

Getting Started for the New Troop Leader

A quick-reference guide for the new troop leader.



11-2017

girl scouts 
of northern indiana
michiana

Service Center Locations

Girl Scouts of Northern Indiana-Michiana Headquarters
Fort Wayne Leadership and Learning Center
10008 Dupont Circle Drive E
Fort Wayne, IN 46825

Michiana Service Center
Walk-in service only.. Please use Fort Wayne address for mail
1218 E University Dr.
Granger, IN 46530

Girl Scout Shops are located at the Leadership and Learning Center
and the Michiana Service Center.

Contact us:

Have a question? Call the Answer Center:

1-800-283-4812, ext. 2 or 0

Fax: 1-855-422-0084

Email forms/documents to: frontdesk@gsnim.org

Camp Properties

Camp Agnes S. McMillen
17107 Griffin Road
Huntertown, IN 46748

Camp Soni Springs
7459 Martin Road
Three Oaks, MI 49128

Camp Ella J Logan
203 EMS D14
Syracuse, IN 46567

Camp Wildwood at the Dunbar
Gathering Center
303 Clay Street
Logansport, IN 46947

Please see our website for more details.
<http://www.girlscoutsnorthernindiana-michiana.org>

New Leader Troop Start-Up Guide

We're excited you've decided to become a Girl Scout Troop Leader!

This New Leader Troop Start-Up Guide is intended to help you get started with your new Girl Scout troop! Below you'll find a basic checklist that walks you through how to start your Girl Scout troop. Consider these pages your quick reference guide for the first steps of starting a troop. All forms and documents referred to in this guide can be found by going to the forms section, GSNI-M Forms/Documents, of the GSNI-M website. Type the name of the resource you are looking for into the search bar and it will come up. Please contact the Answer Center if you need help.

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

Steps for Getting Started



Connect with your troop support specialist! Every troop leader has a troop support specialist assigned to them. Shortly after you become a member and your background check is approved, your troop support specialist will call and e-mail you to help you begin your Girl Scout Journey!

Reminder: All volunteers, troop leaders and troop helpers must be approved as volunteers (they must successfully complete a volunteer application and criminal background check) and complete recommended training. All troops must have a minimum of two approved, unrelated adults.

Start your learning path*



Trainings recommended to complete within 3 months of appointment:

- Girl Scouting 101 - online* _____ Date
- PB & J - group* _____ Date
- Letting Girls Lead - group* _____ Date
- Troop Finance Basics - group or online home study* _____ Date
- Working with Daisies/Brownies/Juniors or Cadettes/Seniors/Ambassadors - online home study* _____ Date
- First Aid/CPR - needed for certain at-risk activities. See Volunteer Essentials and Safety Activity Checkpoints.* _____ Date
- Trip Planning Basics - online --before your first outing or overnight* _____ Date
- Outdoor Basics - group, required before your first camping or fire building experience* _____ Date

*For even more online course options and information, visit the council website under the [Volunteer Tab](#) or register for group trainings by visiting Online Activity Registration. The majority of trainings are **free** and give you a lot of information to help you be successful as a leader. Many trainings are on-demand video tutorials or home studies and can be taken at your leisure.

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Get to know your resources

- Girl Scouts of Northern Indiana-Michiana website: www.gsnim.org
- GSNI-M Answer Center – Call 800-283-4812, ext. 0 or 2 during regular business hours to speak to a real person to find answers to your questions.
- Volunteer Toolkit – online planning tool for your troop - can be found on www.gsnim.org under the MY GS tab
- Volunteer Essentials* forms and *Volunteer Policies*--Detailed volunteer manual and operating procedures--Can be found by searching on www.gsnim.org under the Forms/Documents tab
- Safety Activity Checkpoints* –Safety requirements/guidelines by activity-- Can be found by searching on www.gsnim.org under the Forms/Documents tab
- Program Guide & Camp Brochures - Can be found on our website
- Journey books and *The Girl's Guides to Girl Scouting* – Purchase from the Girl Scout shop
- Resource Center - Program resource materials located at both of our service centers
- Girl Scout Shop - Located at the Leadership and Learning Center and the Michiana Service Center, and online at <http://girlscoutsnorthernindiana-michiana.org/content/scoutfitters> (gs shop tab)
- Girl Scouts USA website: www.girlscouts.org

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Connect with your co-leader

Every troop must have at least two un-related adults (one of whom must be female) as a part of their leadership team. If you don't know your co-leader, this is the time to connect and start making plans!

- Co-Leader's Name: _____
- Phone: _____
- Email: _____

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Decide on a troop meeting place and time

- My Troop number is: _____
- Meeting place: _____
- Date(s): _____
- Time: _____

Schedule your troop meetings for when you are available. As much as possible, you should take into account family needs, scheduled events, religious holidays and of course, availability of your meeting place. Troops meet at many locations, including **schools, churches and local community centers**. It is not recommended that Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors meet in private homes. See *Volunteer Essentials* for guidelines. If requested by the meeting place, a copy of the Certificate of Liability Insurance can be obtained by completing the Certificate of Insurance Request Form. If you are unsure how to find a meeting place, ask your Troop Support Specialist.



