialists to promote Girl Scouts with print media within our jurisdiction.

In the case of serious accident, health emergency, or death, all volunteers and staff need to be aware of the council procedures in these situations.

Procedures

Girl Scout Service Unit Public Relations:

When a newsworthy event or happening in a Girl Scout Service Unit occurs, Girl Scout volunteers must contact their Public Relations (PR) Specialist. The PR Specialist will then draft a press release and contact the appropriate local print media, (newspapers, newsletters, etc.) in their Girl Scout Service Unit (including Neighbors sections of the *Dallas Morning News*).

Multiple Girl Scout Service Unit Public Relations:

In some cases, where several Girl Scout Service Units are in an area served by one newspaper, one of the PR Specialists will be designated to work directly with the newspaper, to ensure a steady, non-repetitive flow of information.

Council-wide Public Relations:

When a newsworthy event or happening has the potential to interest a widespread audience, Girl Scout volunteers must first contact their PR Specialist. If the PR Specialist agrees that the newsworthy event or happening has widespread appeal, they will then draft a media/press release and notify the council's Marketing/Communications Department. If the Marketing/Communications Department agrees with the PR

Specialist that the event has widespread appeal, then the Director of Marketing/Communications will contact the broadcast media (TV, radio) and/or the *Dallas Morning News*.

National Public Relations:

National media are never contacted by members of Girl Scout councils; GSUSA's PR staff handles all national media contact. If a Girl Scout volunteer feels that an event or happening has national appeal, they will follow the steps listed in the 'Council Wide Public Relations' procedure. If the council's Marketing/Communications Department agrees that the event or happening has national appeal, the Director of Marketing/Communications will then contact GSUSA's Public Relations staff.

Emergency Situations:

If an emergency situation occurs, Girl Scouts and volunteers must follow the GSNETX Emergency Procedures which include making NO statement of ANY KIND to the media. Do NOT give out any names or information. Ask the media to contact GSNETX headquarters (972-349-2400 or 1-80-442-2260).

Cookie Program Public Relations:

In order to give every Girl Scout an equal opportunity to meet and exceed their personal Cookie Program goals, **ALL** Girl Scout Cookie Program media efforts (newspaper, magazine, television, radio, billboard, etc.) are coordinated by the council's Marketing/Communications Department. A single Girl Scout Troop, Service Unit, or individual may NOT contact the media nor list their contact information in an advertisement, commercial, PSA, etc. without written approval from the GSNETX Director of Marketing/Communications. Individuals who choose to violate this policy may lose the privilege of participating in the GSNETX Cookie Program.

Flyers/Information in Mailboxes:

It is against federal law to insert flyers in mailboxes. Girl Scouts and Girl Scout volunteers may not place any matter not bearing postage into a mailbox. This includes flyers, Cookie Program information, letters, etc.

Representing Girl Scouts:

When a Girl Scout or Girl Scout volunteer is representing Girl Scouts in any way they must behave in an appropriate, mature manner that fairly represents the Girl Scout movement. If a Girl Scout and/or Girl Scout volunteer acts in violation of this procedure, they may lose their membership privileges.

VIII: Firearms

Guns and ammunition are not carried during Girl Scout activities. Legally owned and licensed firearms must be out of sight, unloaded, and under lock and key. No firearms or fireworks are allowed on council properties used for program activities. Peace officers legally required to carry weapons are the exception.

Procedures

Fireworks or explosive materials of any type are prohibited from all GSNETX activities. Any infraction will be subject to prompt review under council volunteer disciplinary guidelines. The volunteer will be removed from their responsibilities at the activity. This policy information will be included in all volunteer orientations.

IX: Technology

Safety-Wise must be consulted and guidelines followed.

Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas supports the development and use of technology and it is the council's intent to protect the safety, security and privacy of all registered members of the council.

Electronic mail (email) sent to Girl Scout volunteer lists is never to be used to send solicitations of any kind, inappropriate jokes or political information.

Procedures

The use of email is a convenient and quick method of communication between council staff and Girl Scout volunteers, girls or their parents.

Confidentiality:

Anyone using e-mail should be aware that most emails are not necessarily sent through secure channels, and should only send content which is not confidential or libelous. Persons using email should not blanket mail an email from someone else to a list or anyone else, without the permission of the person who sent the original email. Steps should be taken to properly secure and protect personal information in possession of volunteers, whether in paper or electronic form.

Conflict Resolution:

Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas encourages volunteers and staff to take positive actions to resolve conflicts quickly. We believe a personal phone call or meeting to be the most effective and positive action step. Due to potential escalation of conflicts, email exchanges to resolve issues are not recommended by council. (See Conflict Resolution Procedures for more information.)

Websites:

See "Guidelines for Girl Scout Web Sites and The Internet" in *Connections* and the GSNETX website (www.gsnetx.org).

Children's On-Line Privacy Protection Act:

Adults must be aware of the Children's On-Line Privacy Protection Act, <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/edcams/coppa/index.html>, and comply with its provisions.

X. Program

Girl Scouts is an informal-educational program designed to help girls put into practice the fundamental principles of the Girl Scout movement as set forth in the Girl Scout Promise and Law, with a particular emphasis on leadership development. It is carried out in small groups with volunteer adult leadership and provides a wide range of progressive activities developed around the interests and needs of today's girl. Programs are designed to foster courage, confidence and character, with an ultimate goal of helping girls **discover** their full potential, **connect** with others, and **take action** to improve their lives and their communities.

"Tagalongs" (brothers, sisters and friends) are not covered by GSUSA Activity Accident Insurance and should not participate in Girl Scout Troop/group activities, including council and Girl Scout Service Unit events, camping, and/or trips. Girl Scout Service Units may, at their discretion, arrange for separate program or babysitting services so that appropriate adults can participate. Non-member insurance may be purchased for all events at which non-members are present.

