



Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana

Vernon Hills Regional Service Center

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Girl Scout Traditions Mini-Training

In the 95 years since Girl Scouting first began, many traditions have been established and Girl Scouts have developed what, to newcomers, must seem to be a language of their own. The list below will help clarify the mysteries of Girl Scout speak and explain why Girl Scouting is so special to so many.

BADGES: Earned recognitions for Junior Girl Scouts.

BRIDGING: The process of moving from one age level of Girl Scouting to another.

BROWNIE RING: Form of government commonly used in a Girl Scout Brownie Troop.

BUDDY SYSTEM: A safety system where two girls stay together and watch out for each other.

CEREMONIES: Girl Scout ceremonies are used to mark special occasions, transitions for a troop, and to celebrate special days.

CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE: Proof of liability insurance. Often required of businesses where girls go for activities, such as riding stables.

COLLABORATIONS: Partnership with other youth serving agencies to serve girls.

CONTEMPORARY AWARENESS: Staff-led Girl Scout experiences during the school day, focused on a topic-specific curriculum.

COURT OF AWARDS: A ceremony to present earned recognition at any level.

Juliette Low once said while presenting awards, "Every badge you earn is tied up to your motto, 'Be Prepared.' Badges are not awards for something you have done once or for an examination you have passed. They are not medals to wear on your uniform just to show what a smart girl you are. A badge is a symbol that you have done the thing it stands for often enough, thoroughly enough, and well enough to be prepared to give service in it. You wear the badge to let people know that you have earned it, can show someone else how to do it, and are proud of your accomplishment."



COURT OF HONOR: Part of the patrol system of government where patrol officers come together to make decisions regarding the troop and activities.

DAISY: The nickname of Juliette Gordon Low, currently the name of the youngest Girl Scouts.

DAISY CIRCLE: Form of government commonly used by a Girl Scout Daisy Troop.

destinations: Opportunities for girls to participate in activities across the United States and around the world. Information can be found at www.studio2b.org.

DUNK BAG: A mesh bag into which a Girl Scout puts her washed mess kit at camp. She then dunks it into sterilizing water and hangs it on a line to dry.

FIRST-AIDER: An adult who has taken approved first-aid/CPR training.

FLAG CEREMONY: Any ceremony including or honoring the American flag.

FLY-UP: The ceremony in which a Girl Scout Brownie becomes a Girl Scout Junior.

FOUNDER'S DAY: October 31, the birthday of Juliette Low.

FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE: The friendship circle is often formed at the end of meetings or campfires as a closing ceremony. Everyone gathers in a circle where they cross their right arm over their left in front of them and hold hands with those on either side.



FRIENDSHIP SQUEEZE: When everyone is quiet in the friendship circle, a designated person starts the friendship squeeze by gently squeezing the hand of the person on their right. The squeeze is passed from hand to hand around the circle until it returns to the originator. Often girls will make a wish after their hand has been squeezed and before they pass the squeeze along. Also, in some groups girls put their right foot out into the circle when they have received the friendship squeeze and passed it on, so that everyone can see it travel along the circle.

GIRL GUIDES: The original name for Girl Scouts, still used in many countries.

GIRL SCOUT BIRTHDAY: March 12th, the date of the first Girl Scout meeting in the United States in 1912.

GIRL SCOUT BRONZE AWARD: The highest award a Girl Scout Junior may earn by completing specific requirements, including planning and executing a community service project.

GIRL SCOUT GOLD AWARD: The highest award a teen Girl Scout may earn by completing specific requirements, including planning and executing a service project to address a community need. The project must take at least 65 hours to complete.

GIRL SCOUT HANDSHAKE: This is the way many Girl Scouts and Girl Guides greet each other. They shake their left hands while making the Girl Scout sign with their right hand. The left handed handshake represents friendship because the left hand is closer to the heart.



GIRL SCOUT MISSION: Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

GIRL SCOUT MOTTO: Be Prepared.

GIRL SCOUT SIGN: Three middle fingers of right hand raised shoulder high with thumb over little finger, given when saying the Girl Scout Promise or when doing a Girl Scout Handshake. The three fingers represent the three parts of the Girl Scout Promise.

GIRL SCOUT SILVER AWARD: The highest award a Girl Scout Cadette may earn by completing specific requirements, including planning and executing a service project to address a community need. The project must take at least 40 hours to complete

GIRL SCOUT SLOGAN: Do a good turn daily.

GIRL SCOUTS' OWN CEREMONY: An inspirational ceremony with a theme that girls plan and implement themselves.

GIRL SCOUT WEEK: The week containing Girl Scout Birthday.

GORP: "Good old raisins and peanuts," a trail mix snack.

GRADE LEVEL: There are 6 grade levels in Girl Scouting; Daisy, Brownie, Junior, Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador.

GSUSA: Girl Scouts of the United States of America.