Hold your parent/guardian meeting

- Meeting place _____
- Date _____
- Time _____

The parent/guardian meeting should be held at least two weeks prior to your first Girl Scout meeting. For more information and ideas on what to cover in your parent meeting and how to engage parental support, refer to **SECTION ONE** in this booklet. Each Journey *How To Guide* also has tips for Parent Meetings and involving parents. Also check out Building Family Support under Volunteer tab, then Volunteer Learning. Most importantly, **GET THE PARENTS INVOLVED** from the start! Set the expectation that parents are an important part of the Girl Scout experience.



Meet with your troop and get everyone registered!

See **SECTION TWO** of this booklet for troop management information including the Volunteer Toolkit. Also included are tips for getting started and some examples of forms you might find useful:

- Girl's Record - to keep track of each girl's registration, activities, badges, etc.
- Troop Attendance Record
- Summary Record of Completed Recognitions



Girl Scout Program

The National Program Portfolio has two main parts – the National Leadership Journeys and *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*. Complemented by the Girl Scout Product Sales Program, and Girl Scout awards, the National Program Portfolio is designed to help girls develop as leaders and build confidence by learning new skills. It also ensures that Girl Scouts at every level are sharing a powerful, national experience - girls together changing the world! Please see **SECTION THREE** for details and Girl Scout Program resources.



Financing the troop

All Girl Scout troops must have a bank account. For steps on how to set one up, please refer to **SECTION FOUR** in this booklet. Included are some helpful hints for planning the troop budget, organizing troop finances, and completing the *Group Financial Record* that is shared with the troop monthly and submitted to the Council annually.



Getting organized

Check out **SECTION FIVE** for tips on getting organized!

Gaining Parent/Guardian Support



The initial parent/guardian meeting is **critical** to you as a troop leader. Parents/guardians can provide much-needed time, experience and talent to a Girl Scout troop; however, you need to ask for it from the beginning.

A parent/guardian meeting provides an opportunity to:

- Inform parents/guardians about the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and its benefit to girls.
- Ask for parent/guardian support, assistance at troop meetings and expectations of girls and leaders.
- Direct parents online to complete the Girl Scout membership registration process for their daughter and themselves and pay the \$35 girl and the \$25 adult Girl Scouts of the USA membership dues, if they haven't already.
- Have parents/guardians complete the Girl Health History Form and other appropriate forms.



Planning the Parent/Guardian Meeting:

You are encouraged to ask an experienced Girl Scout volunteer or Troop Support Specialist for guidance about the parent meeting.

- Set the time and date and secure a location for the meeting. Limit your meeting time to 1 hour or less.
- Invite all parents/guardians to attend. Choose a convenient time to ensure attendance.
- Organize appropriate Girl Scout materials for parents/guardians packets:
 - Paper registration forms, if needed, and receipt book
 - Online mobile devices (mobile phones, tablets, computers) for registering member on the spot.
 - Have copies of Girl Health History Form (required for all girls), Girl Scout Product Program Permission Form (required for all girls participating in a Product Program) and Ways Adults Can Help for parents to complete at the meeting. These forms are available on our website and can be printed off.
 - Troop phone/email list if you have the information in advance.
 - Troop meeting schedule with your contact information (if these are already set).
 - Supplies for a girl activity
- Finalize the meeting agenda.

Benefits of Parent/Guardian Involvement:

There are many benefits when parents are involved with Girl Scouting. Consider the following:

- Parent/guardians know their children better than anyone else. They can provide insight and will be helpful when it comes to planning and problem solving.
- Involving parents/guardians can help keep girls interested in the troop and troop activities.
- Parents/guardians can ease the workload. Be sure to ask each parent/guardian to be involved. One of the top reasons why people do not volunteer is because no one asked them. Ask them to be involved.
- Parents/guardians benefit from their involvement - they become closer to their daughter, they develop an extended social network, and they can actively contribute to the community.
- Check out the resource "Building Family Support" on gsnim.org.



Sample Agenda for Girl Scout Parent/Guardian Meeting

Be sure you are organized and prepared for this meeting. It is recommended to have additional adult support to take the girls aside and do a fun activity while you speak to the adults. Supplies you will want to have on hand include: a mobile phone, tablet or computer and/or paper registration forms for registering girls and adults, your contact information and meeting dates and location, phone and email list of potential members, copies of the Girl and Adult Health History forms, Product Sales Permission Form 2018, Donation and Pledge Form, Ways Adults Can Help form and a receipt book for any money transactions or payments.