Safety-Wise must be consulted and guidelines followed. Activity Approval requests must be submitted and approved, when appropriate.

Procedures

Council Activity Notification:

Girl Scout Troop Leaders or other adults who work with Girl Scouts are responsible for informing the council and parents/guardians about the activities of the girls and requesting council approval and guidance for any activity that involves the following:

- Overnight activity (1-2 nights)

- Activities requiring a certified instructor (archery, horseback riding, ropes, lifeguards, etc.)
- Activity involving a subject that may be considered sensitive or controversial in nature
- Money-earning activity

Activities listed below will require additional council approval and documentation:

- Events of three (3) nights or more will also require:
 - An *Extended Trip Packet*
 - A signed contract (Site Agreement or transportation Charter* must be signed by the council Chief Program Officer.)
- High Risk Council Activity Approval required – send Activity Approval Notification form directly to council headquarters six (6) weeks before event for approval; Attn: Girl Power Committee. (See *Safety-Wise* Program Standard, Checkpoint, etc.)

When requesting council approval or guidance for a Girl Scout Troop/group activity, the Girl Scout Leader is responsible for providing complete information, including the “who, what, when, where, why, and how” of the activity.

An *Activity Approval Notification* form is available at any Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas Service Center or may be downloaded from the council website, www.gsnetx.org.

The Girl Scout Leader is expected to request approval as soon as activity plans are complete, or sooner if additional guidance is required. Except for high risk activities, approval forms must be submitted to the designated Girl Scout Service Unit Team member or council Membership staff member at least four to six (4-6) weeks prior to the activity. All certifications require documentation to be attached to the notification prior to approval.

Once approval has been given, Girl Scout Troops should retain one copy of the *Activity Approval Notification* form, one should be retained by the Girl Scout Service Unit, and one sent to council service center.

In addition, council copies of *Extended Trip Notifications* (events of 3 nights or more) should be sent directly to the Extended Trip Coordinator at council headquarters.

Non-member insurance may be purchased for all events at which non-members are present.

Extended Trip Notifications:

Once the Extended Trip Coordinator has received a signed *Extended Trip Notification*, an *Extended Trip Packet* is prepared within seven (7) days and mailed to the Girl Scout Troop Leader or Event Coordinator designated on the *Activity Approval Notification* form.

High-Risk Event Council Approval:

High-risk activities/events require council approval. These notifications must be received by the council Program Department **at least six (6) weeks** prior to the event. Notifications are presented to the Girl Power Committee for final approval; the committee meets monthly. Approval and/or requests for additional information will be handled by the council Program Department, and responses sent within seven to ten (7-10) days of the committee meeting.

Overnight Sleeping Arrangements:

Adults will sleep in a separate room, cabin, or tent in the same area or unit as the girls in their group. No adult may sleep alone in a room, or in the same bed, with a Girl Scout. In the event that a Girl Scout Troop/group is using a facility that does not lend itself to this practice, a minimum of two (2) adults per sleeping area must occur and *Safety-Wise* ratios must be maintained. Men must have separate sleeping accommodations at all times. Please note: The primary First Aider or Troop Camp Trained adult cannot be male.

Private Transportation:

Individuals operating motor vehicles transporting girls must be a registered adult, at least 18 years of age, and be properly licensed and insured for the vehicle. The number of passengers must not exceed the intended number of passengers in the vehicle. Each person must have and use their specific seatbelt. All vehicles transporting girls and/or Girl Scout equipment should be properly registered, adequately insured and operated according to state statute. A minimum of two (2) adults is recommended for each vehicle. Each vehicle shall carry passenger *Health Histories* and *Permission Slips*.

Rentals:

Only reputable vehicle rental agencies with good maintenance and service records should be used. Most rental agencies rent to the driver(s), not the Girl Scout Troop, even if the Girl Scout Troop is paying for the vehicle. The driver's insurance is the primary insurance; the rented vehicle replaces the driver's personal vehicle. Driver's should contact their own insurance agent to make sure their personal insurance covers the rental vehicle, and meets or exceeds the insurance requirements for the states or countries in which the vehicle will travel. We recommend that the driver purchase the "damage/collision waiver" insurance, which covers only the replacement value of the rented vehicle, when renting the vehicle. Drivers need to be experienced in driving the type of vehicle being rented. The use of a 15 passenger van to transport Girl Scouts is prohibited. While the lease of a 12 passenger van is NOT RECOMMENDED, if a 12 passenger van is used, the occupant load should be a maximum of nine (9) passengers, with the rear seat(s) unoccupied, AND the driver should have driver training/experience related to 12 passenger vans. If there is another mode of transportation available, it should be used instead of a 12 passenger van. Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas non-owned automobile coverage is a secondary coverage *after* the driver's personal insurance. However, to meet the council insurance requirements, the council should be notified of the vehicle rental at least one (1) week prior of the rental, either through the *Extended Trip Packet* information or the *Activity Approval Notification* form (available in *Connections* or on the council website). A copy of the rental agreement must be provided to the council Program Registrar at council headquarters. Remember to always consult *Safety-Wise* when traveling beyond your usual Girl Scout meeting place.

Site Agreement, Contracts and Charters:

All contracts, including facility contracts (schools, churches, etc.) and transportation charters, must be signed by a council Officer. Bus charters require that the bus agency have a minimum of \$5 million in insurance coverage. A copy of the insurance certificate must be provided to council headquarters. Send all contracts to the council Executive Administrative Assistant, allowing a minimum of 14 days for processing.

XI. Girl Scout Troop Size

There must be a minimum of five girls to register as a Girl Scout Troop/group. Girl Scout Troops with less than five (5) girls will be registered as individual members. Recommended Girl Scout Troop/group sizes are included in *Safety-Wise*.