HUB: Former name for the Vernon Hills Regional Service Center. This building contains the Girl Scout shop, Mission Explore lab, meeting rooms, program activity rooms, and offices.

INVESTITURE: A special ceremony to welcome a Girl Scout where she receives her pin and officially makes the Girl Scout Promise for the first time. Traditionally a girl's pin is placed upside down until she does her first good deed, when she can turn it around.

IT AND OTHER BAGS: All the girls names are placed in a bag labeled IT. When someone is needed to be a helper or chosen for any other reason, a name is pulled out of the IT bag. When that girl has had her turn, her name is placed in a bag labeled OTHER. When everyone has had a turn, the IT bag will be empty and the OTHER bag full. Then all the names are returned to the IT bag and the process begins again.

JULIETTE GORDON LOW: The founder of Girl Scouting in the USA was born in Savannah, Georgia, on October 31, 1860.

JULIETTE LOW WORLD FRIENDSHIP FUND: A voluntary fund that benefits Girl Scouting and Girl Guiding throughout the world.

JULIETTES: Individual Girl Scouts who are not members of a troop. Juliettes may participate in council, VISTA, or troop events.

KAPER CHART: A chart showing all jobs available and who is responsible for each job generally on a rotating basis.

LEADER APPRECIATION DAY: April 22, a special day to honor Girl Scout leaders.

LEARNING TOGETHER MODULES: Self-guided training for leaders and girls on specific topics, available on the Vernon Hills Regional Service Center's VISTA websites under Leader Resources.

MEMBERSHIP SPECIALIST: Council staff member who provides support and works in partnership with the VISTA to successfully recruit girls and adults into Girl Scouting.

MESS KIT: Individual set consisting of a non-breakable plate, cup, bowl, and eating utensils (knife, fork and spoon). Used with a dunk bag when camping.

MISSION EXPLORE LAB: A computer lab at the Vernon Hills Regional Service Center equipped with laptop computers with headsets, an LCD projector and screen, a scanner and printer, topic-focused software, and Internet access.

NOSEBAG LUNCH: A lunch that does not need cooking, carried in a paper bag or bandanna.

NEW VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION: The first training for new Girl Scout volunteers available online.

ONLINE TRAINING: Self-study leader training available on the council website.

OUTCOMES: A change in behavior, knowledge, or perception that can be attributed to experiences.

PATROL SYSTEM: A form of troop government used in Girl Scout Junior, Cadette, or Senior troops.

PATCHES: Symbols of participation in various Girl Scout activities that are worn on the back of the sash and vest.

PROGRAM BOXES: Self-contained activities to be used by troops, available from each VISTA.

QUIET SIGN: In order to maintain order at lively Girl Scout functions, the leader raises her right hand for silence. The girls follow in the motion; as their hands go up, the conversation stops until everyone has their hand up and the room is silent.

REDEDICATION: A ceremony when Girl Scouts reaffirm their belief in the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

SAFETY-WISE: A GSUSA publication detailing safety practices that should be followed.

SEALED ORDERS: A set of directions or instructions given in a sealed envelope.

SIT-UPON: A cushion made by Girl Scouts to use when the ground is damp or to keep ones clothes clean.

SLOGAN: “Do a good turn daily.”

STEM: Learning experiences for girls in science, technology, engineering, and math.

SWAPS: “Small Whatchamacallits Affectionately Pinned Somewhere” - small, handmade items that are traded with other Girl Scouts as a souvenir from a large event.



THINKING DAY: February 22; the birthday of Lord and Lady Baden-Powell, designed as a day to think about Girl Scouts and Girl Guides worldwide.

TREFOIL: The international symbol of Girl Scouting. Girl Scout pins are in the shape of a trefoil.

TRIPPERS: Vernon Hills Regional Service Center's recruitment and service delivery option that provides as many as six field trip excursions during the year. This “trips only” stand alone group is organized by VISTAs and council staff to attract new members and provide short-term, episodic volunteer opportunities.

TROOP COMMITTEE: Adults who assist the troop in some way, either at the meetings or by taking on specific jobs.

TRY-ITS: Earned recognition for Girl Scout Brownies.

VISTA CABINET: A team of volunteers who provide direct service to troops within a VISTA.

VISTA: Volunteer, Information, Support, Training, Area, a geographic subdivision of the Vernon Hills Regional Service Center's jurisdiction.

WAGGGS: World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, the worldwide organization to which Girl Scouts belong.

WALKING SALAD: Often a hollow apple stuffed with peanut butter and raisins. It is something to carry with you and eat while doing other things.

WIDE GAME: A large event where groups of girls move through a series of stations (either manned or unmanned) and complete the activity at each one.

WORLD CENTERS: Four program activity centers owned by WAGGGS. They are located in Mexico, England, Switzerland, and India.



