

**Parent Handbook**

**Troop #000**

**Service Unit #000**

Troop Leadership

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Welcome to Troop 50000!

Welcome to Troop 50074! Thank you for registering your daughter in Girl Scouts and giving her the opportunity to develop to her fullest potential in an all-girl setting. Parental support and participation is crucial in to the successful completion of this Girl Scout year.

**Juliette Gordon Low**

Throughout the year we will be talking about Juliette Gordon Low, the founder of Girl Scouts. Feel free to check out books from the library or research online so you and your girl get better acquainted with the person who started it all. One of the favorite overnight trip for most troops is to visit her birthplace, Savannah Georgia.

**Girl Scout Promise and Law**

All of our activities will in some way involve the Girl Scout Promise and Law. They are the ethical foundations of our organization. If your girl does not know them, please help her learn them. Remember, both are said using the Girl Scout Sign.



Girl Scout Sign

**Girl Scout Mission & Leadership Experience**

The Girl Scout Mission is a simple and powerful one: Building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

The heart of Girl Scouting falls under three main leadership principles.

* ***Girl led --*** Girls play an active part in determining the what, when, where, how and why of their activities. At the Daisy levels the girls will be presented with several options and they can make choices. With each year they grow and their ability to handle more responsibility will increase.
* ***Learning by doing --*** Rather than listening to someone tell them what to do or how to do it, girls get in there and do it themselves. They explore their own questions, gain new skills, share ideas and take time to reflect.
* ***Cooperative Learning --*** Girls will work toward shared goals in an atmosphere of respect and collaboration.

**Girl Scout Grade Levels**

The Girl Scout age levels are defined by grades. It is important to know your Girl Scout’s grade level so that you can be directed to the appropriate materials and uniforms.

Daisy Girl Scouts - Kindergarten and 1st grade

Brownie Girl Scouts - Grades 2-3

Junior Girl Scouts - Grades 4-5

Cadette - Grades 6-8

Senior - Grades 9-10

Ambassador - Grades 11-12

**Girl Scout Uniform and Awards**

**What is required?**

* Sash or vest
* White top
* Troop numerals (5000)
* Council ID
* American flag patch
* Brown insignia tab
* Girls Guide to Girl Scouting (Brownies)
* Tote bag (If you purchase the uniform kit through GS store you get a free bag☺)

**Where to purchase your gear**

* Greene Wood: 3155 71 st. Street. Naperville, IL 60540 Phone: 630-544-5901
* Joliet: 1551 Spencer Rd, Joliet, IL 60433, phone: 518-723-3449
* Uniforms are also available online at [www.girlscoutsgcnwi.org/shop](http://www.girlscoutsgcnwi.org/shop)

During the year girls will earn various badges, patches and awards and will be displayed on their uniform vest/sash. Most of these will be given to the girls as they earn them but some awards may not be given until the end of the year at our ceremony/party.

***Girl Scout Badges***

Badges and pins are earned awards. They are officially approved by Girl Scouts USA. To earn a badge girls must follow/complete the required steps that are outlined for each badge (Brownies typically have 4-5 steps). Badges are centered on a certain skill. All approved badges and pins will be displayed on the front of the uniform vest/sash.

* In the event that you miss an opportunity to earn a badge or award, you can reference our troop website under the Daisy or Brownie tab.

***Girl Scout Patches***

Patches are also called “fun patches” and are received by participating in an event or activity. They are not official and are not approved by the Girl Scout USA powers that be. Any business can create and issue their own fun patch and the girls display these on the back of their uniform vest/sash. Fun patches are issued for all of the fun stuff that girls do together as a troop or girls who attend a council sponsored event themselves.

If your daughter chooses to complete a badge outside of our meetings and events, let the troop leader know so she can sign off on the badge. Any badges earned outside of our meetings and events must be paid for by the parent/guardian. If your Girl Scout participates in any kind of community service outside of the troop please let the troop leader know – there may just be a badge for that!