Exceptions to minimum Girl Scout Troop size can be made if girls:

- are from sparsely populated rural areas where no other girls are available within a reasonable distance;
- are disabled and require much individual time and attention from Girl Scout Leaders; or
- are Girl Scouts in the 9th, 10th, 11th, or 12th grades registering with a minimum of three (3) girls.

Procedures

Registration:

Girl Scout Troops may be formed and registered at any time during the membership year. Newly formed Girl Scout Troops should register the girl members and Girl Scout Leaders with their Girl Scout Service Unit Registrar prior to their second meeting as a Girl Scout Troop. For the purposes of activities or events, registration is effective when the completed membership forms are received by an employee or at a GSNEX Service Center. Girl Scout Troops with less than five girls will be registered as individual members, who can participate in Girl Scouting through one (1) of the six (6) Girl Scout Pathways established by GSUSA.

Re-registering:

Re-registering Girl Scout Troops should register the girl members and Girl Scout Leaders with their Girl Scout Service Unit Registrar during spring registration or by October 1 of each year, or by an earlier date set by their Girl Scout Service Unit. This is necessary to ensure continued insurance coverage.

Additional Members:

Additional girls or adults may be added to a Girl Scout Troop at any time during the year.

Size:

Groups of less than five (5) girls who believe that they meet one of the minimum Girl Scout Troop size exceptions listed in the policy above should attach a written statement of why they should be registered as a Girl Scout Troop to the Girl Scout Troop *Registration* forms turned in to their Girl Scout Service Unit Registrar. This written statement is sent with the registration forms to the council Registrar. The council Registrar will work with the appropriate Membership Specialist to review the request. The Girl Scout Troop leader will only be contacted if there is an issue with the exception.

XII. Adult Development

The strength of the Girl Scout movement rests in the voluntary leadership of trained adult members. All volunteers will receive basic training for their position and will also be required to complete additional training that is designated as mandatory for the position within a specified time frame. To ensure ongoing improvement of Girl Scout programming, volunteers should continue to take advantage of adult education opportunities. These trainings will ensure that each volunteer has the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in her or his volunteer role.

Procedures

All volunteers are required to complete position appropriate training within six (6) months of appointment. For further details, see specific job descriptions. All volunteers not listed below should take *Discover Girl Scouting* online orientation and job appropriate training provided by an appropriate administrative volunteer or council liaison.

New Girl Scout Leaders/Co-Leaders/Assistant Leaders:

New Girl Scout Leaders, Co-Leaders, and Assistant Leaders are required to take *Discover Girl Scouting* online orientation, *Connect with Your Girl Scout Troop*, and *Take Action* for the appropriate grade level. New Girl Scout Leaders are recommended to complete the first two (2) courses prior to starting meetings with girls and completion of appointment process.

Returning Girl Scout Leaders/Co-Leaders/Assistant Leaders:

Returning Girl Scout Leaders, Co-Leaders, and Assistant Leaders should take the appropriate grade level *Take Action* to remain current with the grade level of the majority of their Girl Scout Troop.

Girl Scout Service Team Members:

Girl Scout Service Team Members are required to take Girl Scout Service Team Training. For Girl Scout Service Unit Team Member specific required training, please see the list of required training on the STAR section of the council website at www.gsnetx.org.

Episodic Volunteers:

Volunteers who participate in a one-time or short-term project should have appropriate on-the-job training to ensure their success and safety. If their position progresses to be a more permanent position, they should take the required training for the new position.

Council Trainers:

Council Trainers are required to complete *Train the Trainer*.

Certified Adults:

Volunteers that are meeting *Safety-Wise* requirements as a First Aider, or other certified adult, must have the appropriate current training from the certifying organization. Please note: The primary First Aider and Troop Camp Trained adult cannot be male.

Camping:

Girl Scout Troops who are camping on council or non-council sites with established sleeping and restroom facilities must be accompanied by at least one (1) adult who has had Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas *Discover Girl Scout Troop Camping* training, one First Aider as defined in *Safety-Wise*, and an appropriate number of adults.

Girl Scout Troops who are camping on council or non-council sites with only established restroom facilities must be accompanied by at least one (1) adult who has had Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas *Advanced Girl Scout Troop Camping* training, one First Aider as defined in *Safety-Wise*, and an appropriate number of adults.

XIII. Volunteer Terms

Girl Scouts is not only the premier leadership development organization for girls, it is also a vehicle through which adult volunteers are encouraged to enhance and develop their leadership skills. It is recommended that volunteers serving on Girl Scout Service Unit Teams, Council Operational Committees, and Day Camp Staff be appointed to any one position for a two-year commitment, with the option of serving three (3) consecutive terms – for a total of six (6) years. By using two-year appointments, it affords the volunteer time during the first year to learn the responsibilities of the position, and the second year to refine those skills, carry out the position responsibilities, and begin mentoring others. Rotating terms allows for mentoring and sharing of knowledge, as well as the ability to broaden knowledge and skills into new areas.

Procedure

A performance review and reappointment agreement will be conducted annually. Prior to ending a term or rotation to a new position, the volunteer and staff support member should identify a volunteer to mentor to take on the position.

XIV. Camping

Camping is an integral and fun part of the Girl Scout experience. Because the Girl Scout program has a rich history full of traditions, and because it is important to protect the safety of the girls in the program, the following policies are in place for camping:

- Every Girl Scout Troop that desires to go camping must be accompanied by at least one (1) registered Girl Scout volunteer who has had the level of camp training appropriate for the type of camping being done. Recertification must occur at least every three (3) years.
- Each Girl Scout Troop must follow the *Safety-Wise* requirements for the ratio of adults to girls, and follow all guidelines that are appropriate to the activities they are doing while camping.