Meet Our Founder, Juliette Gordon Low

From www.gogirlsonly.org

My Life

I was born in Savannah, Georgia, on October 31, 1860. I am the second of six children in my family - I have three sisters and two brothers.

When I was young, I went to a boarding school in Virginia. When I got older, I went to a French School in New York City. I loved the arts - I designed my own clothes, painted china, and performed skits with my friends.

But I was also a tomboy - roughhousing with my brothers, getting my hair braided with taffy, even cementing my fingers to a soap dish!

I always loved animals - I was always coming home with a stray cat or dog. Well, to be honest, they weren't always strays - some belonged to people, but I felt that they were being neglected, so I took them home. Momma always made me take them back.

A Turkey Tale

When I was a girl, cooking was very different from what it is like now. If you wanted a turkey dinner, you'd have to go outside and get a live turkey - then cut its head off, pluck off the feathers, and cook it. That was the only way to get fresh meat! We only had cold storage, but no real refrigerator or freezer. When our ice melted, food went bad.

One year for Thanksgiving, we raised a turkey and we all became very fond of him - even called him "old Tom." When the day came for Tom to become Thanksgiving dinner, I begged my papa for the turkey's life, and, if not, then at least for anesthesia.

So we got some chloroform, put poor Tom to sleep, plucked him, and put him in the cold storage. We did not, however, cut off his head. So the next morning when we went to get him for cooking, he was very much alive and very, very mad. He chased Mama and the cook round and round, until finally he was caught, and had to lose his head. It really was a Thanksgiving to remember!



Daisy Gordon at age 9.



The Gordon children circa 1876.
Juliette is at top left.

How Girl Scouts Began

An Important Friendship

I married William Low when I was 26 years old. He was an Englishman, so we lived in Great Britain during most of our years of marriage. While I was in Scotland in 1911, I met two very important people - Sir Robert Baden-Powell and his sister Agnes. We became very close and remained friends for the next 16 years. Sir Robert started the Boy Scouts in England and it seemed like such a purposeful activity that girls would be interested in it too. And so they started the Girl Guides. I ran my own Girl Guide troop that year.

My Own Girl Guide Troop in Scotland

My original idea was that girls could learn the same things boys were learning - knot tying, signaling, first aid, etc. But while people saw such military skills as being beneficial to boys, they viewed them as frivolous for girls.

The area where I lived was very poor, and many girls had to leave their homes and go into the cities for work in order to help their families make a living. City factories were very filthy and unsafe back then. I thought that there ought to be some way the girls could help their families earn money without having to leave home. I thought that they might raise poultry to feed the rich people who stayed at the nearby hunting lodges. This was very successful. We branched out and learned how to spin wool which the girls went on to sell.

How I Started Girl Scouting in the U.S.

When I came back to America, I called my cousin and told her that I had "...something for the girls of Savannah, and all America, and all the world..." and that we had to get started on it right away. And we did!



Juliette Gordon Low with some of the nation's first Girl Scouts.

It wasn't easy - people seemed convinced that this would be one more thing I'd start and then lose interest. And money was always a concern. At one point I even sold my pearls to finance the organization.

But I never had any doubts that it would be successful. After all, I knew that girls could do anything they set their minds to. What started out as a group of girls meeting to study nature or learn to play basketball in my backyard grew quickly.

When America entered into World War I, I wrote to President Wilson and offered him the Girl Scouts' services. Girls went to help out the Red Cross, planted victory gardens, and helped to sell millions of war bonds.

Watching the Seed Grow

I had 15 years to watch my program grow. In January 1927, I lost my battle to cancer. I had been fighting it for the last few years, and had kept it a secret from all but my closest friends. I found that I had to spend less and less time actually running the Girl Scouts, and more time creating an organizational structure that would ensure that the Movement didn't die with me. I guess I succeeded. In 1927 there were 167,925 Girl Scouts and now there are over 3.7 million girls and adults!



The Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace in Savannah, Georgia.

If you want to learn more, come visit the house I grew up in! It's called the Birthplace. It's a national center in Savannah, Georgia. When Girl Scouts visit the Birthplace they can try things I did when I was their age.

Source: <http://www.gogirlsonly.org/spotlight/juliette/default.asp>

Juliette Gordon Low's Chicago Connection

From "Daisy's Chicago Heritage" by Gert Schriener and Peggy Rogers

One of the founders of the city of Chicago was Juliette Low's great-grandfather, John Kinzie. Arriving in 1804, he purchased the original home built by Jean Baptiste Point Du Sable on the north bank of the Chicago River. Kinzie, his wife Eleanor, and their children survived the massacre of Fort Dearborn in 1812. Their oldest son, John Harris Kinzie and his wife Juliette Magill, were prominent citizens of the growing new city and their only daughter was Juliette Gordon Low's mother, Nellie. The Kinzies are buried in Graceland Cemetery in Chicago.