**Girl Scout Registration/Membership**

***Girl Membership***

Whether your daughter is returning or new to Girl Scouts, she will have a wonderful time in our troop, and we're looking forward to another great year with all of our girls! Registration is $25 per child per year and is required in order to participate in any Girl Scout meeting, event or fundraising. Financial assistance is available.

***Adult Membership***

Never been a Girl Scout? It’s not too late. Adults 18 years of age or older can join Girl Scouts to help out in their own daughter’s troop, serve as a mentor or even speak at a Girl Scout event. Membership is truly what you make of it! Pitch in your expertise or build a skill you’ve always wanted to develop. The cost is $25 per adult.

*\*Please note: Any council events that we attend will require all participants to be registered Girl Scouts – this includes adults. Last year we went to two council sponsored events. If you choose not to be a registered adult Girl Scout, you will not be able to chaperone or attend these events.*

***Adult Background Check***

Parents, guardians and girls trust that Girl Scouts is a safe place for them, and we do not take that trust lightly. We are committed to maintaining policies and procedures that create a safe environment for girls to discover, connect and take action. Criminal background checks are one of the strategies used to ensure that girls are safe with us.

Our policy is to conduct criminal background checks on all new volunteers, and to repeat them on all volunteers every two years. Volunteers include troop leaders, co-leaders and yes, even parents/guardians. If you will be attending any meetings, driving any Girl Scout (other than your own) to/from meetings or events, chaperoning our field trips or assisting us with booth sales in the community, you must complete a criminal background check. This can be done online or on paper and is confidential and free of charge to you by Girl Scouts.

**Paperwork**

Ready to join? Parents/guardians must complete the following forms:

* Girl Membership Form (Annual fee is $25) ONLINE
* Adult Membership Form (Annual fee is $25) ONLINE
  + Leaders, committee members, volunteers required
* Health History Form
  + This form should be updated every year and is always with the troop leader and/or chaperones on field trips
* Money Earning Activity Permission Form
  + We need your permission for your Girl Scout to participate in our fundraisers. If a permission slip is not signed she cannot earn awards and cannot sell products.

**Meetings & Communication**

***Communication***

Please pay close attention to our website Link as it will always have the most up-to-date information about meetings and events. We have also created a private Facebook group that will post the dates of meetings and events. The Facebook is also a place to share pictures and videos of the troop. Most information will be communicated via email. Last minute (less than 24 hour notice) requests will be sent out via text. The additional communication tools are optional and can be used for your convenience.

* **Troop website:Link**
* **Email**
* **Facebook private group (link)**
* **Mobile (Band app Link )**

***Meeting Attendance***

Our troop meetings for each level meet twice per month and one additional troop meeting with all of the girls (3 meetings in total). In addition to the regular meetings, we like to incorporate field trips and events for extra fun! You will have a minimum of a 2 week notice but typically it’s at least a month in advance. Girls are encouraged to wear their uniform to every **meeting and event** (unless instructed otherwise). Meetings are for registered Girl Scouts only. **Please make sure your girl is registered before the first meeting.**

**Daisies (2 / month): Thursdays 6 - 7:30 PM**

**Brownies (2 / month): Sundays 6 - 8 PM**

**Troop (all 1 / month): Sunday or Thursdays 6 – 7:30 PM**

So that the girls can better focus on activities and leaders running the meeting can better direct the girls, we'd like to ask that parents drop off their girls and return for pick-up. Parents are welcome to wait in the hallway for the meetings held at the school. If you would like to be a part of the experience please don’t hesitate to volunteer as a co-leader.

The meetings will start promptly at 6:00 PM. If there is an issue with your schedule that requires you to be a couple minutes late please let me know. If there is something you would like to speak with us about please save it for after the meeting.

**Events**

All field trips and events require a signup sheet and permission slip to ensure we have an accurate headcount and enough drivers. This will be in the form of a google doc located on our troop website. If there is a registration deadline it will be posted on that individual event. Please make sure to sign up **by the registration deadline**. Girls who do not meet the registration deadline are at risk of not attending the event.

