

VISTA 8 Evanston Troop Activities

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Troop Experiences

Girl Scout Brownie Troop 1555

Our troop recently spent a night at Happy Hollow Program Center, for our third annual mother/daughter overnight. Some highlights include snow painting snowmen in a large field, baking chocolate chip cookies, learning how to tie new knots, an impromptu talent show, and a flashlight hike under a nearly full moon!

Girl Scout Brownie Troop 1605

Our girls are 2nd graders. In October 2008, we played soccer with the Northwestern University women's soccer team. We also visited Wagner Farm and learned about caring for horses. In February 2009, we delivered 5 hand-made baby blankets to The Cradle in Evanston. During the donation delivery, we met the staff, took a tour, and saw a few of the babies that were going to benefit from our donation.

Girl Scout Junior Troop 49

In the summer of 2008, our girls and their families organized and sent numerous boxes of goodies, books, magazines, and games to an Army Battalion in Baghdad. In appreciation for our delivery from an Iraq Battalion, we received an American flag which had actually been flown over the U.S. International Headquarters in Baghdad.

Girl Scout Junior Troop 3486

Our girls served senior citizens at the Levy Center's Holiday Breakfast. We also went to the Adahi Program Center for a day trip and were surprised by its new wooden benches around the fire pit. The girls read cards with the ABC's of Girl Scouting as part of our opening ceremony. The girls worked on their *Outdoor Creativity* badge by painting watercolor scenes on the new bench tables. The girls tie-dyed T-shirts and pillow cases for the *Making Hobbies* badge.

Girl Scout Cadette Troop 20

Our troop is made up of seven 7th grade girls. We started the year by helping plan *Cadette Game Night* at the Adahi Program Center. Everyone in attendance enjoyed the games, charades, campfire, and meeting other Girl Scout Cadettes. We also attended the Joffrey Ballet together. We even ventured to the Chaos Glass-Blowing studio in the fall where the girls made their very own paperweights. Some of our Girl Scouts participated in the VISTA skiing trip to Geneva while a few girls attended a self-defense workshop with another Cadette troop.

Our service projects this year included making 300 Spritz sugar cookies for a local soup kitchen and presenting a Variety Show for a local retirement home.

This spring we participated in Earth Hour and the "Save-Our-Energy" Contest as part of our *Eco-Action* badge work. On a field trip to the Wilmette Historical Museum, one of our moms gave a presentation on costumes from the 1920's. We plan to end the year by camping in the Happy Hollow Program Center platform tents units!

Girl Scout Cadette Troop 35

Our girls participated in the VISTA Grand Geneva ski trip. We also enjoyed making a difference while assisting in the distribution of donated foods at the Greater Chicago Food Depository.

Girl Scout Cadette Troop 189

Our girls went to White Pines Ranch for the second time this past fall. They loved it just as much this time as they did the first time. Our girls were in 4th and 5th grades for our first trip there. This time around they were in 6th and 7th grades. White Pines staff members do an excellent job working with the girls, no matter what their age.

We also had an Iron Chef cooking competition at the Adahi Program Center. The girls were split into two teams. Each team had to cook a healthy vegetarian menu of soup, a main course, and a dessert. Parent chaperones served as the judges. The girls cooked from scratch and did a great job!

The 7th graders in our troop had a retreat at a hotel where they mixed badge work and Silver Award planning with a swim in the pool. We did a combined overnight with 5th grade Girl Scout Troop 55 where our girls led them through badge work. The girls also worked with 1st grade Girl Scout Troop 2463 in making flower pens for a local nursing home. It was great to watch girls of different ages work together!

In a lavish ceremony for several hundred Girl Scouts and leaders, Bishop Francis Kane presented the award honoring Mary, the First Disciple, to four members of Girl Scout Troop 189 on March 22nd. This special religious award is earned by Catholic Girl Scouts in grades 7-9. The young ladies worked on requirements that included music, dance, art, and discussion for four months outside their regular meeting times.

Girl Scout Cadette Troop 522

Our troop is made up of seven girls in grades 5-7. Each girl leads a badge activity during our meetings. Giving each girl this leadership opportunity gives our meetings quite the variety of sometimes activities from six different badges. For the Career Exploration portion of the *Creative Cooking* badge, we arranged a tour with the manager and baker of Tag's Bakery. One girl was so excited during the outing that she was invited to become an apprentice there when she's older. To earn the Cadette Leadership Award, the girls have written a script for a play and will be performing it at various retirement homes.

During the holidays, we sorted food and clothes at a homeless shelter called Hilda's Place. We also baked blueberry muffins for their New Year's Day breakfast. We participated in the VISTA Grand Geneva ski trip for the first time this year and discovered some girls who have natural skiing abilities. Our future plans for the summer include going to Wolf Park and a county fair.

Girl Scout Senior Troop 2467

Our troop consists of nine 9th graders from different high schools. Some of the girls have been in this troop since elementary school where they started as Girl Scout Brownies in 2000. Some girls joined the troop during middle school when troops disbanded. We're pretty busy with school and other activities so we don't have meetings on a regular basis anymore, but we usually end up getting together once or twice a month for a meeting or an activity. Sometimes the girls hang out at the leader's house to watch movies or play Wii.