- One of the volunteers camping with the Girl Scout Troop must provide proof that they are currently certified in First Aid/CPR.
- Men who camp with a Girl Scout Troop must follow all volunteer procedures. When men are part of the Girl Scout Troop leadership team, separate sleeping arrangements must be provided. No men may sleep in the same room as girls; a separate room, tent, or sleeping area must be provided. In the case of a husband and wife team, separate sleeping arrangements away from the girls and other volunteers is recommended.

Procedures

Camp Trained Adults:

A Girl Scout Troop must have at least one (1) Girl Scout Troop Camp Trained Adult and one First Aid/CPR Trained Adult – it is strongly encouraged that this not be the same individual.

Domestic Animals or Pets at Camp:

Domestic animals or pets, other than service animals, should not be brought to any Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas camps at any time. Pets belonging to on-site, permanent staff will be contained – either indoors, behind a secure fence, or on a tie-out – while campers are on property.

Men at Camp:

It is expected that men camping with Girl Scout Troops are an active part of the adult team accompanying the Girl Scout Troop/group camping. If a MALE VOLUNTEER is one of the adults camping with a Girl Scout Troop/group, these steps must be followed:

1. Indicate on the Camp Reservation Request card the number of adults that are males – limited space is available for males. Males will be placed as space allows.
2. Designated sleeping areas for registered males at camp are:
 - Camp Whispering Cedars - East end of the lodge
 - Camp Rocky Point - Tent in day use area
 - Camp Bette Perot - Cooks Cabin
 - Camp Gambill - Waterfront Cabin
 - Camp K and Whispering Oaks: Call the Camp Registrar located at GSNEX headquarters.
3. For non-council facilities, a separate sleeping area must be designated for males away from girls.
4. Registered males CANNOT be counted as *Safety-Wise* adults due to the fact they must sleep in a different area than the girls.
 - a. A male cannot serve as the primary Troop Camp Trained adult, First Aider or adult to meet girl/adult ratios
 - b. A male volunteer may supervise camping activities between the hours of 8:00 AM and 10:00 PM, during other hours he is expected to be in the designated separate sleeping area
 - c. A female Troop Camp Trained adult, First Aider and/or adult to meet girl/adult ratios must supervise camping activities involving male volunteers

Vehicles at Camp:

A maximum of one vehicle per Girl Scout Troop per unit will be allowed to park at the Girl Scout Troop campsite; this vehicle must have a council hangtag displayed from its rearview mirror (received at check-in). All other vehicles must park in designated parking areas. The Site Coordinator/Site Manager has the final decision as to the safe placement of vehicles. With the exception of loading and unloading directly related to arrival and departure of Girl Scout Troops, all vehicles must remain parked in their designated areas. If you have special needs (e.g., medical, physical, and ADA accessibility), please speak directly with the Site Coordinator / Site Manager prior to use. The posted speed limit must be followed at all times.

Personal Property:

Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas is not responsible for property damage such as theft, vandalism, acts of nature to personal vehicles and effects brought on to camp property for programs, events, training, Girl Scout Troop camp, special events, and resident camp.

Camp Sleeping Arrangements:

Cabin and tent units have a designated Girl Scout Leader's cabin/tent for adults; girls will sleep in the remaining cabins/tents in that unit. GSNETX lodges have a group sleeping area for girls and a separate Girl Scout Leader room for adults, all within the same building. No adult may sleep alone in a room, or in the same bed, with a Girl Scout. In the event that a Girl Scout Troop is using a facility that does not lend itself to this practice (another Girl Scout council facility, church camp, etc.), a minimum of two (2) adults per sleeping area must occur and *Safety-Wise* ratios must be maintained.

Adult males must sleep in a different area than the girls (see "Men at Camp" Procedure).

Camp Emergency Procedures:

Girl Scout Troops will be provided a copy of the camp emergency procedures prior to attending camp.

Reservations of GSNETX facilities:

See *Connections* or GSNETX website (www.gsnetx.org) for current guidelines.

Camping on Non-council Sites:

All sites should meet all *Safety-Wise* standards and council approval (using the *Activity Approval Request Notification* form) should be obtained.

Day Use of Council Sites:

Reservation requests may be made for picnics, hiking, outdoor skill building, nature study, etc. Girl Scout Troops/groups wishing to use council sites during the day for Girl Scout programs should follow Camp Reservation Procedures (see *Connections*).

Burn Bans:

Burn bans are occasionally implemented by the Texas Forest Service for the protection of life and property. Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas will follow their recommendations. Information will be posted online at www.gsnetx.org. The Camp Registrar or Site Manager may be contacted for updates. During burn bans, only propane, solar and indoor cooking is permitted.

Camp Closings:

In the case of pending weather conditions, emergency repairs, etc., GSNETX will make the determination by no later than noon on the date of departure whether facilities will remain open for activities. Listed Event Coordinators will be notified by phone and/or email if camp is officially closed.

XV. Environmental/Ecological Issues

Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas is concerned with the conservation of the environment. Good stewardship of the environment will be modeled by all volunteers working with girls and will be apparent in all we do.

Procedures

Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas encourages members to reduce, reuse and recycle during Girl Scout activities. Members should follow guidelines in *Safety-Wise* and *Outdoor Education in Girl Scouting* for minimal impact to the environment during all outdoor activities.

XVI. Financial Assistance

Financial assistance is to be available to girls and adults and is to be based on multiple factors, including financial need. It is the intent of Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas that financial consideration not be a barrier to participation in the Girl Scout program.

Procedures

Eligibility:

Applicants must be registered Girl Scouts and actively participate with the Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas before funds can be allocated – unless applying for membership dues. All applicants will be considered, unless an applicant has an outstanding account with the council, in which case, no financial assistance will be considered until the outstanding balance is paid. Only one experience of a type will be considered for any one girl in a year, e.g., one event, one Girl Scout Troop camp, one resident camp, or one day camp.

