

S'MORE NEWS

for leaders like you

New Leader Newsletter, an introduction to Girl Scouts

How it all started...

On March 12, 1912, Juliette Gordon Low spoke to a small group of 18 girls in Savannah, GA and said... "I've got something for the girls of Savannah and all America and all the world and we're going to start it tonight!" That small gathering has grown into a global movement of over 2.6 million girls and adults who share adventures, offer a helping hand, work together, create lifelong friendships, and have a desire to do great things to make the world a better place.

Girl Scouts is the premier leadership program for girls and we are so glad that you have become a part of this wonderful organization. As a new leader, you are probably thinking "what do I do now?" Here are a few helpful hints from some experienced leaders.

Meet the Families - The girls' families are going to be your team for the troop, they make the magic happen. Just like you, the parents have expectations and resources to share with the troop. Schedule a family meeting where you can find out if the parents have a special skill that would be valuable to share. It's much easier to get parents to volunteer the first time if they know what they're volunteering to do, and if they (and their daughters) have fun, they'll be back for more.

Be Careful Not to Compare - Girl Scouts is not a competition and each troop (and leader) has great moments and epic fails. Nobody is perfect, so embrace your imperfections, learn from mistakes, and keep moving forward (just as you will tell the girls to do).

Involve the Girls - Our organization is girl-led because when girls are given the opportunity to lead, amazing things happen. So get the girls involved in the planning from the beginning, and as they grow older and more capable, keep handing over more and more of the troop planning, finances, and organization to them! You'll be surprised what they can accomplish when given opportunities by a leader who believes in them.

Use Your Resources - We don't expect you to know everything right away. We have resources to help you learn what you need, program events that are available for troop activities, and area event opportunities that your troop can attend. Attending your local leader meetings is also a great place to learn from other volunteers and their experiences. If you don't know when these meetings are, ask your community engagement manager at your regional office.

Have Fun! - Remember that Girl Scouts should be fun for both the girls and the volunteers. While we are always advocates for having “fun with purpose” and building “leadership,” it’s okay to plan activities that are just fun. Chances are whatever game, badge, or activity the girls take part in they’re going to come out of it with their relationships strengthened and their confidence in themselves boosted.

Be Prepared!

Have you signed up for your New Leader Workshop Yet? We have a lot of great trainings in the [Fall Program and Training Guide](#) available to help you have a successful troop. There are also [age level online trainings](#) to watch at your leisure and on the Girl Scout website. For a complete listing of all the trainings and program activities check out the events section of our website. Here you can search by [calendar](#), or by [program level and area](#).

Member Community

The Member Community is where you can make rosters of your troop, share when and where your troop meetings are, and document the number of girls that you are willing to have in your troop. Both the Member Community and the Volunteer Toolkit can be found on the Girl Scout website at www.girlscoutsindiana.org. Look in the MYGS tab in the right corner of the home page to find your troop’s information. You will be sent an email from your community engagement manager to help you get your password set up. Here are some helpful and quick tutorials to help you out.

[How to log in to the Membership Community](#)

[How to add a girl to my troop](#)

Volunteer Toolkit

The Volunteer Toolkit is a valuable tool to help you plan troop meetings, keep track of attendance, badges earned and communicate with the families of your troop. Checkout the tab called “Explore” that allows you to see all the badges available in your age level. Once you are logged in to Volunteer Toolkit, find this tab and see what wonderful opportunities await your troop.

Here is the [Volunteer Toolkit Overview](#) that will help you understand how to get the most out of this site.

Monthly Challenges

- 1.) Contact your community engagement manager and find out when your monthly leader meeting take place.
- 2.) Attend the next leader meeting and learn about events that are in your area. These meetings will also have valuable activities that you can use with your troop.
- 3.) Do you have questions? At some point we all do! Girl Scouts of Central Indiana has a help desk where you can direct your questions. You can contact the help desk at helpdesk@girlscoutsindiana.org or call 317.924.6800 Monday - Friday, 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m.