**Fundraisers and Finance**

Girl Scouts has two major fundraisers each year to help finance trips, community service and special events:

***Fall Product Sale***

Every year, registered Girl Scouts take orders from friends and family for delicious nuts and candies and magazine subscriptions as part of the Fall Product Sale. This sale starts on October 1st and will wrap up on October 22nd. The prizes are fantastic for the kids and the troop keeps a minimum of 15% of all sales. This year we are not pushing the fall product sale, however, I do ask that you attempt the online sales. Materials will be provided to you at the parent meeting.

***Cookie Program***

For many people, Girl Scout cookies are an iconic product with a sentimental value that transcends many other food products. It reminds them of the days when they were Girl Scouts and when their sisters or daughters participated in the program. Girl Scouts of the USA sells more than 200 million boxes each year. Cookies go on sale January 1 to the end of March. Our troop earns approximately $0.90 per box sold. Last year the girls did an amazing job and were able to finance many exciting activities!

***Troop Dues***

Our troop does collect troop dues from members. This is in addition to the Girl Scout membership registration fee. This year we will be collecting a troop dues of $35. Due to the success of our previous cookie fundraising, returning girl scouts will not require troop dues.

The troop dues will be collected at the beginning of the year and covers the cost of awards, badges, rental fee, program supplies, crafts or snacks. We rely heavily on fundraisers and money donations so that we can keep the troop dues to a minimum and eliminate as much out of pocket cost to parents.

**Expectations**

Your troop leaders have volunteered their time to provide fun and educational learning experiences for all of the girls. We ask that parents and/or guardians review the following expectations with their girl to ensure that everyone understands their responsibilities to the Troop and to their fellow Scouts.

Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be honest and fair,

Friendly and helpful,

Considerate and caring,

Courageous and strong, and

Responsible for what I say and do, and to

Respect myself and others,

Respect authority,

Use resources wisely,

Make the world a better place, and

Be a sister to every Girl Scout.

**Girls:**

Girl Scouts will…

* Wear uniform to events/activities
* Register annually ($25 per year)
* Learn and follow the Girl Scout Promise
* Learn and demonstrate the behaviors

and attitudes that reflect the Girl Scout

Law

Parents:

As a parent of a Girl Scout…

* I have a genuine concern and interest in my daughter’s participation and knowing that parents have the biggest influence on my Girl Scout.
* I will reflect on the Girl Scout Promise and law in order to be a positive role model.
* I recognize that Troop leaders are volunteers and I will support those who are working with my child, in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable Girl Scout experience for all.
* I will communicate concerns through proper channels, not in the presence of the girls, and should I have a complaint or problem, I will share a suggested solution.
* I will uphold the Girl Scout Promise and Law by demonstrating positive support and encouragement to my daughter and her troop members.
* I will demand a Girl Scout environment for my child that is free from drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and I will refrain from their use at all Girl Scout led events.
* I will place the emotional well-being of my child ahead of my own personal aspirations in order to allow my daughter to be successful as a Girl Scout.
* I will support the Girl Scout efforts to provide an environment of acceptance for all girls and their families by asking my child to treat others with respect regardless of race, color, creed, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, marital status, socio-economic statues, national origin or any other protected status.
* I will volunteer according to my time and talents as approved by Leadership. These roles may be anything from leading a meeting, supplying snack, or driving on a field trip. I understand that in order to do some of these things I will need to be a registered Girl Scout.
* I will read through all forms given to me. Sign those needing a signature and return them promptly.
* I will attend required Parent Meetings, for planning and product sales and other opportunities.

**Volunteers are the Lifeblood of Girl Scouting**

Our volunteers make a difference... in the lives of girls, in the success of families and in the growth of communities. The strength of Girl Scouting rests on the shoulders of adult volunteers who are committed to helping all girls develop into strong, confident, capable women.

Girl Scouts is a team effort among leaders, girls and parents. There are many ways you can help your Girl Scout’s troop throughout the year . . . just be on the lookout! Some examples include help lead troop activities, provide transportation, make phone calls … there is always something that can be done.