Types of Requests:

Financial Assistance will be considered for Girl Scout membership dues; activities; events; training; handbooks; insignia; uniforms; and resident, day and Girl Scout Troop camp. Assistance may include transportation and necessary equipment. (For information on how to apply for other types of Financial Assistance, see *Connections*)

Application Process:

Application for all Assistance must be made in writing. Each application will be evaluated on a rating system to so that the application process remains objective. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times. For Assistance given to Girl Scout Troops/groups, self-help plans should be in place to repay some, or all of the funds.

Amount of Assistance:

All applications over \$50 will be submitted to the Financial Grant Committee for review and decision. Any application under \$50 that does not fall clearly into the established parameters will also be referred to the Financial Grant Committee for review and decision. If more than \$300 in grant funds are requested, documentation of family income may be requested in addition to the application.

XVII. Financial Reimbursement for Designated Council Operational Volunteers

The concept of volunteer service, of time and talent given without remuneration, is essential to the future of the girls who want and need Girl Scouting. Within this concept, it is recognized that special situations will warrant meeting some out-of-pocket expenses of volunteers whose needed skills and services would not otherwise be available.

Officers of the council, Board Members, Certified Volunteer Trainers, and Administrative Volunteers may – from time to time – incur expenses related to carrying out their responsibilities. Volunteer expenses may be itemized as IRS expenses, or may be reimbursed all, or in part, by the council in accordance with council procedures.

Procedures

Designated Council Operational Volunteers:

Designated Council Operational Volunteers include council Task Group Volunteers and Council Trainers. Designation of volunteers at this level is defined at the time of volunteer appointment.

Reimbursable Expenses:

Expenses to be reimbursed may include, but are not limited to, the following: reimbursement for gasoline, postage, rental fees, mileage, parking fees, toll charges, airport limo, bus or taxi, long distance telephone calls, business meals, overnight lodging, airfare, meeting supplies and expenses.

Making a Request:

To request council reimbursed funds for the expenses you must:

- Obtain preapproval
- Forward a completed expense report with receipts to the Training Director or lead staff member assigned to the task group responsible for the activity.
- Allow at least three (3) weeks for processing and disbursing.

Process:

The appropriate Budget Manager reviews and approves the request and forwards a *Payment Authorization Request* to the accounting department for processing.

Sales Tax Exemption:

It is recommended that the council sales tax exemption certificate be used when purchasing eligible supplies for Girl Scout programming and events.

Remaining Funds:

Receipts and money remaining from an advancement of funds must be returned to Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas within two (2) weeks following the activity/event.

XVIII. Girl Scout Troop/Group Finances

Safety-Wise must be consulted and guidelines followed.

All volunteers who are responsible in any way for Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas or Girl Scout Troop/group finances and fund raising must be registered Girl Scouts.

All money collected, earned or deposited in the name of Girl Scouting is used to meet the purpose of Girl Scouting in Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas. Such money becomes the property of Girl Scouting and is not the property of individuals. Girl Scout Troop funds are not to be credited or given to individuals. Girl Scout Troop funds are not to be commingled with an individual's personal/business accounts.

- *Bank Accounts:* To safeguard Girl Scout Troop funds, it is recommended that a Girl Scout Troop bank account be established. It is required to open a Girl Scout Troop bank account when the Girl Scout Troop funds grow to an amount over \$100.00 unless those funds are being collected and immediately disbursed for GSUSA registration or an event.
- *Disbanded Girl Scout Troop Funds:* When all of the girls in a disbanding Girl Scout Troop are not continuing in Girl Scouting, the members of the disbanding Girl Scout Troop will decide fund placement. If some girls are continuing in another Girl Scout Troop(s), the funds will follow the girl(s) to the new Girl Scout Troop(s). All undesignated funds will be placed in the council fund for financial assistance for girls and adults.

Procedures

Bank Fees:

6/23/2009

Choosing a bank which does not charge monthly service charges or charges only minimal fees on Girl Scout Troop bank accounts is recommended.

Account Name:

"GIRL SCOUTS OF NORTHEAST TEXAS" must be included in the name of bank accounts, e.g., Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas Troop 0000.

Signatures:

Two (2) authorized signatures are required for each Girl Scout Troop bank account; only one (1) signature is required on each check. Appropriate signatures are Girl Scout volunteers registered with the Girl Scout Troop. None of the persons authorized to access the account may be adults who are related to each other or reside in the same household.

Letter of Authorization:

A *Letter of Authorization* to open a bank account from the council should be obtained before opening any bank account, whether or not the bank requires a letter of authorization. To obtain a *Letter of Authorization* from the council, mail or fax (972-349-2498) the *Opening a Girl Scout Bank Account* form to the council Information & Referral Manager.

When contacting the council, have the following information:

- Name and branch address of the bank where account is to be opened;
- Name of Bank Officer who should receive the *Letter of Authorization*
- Bank's fax number (if needing authorization that day);
- Girl Scout Troop number;
- And names of at least (2) two volunteers from the Girl Scout Troop who will be authorized to sign checks from the account and who will be accountable for the funds.

Please note that the *Letter of Authorization* will also add a council Officer to the account as an authorized signer on the account, so the council can review bank account statements or close the account if questions about the usage of these funds arise. This is simply a check and balance measure to help safeguard Girl Scout funds.

Reporting:

At least three (3) times during the year, the girls in the Girl Scout Troop/group and their parents/guardians should be informed about the current status of the Girl Scout Troop income and expenses. Parents/guardians of the girls in the Girl Scout Troop/group always have the right to review the income and expenses of the Girl Scout Troop; providing the girls and their parents with a copy of the *Annual Girl Scout Troop Financial Report* is recommended. Keeping Girl Scout Troop income and expense records up-to-date will reduce misunderstandings with girls and their parents/guardians about the use of Girl Scout Troop funds. Be sure to obtain receipts for all Girl Scout Troop expenses and deposits and attach them to the Girl Scout Troop copy of the required *Annual Girl Scout Troop Financial Report*.