This year we have been working on the requirements for the Gold Leadership Award and the Career Exploration Award. These need to be earned prior to beginning their Girl Scout Gold Award projects. This year the girls have earned the *From Stress to Success* badge and the *uniquely ME! Inside and Out* STUDIO 2B charm. The girls are planning to work on the *Car Sense* badge over the summer since some of them will soon be taking Driver's Ed. In the fall we are going to see the musical *Hairspray* at the Marriott Lincolnshire Theatre and began discussions about planning a train trip somewhere on Amtrak, but the girls are not sure yet where they want to go.

Activity Details

Chain O'Lakes State Park Canoeing

Girl Scout Troop 76: 8th grade Girl Scout Cadettes

We canoed during the first weekend in October at Chain O'Lakes State Park (75 minutes from Evanston) and had a marvelous experience. The staff was very accommodating. They even delivered our cars to the ending point for us. We paired this event with an overnight stay at Morrison Program Center which is 20 minutes down the road, but it could just as easily have been a day trip. We would recommend this for Girl Scouts in 6th grade or higher who have had at least one canoe/boating experience.

Details:

Canoe Float Trip - 4-5 miles on the Fox River, about 1½ hours from start to finish. Arrive at the State Park boat concession area to caravan up to Oak Point launch. (Only pit toilets are available at the launch area so remind girls to go at concession stand beforehand) Scenery includes friendly fishermen; marshy areas; wildlife including fish, great white egrets, blue heron, turtles, and more. Easy paddle, gentle river current in the fall but it is advised to check river conditions before scheduling in the spring. Ends back at the concession stands where staff are waiting to help girls out of the boats at the dock. One nice perk is the park attendants offer to bring back cars for us.

Cost: \$30 per canoe with 2 girls per canoe. Includes PFDs. Be sure to include a tip for the wonderful park people.

Amenities:

Wonderful, inexpensive concession stand offering ice cream, hot pretzels, hot dogs, slurpees, and other snack varieties after the trip.

Other activities: Great scenic hiking trails. We took a 1 hour hike after the boat ride. Picnic tables for lunch.

Hayrides and horseback riding also available in the park. We used the stables on a previous trip but I'm hesitant to recommend them.

Camping: Available in the park. The group camping area is really inexpensive but it was occupied during our weekend so we opted for the platform tents at the Morrison Program Center.

Contact:

Jim or Jay, 847-587-7165 to make reservations.

Chain O'Lakes State Park Camping/Horse Riding/Rowboats

Girl Scout Troop 522: 5th and 6th grade Girl Scout Juniors and Cadettes

We went tent camping at the Youth Group Camp area of Chain O'Lakes State Park during the last weekend of October 2007. This was the last weekend of the year for camping at this site, but we had plenty of company with Boy Scouts. The Boy Scouts came in caravans and were singing their songs. We tried singing our songs very loud to make sure they heard. It dipped below freezing at night and all the girls can tell you about the very warm and clean bathroom the park provided. Camping fee: \$20.

The park has a stable that offers trail riding. Everyone enjoyed the trail ride. Unfortunately the horses were yelled at by their keeper. With the Girl Scout discount they provide, the cost was \$18.90 per person. Our most experienced horse lover in the troop gave a lesson beforehand and the guide gave everyone instructions as well.

On the last day of the season, we were able to try the rowboats set up with four people per boat, circling around in the lake. One boat of girls pretended they were going on an expedition in Australia.

Cost: \$16 per boat for 4 hours.

Chaos Glass Studio – Making Paperweights

Girl Scout Troop 20: 7th grade Girl Scout Cadettes

We attended this workshop as part of our *The Visual Arts* badge on a Saturday afternoon in November. This activity is great for team-building and great for fall and winter when it is cold outside. We heard that during warmer weather or when younger girls get bored, the owner brings out her dog to keep the girls entertained while waiting their turn.

Location:

Chaos Glass Studio, 1601 Payne, Unit B (west of Green Bay Road on the corner of Ashland and Payne)

Details:

Availability includes after school, weekends, days, and during the summer.

Cost: \$20 per Girl Scout Brownie age level or older with tax ID.

Contact:

Kelly McGown (a former Girl Scout) at Kelly@chaosglasstudio.com or www.chaosglasstudio.com.

Heinz Orchard Apple Picking / Richardson Farms Corn Maze

Girl Scout Troop 522: 6th and 7th grade Girl Scout Cadettes

We went apple picking at Heinz Orchard in Green Oaks (35 minutes from Evanston) during the first weekend of October. It had 3 varieties of apples. Girls used a pole to get the apples from the trees. Cost: \$7 per half peck of apples. No minimum. No parking fee.

Afterwards, we went to the corn maze at Richardson Farms (45 minutes from Heinz Orchard). The farm offers an 11-acre corn maze, a 50' tower overlooking the maze, pedal tractor, and a lot of campfires set up in a wooded area where groups can have a private campfire. One acre of the large corn maze is a quiz maze where quizzes steer the way. We brought flashlights to do the maze in the dark. Richardson Farm is open until 2:00 a.m. on Saturdays.

Cost: \$7 for kids 12 and under and \$9.50 for adults.

The next morning at Morrison Program Center (22 minutes from Richardson Farms), we peeled and cut a peck of apples and made apple pie, apple sauce, and apple cider. We also had a longest apple peel contest. We used a blender for the applesauce and the blender with a cheesecloth for squeezing out the cider. Very yummy and fun!