



**Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana**  
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## Girl Scout Service Projects Mini-Training

Service has always been an important part of Girl Scouting. Service means doing something helpful for others without expecting or asking for money or any other reward. Look around your community to determine where there are needs. Your Girl Scout troop may choose to participate in a large-scale service project with other Girl Scout troops, or do your own project.

Service to others:

- Is giving of ourselves
- Helps shape a better community, nation, and world
- Is the lifelong responsibility of every citizen
- Is part of the Girl Scout Mission – *Girl Scouts builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place*



Service projects should:

- Stretch each girls' understanding beyond family and troop into the wider world
- Teach the joy of giving one's time and energy instead of giving things
- Help Girl Scouts understand the feelings and needs of others
- Encourage a growing willingness to help others
- Fill a need and be of value to the receiver
- Hold a promise of fun and adventure
- Help reinforce the Girl Scout Promise and Law in the minds of the Girl Scouts

Criteria for a meaningful service project:

- Service should demonstrate initiative by meeting a need.
- Girl Scouts should be involved in planning the service project.
- Girl Scouts should feel a sense of accomplishment when the project is complete.

Steps in planning your service project:

- Present the philosophy of giving service to the girls in the Girl Scout troop. Discuss the meaning and purpose of "service."
- Brainstorm ideas for service projects.
- Develop the girls' best ideas to determine if they are do-able.
  - Is the project appropriate for the girls' age level?
  - Does it require skills above their capabilities?
  - If so, can they learn the needed skills?
  - Will it be a rewarding and memorable experience for the girls? Will they be able to see the results of their efforts and be proud of the results?

- Investigate how these service suggestions could be accomplished, how long it will take, and the cost involved. Be sure the Girl Scouts are included in the research.
- Decide as a group which service project to pursue.
- Obtain any permission(s) necessary to carry out the project.
- Set up a plan to finance the project, if needed. Take into consideration the availability of your Girl Scout Cookie® profits.
- Recruit others who may be needed to assist with the project.
- If the service project will be visible community-wide, contact the VISTA Public Relations Ambassador for assistance in obtaining media coverage.

Ask these questions to determine you have a good service project:

- Is it safe?
- Does it help others or the environment?
- Does it accomplish what is needed?
- Does it involve the recipients as partners in the service?
- Is it something that can be sustained by the community or those organized to do service?
- Does it follow the guidelines in GSUSA's *Safety-Wise*?



Some options are limited by Girl Scouts of the USA policies:

1. A Girl Scout troop cannot raise funds for another organization. However, girls may choose to contribute a portion of their Girl Scout troop treasury to organizations or projects they consider worthwhile.
2. A Girl Scout troop cannot endorse commercial products or services unless it receives permission from Girl Scouts of the USA and is in keeping with Girl Scouts' principles and activities.
3. A Girl Scout troop cannot work on or support a political campaign.
4. For more information, check *Safety-Wise* and *The Blue Book of Basic Documents*.

### **Hints for Organizing a Service Project**

- Make some decisions:
  - What kind of information is needed?
  - How much will it cost?
  - Where will the money come from?
  - Are materials and support available from the community?
  - What kind of special permission is needed?
  - Has Girl Scouts of the USA's *Safety-Wise* been reviewed?
  - Does the recipient organization have guidelines or perimeters that need to be considered?
- Plan your calendar:
  - Is there a set date for the activity?
  - Who needs to be contacted and when?
  - If setting dates, who should be consulted?
  - What kind of planning and preparation time is needed?

- Develop detailed plans:
  - Are committees needed to work on various details and assignments?
  - Are special tools or materials needed?
  - Is transportation needed?
  - Are parents going to help?
  - What about food for the girls and workers?
  - What about first aid?
  - Are signs, fliers, or posters needed?
  - Will uniforms or something to identify everyone as Girl Scouts be necessary?
  - What will a bad weather plan look like?
  
- Just do it!
  - Recruit enough adult volunteers to assist, in case some emergency arises.
  - Keep a record of those who help.
  - Have fun!
  
- Evaluate the service project with the Girl Scouts:
  - What did they like about the project?
  - What could have been done differently?
  - Were goals accomplished?
  - Should the project be repeated?
  - Is it a project that will sustain itself?
  
- Share your successes:
  - Thank those who helped.
  - Celebrate the Girl Scout troop's success.
  - Inform the council about the project.



## Great Ideas for Service Projects

### Making Things:

- Make decorations for a party at a nursing home.
- Assemble care packages for victims of a disaster.
- Make posters for a special event, like *Earth Day* or *Fire Prevention Week*.
- Make a toy box for a hospital waiting room.
- Make personal care kits (soap, tooth brush, toothpaste, shampoo, and more) for homeless shelters.
- Make fun kits (crayons, coloring books, stickers, Play Doh, and more) for children in a hospital or shelter. (Be sure to inquire about recommendations first.)

### Helping the Earth:

- Plant trees in your neighborhood for Arbor Day, April 25, 2008.
- Collect seeds for a seed bank.
- Educate others about different ways to conserve water and energy.
- Stencil stream protections symbols on street drains.
- Help at an environmental fair for the Girl Scout troop's community.
- Make bird houses or bat houses for a camp or park.
- Recycle newspapers or donate them to an animal shelter.