Disbanding Girl Scout Troops:

Dividing Funds:

Remaining Girl Scout Troop funds shall be equally divided by the number of girls continuing in the Girl Scout program and shall be transferred to the continuing Girl Scout Troop/group(s) funds.

If a large Girl Scout Troop divides into two (2) or more Girl Scout Troops, funds will be divided on a per girl basis based on those girls continuing in Girl Scouts.

If none of the girls in a disbanding Girl Scout Troop are continuing as a Girl Scout in another Girl Scout Troop/group, all remaining funds at the time that the disbanding Girl Scout Troop stops meeting must be sent to the council so they can be used to support Girl Scouts in our council. The girls may choose a council program area (Destinations grants, Girl Scout Gold Award Scholarships, etc.) that they wish their remaining funds to support.

Annual Girl Scout Troop Financial Report:

The Girl Scout Troop Leader must complete a final *Annual Girl Scout Troop Financial Report* (indicating that the Girl Scout Troop is disbanding and that the bank account has been closed) with a check payable to the Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas for the remaining Girl Scout Troop funds amount, and send the council copy of the report with the check to the council Information & Referral Manager at headquarters (JoAnn Fogg Service Center).

The Girl Scout Service Unit copy of the final *Annual Girl Scout Troop Financial Report* should be given to the Girl Scout Service Unit Manager or other designated team member.

A final *Annual Girl Scout Troop Financial Report* may be filed at any time during the year.

XIX. Girl Scout Troop Money-Earning Activities

Girl Scout Troop money-earning activities are valuable program activities and should be suitable to the age and ability of the girls. These Girl Scout Troop money-earning activities are consistent with the goals and principles of the Girl Scout program. For more specific direction, see “Money-Earning Activities” in *Safety-Wise*.

The council product programs are approved money-earning activities. Additional money-earning projects must be approved in writing by designated Girl Scout Service Unit Team members of the council before the money-earning project is undertaken. In most cases, the council money-earning activities should be sufficient to support the Girl Scout Troop activities unless the Girl Scout Troop is planning a trip or event that will take more than one (1) year to plan. Participation in the most recent council money-earning project (or commitment to participate) is required for approval of additional money-earning projects.

Permission must be obtained in writing from a girl’s parent/guardian before she may participate in Girl Scout Troop money-earning projects or council-sponsored product programs.

Money-earning projects will not take place during the order-taking and delivery periods of the GSNEX Cookie Program. Girl Scout Troops must also follow their local United Way guidelines in scheduling dates for money-earning projects.

Cash donations may be accepted by Girl Scout Troops/groups but must **not** be solicited.

Procedures

Cookie Program:

The primary money-earning activity for Girl Scout Troops is the GSNEX Cookie Program. Participation in the GSNEX Cookie Program will be reviewed when approval is requested for an additional Girl Scout Troop/group money-earning project.

Approval Process:

- For any non-council money earning activity, the Girl Scout Troop/Group Leader must complete the *Activity Approval Notification Form* and submit it to the Girl Scout Service Unit designee before finalizing money-earning plans.
- If approved, the Girl Scout Troop may proceed with the approved project.
- If not approved, the Girl Scout Troop Leader may correct the issue that caused the project to not be approved and then resubmit the revised *Activity Approval Notification Form* to the Girl Scout Service Unit designee.
- When approved, the original form will remain with Girl Scout Service Unit, the yellow copy must be sent to a GSNEX service center, and the pink copy should be retained by the Girl Scout Leader.

XX. Individually-Registered Girl Money Raising

Money earned by individually-registered girls (non-Girl Scout Troop members) participating in council-sponsored product programs will be retained by the council to provide program activities and supplies for the individual girls. The monies will be held in a special account and girls who are individually-registered may apply for assistance from the fund for their Girl Scout activities. As noted in *Safety-Wise*, "the income from product sales does not become the property of individual girl members."

Procedures

Eligibility:

Individually-registered girls may only participate in a council-sponsored product program under the supervision of a Girl Scout Service Unit Product Program Coordinator or a Girl Scout Troop Product Program Manager.

All individually-registered girls are eligible to receive Girl Incentive items.

If an individually-registered girl participates as a Girl Scout Troop member for the purposes of the council-sponsored product program under the supervision of a Girl Scout Troop Product Program Manager:

- The individually-registered girl will participate in the program in the same manner as the other members of the Girl Scout Troop.
- Proceeds generated will be retained by the Girl Scout Troop and will become the property of that Girl Scout Troop's treasury.
- The individually-registered girl will not be eligible to apply for money from the Individually-Registered Girl Account.

Individually-Registered Girl Account:

To be eligible to apply for money held in the Individually-Registered Girl Account, individually-registered girls must have participated in the current year product program.

Applications for assistance from the Individually-Registered Girl Account will be considered for membership dues, activities, events, training, handbooks, insignia, uniforms, and resident, day and troop camp. Assistance may include transportation and necessary equipment.

- Application must be made in writing
- All eligible applicants will be considered, unless an applicant has an outstanding account with the council, in which case, no assistance will be considered until the outstanding balance is paid.
- Applications will be accepted until that year's funds are depleted.

XXI: Girl Scout Service Unit Funding:

The Family Partnership Campaign is an adult-generated fund raising campaign which enables families of Girl Scouts to tangibly express their belief in the value of Girl Scouting through their financial support of their local Girl Scout Council. Funds from the Family Partnership Campaign are a key component of the operational budget, helping the council to achieve our mission of building girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place.

The Board of Directors determines annually the rebate to Girl Scout Service Units derived from each Girl Scout Service Unit's participation in the Family Partnership Campaign and Cookie Program.

These funds are to be used for operations of the Girl Scout Service Unit and their guidelines are to be followed. Since these funds are available through the efforts of girls and Girl Scout Troops, every effort should be made to use the funds in the same year in which they are collected.

All volunteers who are responsible in any way for Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas or Girl Scout Service Unit finances and fund raising must be registered Girl Scouts.

Girl Scout Service Units do not engage in any other fundraising activities.

The fiscal year of a Girl Scout Service Unit is July 1 – June 30. Girl Scout Service Units are required to provide semi-annual financial statements to the council office due January 31st (documenting transactions made July 1 – December 31) and July 31st, recapping the entire fiscal year. Girl Scout Service Unit accounts may be audited by the council Business Manager or designee at any time.

Girl Scout Service Unit bank accounts should be reconciled monthly and must maintain a positive balance at all times.

Procedures

Source of Funds:

The Girl Scout Service Unit will receive funds from the Cookie Program (per box amount approved by Board of Directors annually), the Family Partnership Campaign (rebates based on amount of funds raised by Girl Scout Troops/groups in Girl Scout Service unit versus goals; percentage approved by Board of Directors annually), and Girl Scout Service Unit events. Money collected for Girl Scout Service Unit girl events should balance out with expenditures. If there is a small amount of money left over, it should be used for the next girl event.

Receiving Funds:

Girl Scout Service Units may receive funds directly only if previously required *Girl Scout Service Unit Financial Report* is on file with the council. Funds for Girl Scout Service Units that have not filed a *Girl Scout Service Unit Financial Report*, or that have a staff member serving as Girl Scout Service Unit Manager, are held in a custodial account. Written requests to release or use custodial funds must be approved in advance by council.

Corporations:

Girl Scout Service Units may request prizes of small value (\$35 or less) from businesses within their local geographies. Corporations and foundations are **not** to be solicited by Girl Scout Service Units or individuals.

Managing Girl Scout Service Unit Funds:

The Girl Scout Service Unit Manager is accountable for the management of Girl Scout Service Unit funds, even if another volunteer is appointed to help manage the Girl Scout Service Unit funds. The Girl Scout Service Unit Manager may appoint another volunteer to be responsible for managing the Girl Scout Service Unit bank account. The volunteer must be a registered member of GSUSA, complete the Criminal Background Check process, and support the principles of Girl Scouting and the goals and objectives of Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas and GSUSA.

Bank Fees:

Choosing a bank which does not charge monthly service charges or charges only minimal fees on Girl Scout Service Unit bank accounts is recommended.

Account Name:

“GIRL SCOUTS OF NORTHEAST TEXAS” must be included in the name of bank accounts, e.g., Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas Service Unit 000.

Signatures:

Two authorized signatures are required for each bank account; only one signature is required on each check. Appropriate Signatures are Girl Scout volunteers active and registered in the Girl Scout Service Unit – usually the Girl Scout Service Unit Manager and from one (1) to three (3) Girl Scout volunteers. None of the persons

authorized to access the account may be volunteers who are related to each other or reside in the same household.

Letter of Authorization:

A *Letter of Authorization* to open a bank account from the council should be obtained before opening any bank account, whether or not the bank requires a *Letter of Authorization*. To obtain a *Letter of Authorization* from the council, mail or fax (972-349-2498) the *Opening a Girl Scout Bank Account* form to the council Information & Referral Manager.

When contacting the council, have the following information:

- Name and branch address of the bank where account is to be opened;
- Name of Bank Officer who should receive the *Letter of Authorization*;
- Bank's fax number if needing authorization that day);
- Girl Scout Service Unit number;
- And names of at least two (2) persons from the Girl Scout Service Unit who will be authorized to sign checks from the account and who will be accountable for the funds.

Please note that the *Letter of Authorization* will also add a council Officer to the account as an authorized signer on the account, so the council can review bank account statements or close the account if questions about the usage of these funds arise. This is simply a check and balance measure to help safeguard Girl Scout funds.

Budgeting:

It is recommended that Girl Scout Service Unit Teams develop a budget which includes projected sources of funds and anticipated expenses for major events in the upcoming year as they complete their *Girl Scout Service Unit Action Plan*.

Spending Funds:

Always keep in mind that Girl Scouting is a girl organization and all funds spent should benefit the girls. As a guideline, it is recommended that Girl Scout Service Unit funds should be spent as follows:

- 75% Directly Benefit for Girls
- 15% Operational Expenses
- 10% Adult Recognition

Girl Scout Service Unit funds may be used toward the purchase of the following:

- Postage/Postcards
- Office Supplies (paper, copies, checks, etc.)
- Girl Scout Leader Appreciation Gifts/Events
- Offset some Girl Scout Service Unit Event Costs
- Girl Scout Service Unit Equipment
- Resource Materials (Handbooks, Songbooks, etc.)
- Annual Meeting/Recognition/Luncheon Meals for Delegates
- Girl Scout Troop/group Start-up Money
- Membership Recruitment Events

Reporting:

At least three (3) times during the year, the girls in the Girl Scout Troop/group Leaders and Team members in the Girl Scout Service Unit should be informed about the current status of the Girl Scout Service Unit income and expenses. Members of the Girl Scout Service Unit always have the right to review the income and expenses of the Girl Scout Service Unit. Keeping Girl Scout Service Unit income and expense records up-to-date will reduce misunderstandings about the use of Girl Scout Service Unit funds. Accounting of Girl Scout Service Unit operational funds and individual event funds are maintained separately, then combined for reporting on the *Annual Girl Scout Service Unit Financial Report*.

Girl Scout Service Unit Semi-Annual and Annual Financial Reports are prepared and submitted to the council. Be sure to obtain bills and receipts for all Girl Scout Service Unit expenses and deposits and attach them to the Girl

Scout Service Unit copy of the required *Semi-annual Girl Scout Service Unit* and *Annual Financial Reports*. A copy of the report must be shared with the Girl Scout Service Unit members.

XXII. Annual Program/Financial Reports

- Annual program/financial reports must be submitted by each Girl Scout Troop/group and Service Unit by July 15th. The annual program/financial year is defined as July 1st through June 30th.
- Regular reporting of Girl Scout Troop finances is essential. Every Girl Scout Troop should report at least three (3) times per year to the families of Girl Scout Troop members the financial status of the Girl Scout Troop and how its funds are being earned and spent.

Procedures

The Program report is currently being revised to reflect the Girl Scout Leadership Experience Outcomes. Each Girl Scout Troop's report will reflect a minimum of two (2) outcomes per Leadership Development key (Discover, Connect and Take Action).

XXIII. Other Financial Situations

- Adult members in a Girl Scout capacity may not solicit financial contributions for purposes other than Girl Scouting. Adults may engage in combined fundraising efforts authorized by the Girl Scout Council and in which the council is the beneficiary (such as United Way). Girls may not engage in any direct solicitation for money.
- Any permission for endorsements, individual testimonials or authorization of books, play, promotion pictures, radio and TV programs about Girl Scouting shall be first referred to the CEO of the council for further action in keeping with the policies of GSUSA.
- Sales on the internet, EBay, or the Girl Scout council/service unit/troop/individual website of any products sold in council-sponsored product sales, such as Girl Scout Cookies, candy, nuts, calendars, magazine subscriptions, or of any other product, item or service, **MAY NOT BE CONDUCTED BY ANYONE AT ANY TIME.** (*The Blue Book of Basic Documents, 2006 – "Internet Sales"*).
- Sales on the internet of Girl Scout merchandise such as uniforms, insignia, publications, and equipment, may only be conducted by duly authorized and licensed Girl Scout councils, council shops, retail agencies and/or GSUSA licensed vendors. Permission to sell on the internet must be obtained from GSUSA. (*The Blue Book of Basic Documents, 2006 – "Internet Sales"*)
- For safety and security reasons, sales on the internet in any way whatsoever for any Girl Scout Troop/group money-earning activities **MAY NOT BE CONDUCTED BY INDIVIDUAL GIRLS, PARENTS OR OTHER ADULTS.** (*The Blue Book of Basic Documents, 2006 – "Internet Sales"*)
- Day camps will follow similar procedures to Girl Scout Troops and Service Units for the management of day camp monies. Day camp training materials will address specifics for this situation.

Procedures

Consult the noted sections of *The Blue Book of Basic Documents*. Individual violations will be reviewed and discussed with the party involved as they arise based on the circumstances of the situation.

XXIV: Volunteer Hour Matching Gifts and Other Tax Deductible Gifts:

All voluntary contributions intended to benefit Girl Scout program in the Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas jurisdiction, regardless of value, form or designated use, shall be made only to the council and must follow current IRS guidelines. Incorporated as a public charity and designated as a 501(c)(3) organization, the council is the only entity to which tax-deductible contributions may be made. The Federal Internal Revenue Code determines any tax deduction available to a donor.

Because Volunteer Hour Matching Gifts are adult-generated funds and not generated by the girls as money-earning program activities, they must be considered separately. Once Volunteer Hour Matching Gift funds are received at the council headquarters, 25% will be returned to the Girl Scout Troop or Service Unit. They will then have the opportunity, if so desired, to designate which council fund they would like the remaining 75% to go.

In cases where a company will match volunteer hours with a donation to an organization recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, council will verify hours as requested, and all contributions must be received by Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas. Individual Girl Scout Troops are not recognized as 501(c)(3) charitable organizations and therefore may not deposit these gifts.

Donations received as matching grants for volunteer service may be considered as a Family Partnership Campaign donation.

Procedures

If a volunteer's company offers a program for volunteer hour matching gifts, the volunteer should obtain the paperwork from the company and notify the council of any assistance needed. Once a request for Volunteer Hour Matching Grant is received by the council, the council will verify that the volunteer is registered and the volunteer hours (as needed). When checks are presented either to the council or to the volunteer, they will be receipted by the council, and thank you letters from the council to the company and volunteer will be generated. The gift will be recorded in the council's data base. The volunteer / Girl Scout Troop will receive a thank you note describing how the funds were used. Volunteer Matching Gift checks should not be deposited in Girl Scout Troop funds. Should a payment for volunteer hours not be delivered to the council, the volunteer's hours will no longer be verified.

XXV. Collection of Outstanding Funds

To protect the integrity of council-approved Girl Scout Troop money-earning activities, all efforts will be made to ensure that the outstanding balances are paid.

The Girl Scout Troop will not assume debt responsibility for any individual.

Persons with an outstanding amount due to Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas beyond 60 days will not be allowed to serve in any volunteer capacity for the council until the account is paid in full.

Girls who have delinquent Cookie Program accounts may not participate in subsequent council-sponsored money-earning activities until the account is paid in full.

Procedures

Program Participation:

Girls may continue to participate in Girl Scout Troop and Service Unit activities if their parents/guardians have delinquent or outstanding balances with the council. Girls with parents/guardians having delinquent or outstanding funds may not participate in council-sponsored money-earning activities until the debt is cleared.

Girl Scout Troops:

Girl Scout Troop outstanding funds will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine if the debt should be assigned to an individual or volunteer. Girl Scout Troop eligibility to participate in future money-earning activities will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Course of Action:

All avenues available to the council, including use of collection agencies and legal action, will be pursued regarding outstanding debt or delinquencies.

Resigned or Terminated Volunteers:

If a volunteer resigns their position or is terminated, any balances owed the council are still considered outstanding until paid in full.