Welcome/Introductions

- Introduce yourself and any other Girl Scout adults present. Ask parents/guardians to introduce themselves and their Girl Scout.
- Explain to parents/guardians the process of becoming a leader (that you completed a background check and will participate in the recommended training courses).
- Explain that the troop leader's role is to work with the girls, but it is the girls' troop. The troop will do activities based on what the girls choose. Explain the Girl Scout Mission and how the Girl Scout Leadership Experience engages girls in discovering self, connecting with others and taking action to make the world a better place.
- Hand out Girl Health History Form, Adult Health History form (for registering adults), Product Sales Permission Form, Donation and Pledge Form, and Ways Adults Can Help. Find forms on www.gsnim.org.



Registration

- Each girl must be registered in order to participate in Girl Scouts. Give instructions on how parents/guardians can register both girls and themselves through the Online Registration System on our website. Encourage parents/guardians to register as members and complete a background check, so they can fully participate in their daughter's Girl Scout experience. Share that paper registration forms are also available.
- Explain that Girl Scout membership dues of \$35 for girls (\$25 GSUSA membership dues + \$10 council service fee) and \$25 for adults are paid when registering, and covers each member in Girl Scout activity insurance. Share that financial assistance is available for new members to help with the membership dues if needed.

Girl/Adult Code of Conduct

- Share that Girl Scouts encourage girls to treat each other with respect while we are together. We want everyone to enjoy this experience in a safe and fun environment. Girls will be expected to follow the Girl Scout Law.

Health History Forms

- Have each adult complete the Girl Health History Form for their girl. This allows the girl to be treated if anything should happen. It also lets you know if they have any allergies or special needs. These forms are very important and must be turned in to you by the first meeting. Adults working with the troop, attending events or activities or traveling with the troop should complete the Adult Health History form. This form can be placed in a sealed envelope with the adult's name on the front and only opened in case of an emergency. Tip! Many troop leaders keep these forms in an envelope with a first aid kit.

Product Sales Permission Form 2018

- Girls can participate in two product program sales each year--the Treats N Reads program and Girl Scout Cookie Sale program. It's a great way to earn money for the troop to help pay for badges, materials, and other activities the troop may decide to do and teaches girls life skills.
- Each girl must submit the parent/guardian signed permission slip before she participates in either program.
- One permission slip covers both the Treats N' Reads and Cookie Sale program.

Donation and Pledge Form

- GSNI-M relies heavily on donations from individuals, United Way, corporations, and foundations to support Girl Scout programs. Parents are never asked to pay the true cost of Girl Scouting; in fact, we subsidize each girl's experience by about \$336 annually.
- As a valued and important member of our Girl Scout family, your support is needed to bring Girl Scouting to your daughter's life and thousands of girls like her.

Phone List and Meeting Dates

- Ask the adults to review the phone/email list you will receive from your troop support specialist to ensure their information is correct. This list is for Girl Scout purposes only and should not be given to anyone outside of the troop or group.
- Review the meeting schedule and ask if there are conflicts that would prevent a girl from attending regularly scheduled meetings.
- **Attention troops meeting at a Catholic church or school!** Troops must follow all Dioceses and Parish policies and procedures as well as GSNI-M policies and procedures. Please check with the church or school contact where you are meeting for more information.

Getting Parent/Guardian Support

- Ask adults to look at the Ways Adults Can Help Form. Let them know that troop leaders and parents/guardians will need to work together to support the troop.
- Ask for help in transporting girls on trips, bringing snacks, sharing special talents with the troop or by attending troop meetings. Let them know the troop cannot meet unless you have the appropriate number of adults in attendance (refer to *Volunteer Essentials* for girl/adult ratios). Note: Any adult working directly with or supervising girls must be approved volunteers (by completing the volunteer application, background screening) and become registered members. Also, adults transporting Girl Scouts must be an approved, registered volunteer with a good driving record, valid license and a registered, insured vehicle in good running order.

Program Information

- Let adults know that troop activities are supported through troop dues and money-earning activities. Explain what troop dues are and that the girls will agree on an amount and how often they will pay dues (every meeting, once a month or once a year).
- Inform parents/guardians that while it is not mandatory for girls to have an individual copy of *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* handbook, it is a valuable resource for both girls and their parents/guardians. There is a Starter Kit for each grade level that can be purchased from the Girl Scout store that contains the *Girls' Guide*, a vest, sash or tunic, and all of the starter emblems. For up to date pricing information, contact the Answer Center, the Girl Scout store, ScOutfitters, or ask your troop support specialist.
- While uniforms are not mandatory, they are strongly encouraged, especially for younger girls. The official Girl Scout insignia is the Girl Scout pin. See "Insignia Placement" on the Girl Scout store website (girlscoutshop.com, under FAQs) for a complete uniform diagram. It would be helpful to have these printed to distribute to the parents and/or have a sample uniform present.
- Let parents know they can keep up with troop activities by logging onto "My GS" on our website and looking at the calendar.

Troop Finances

Let parents know that the troop leadership team will be sharing an up-to-date *Group Financial Record* and bank statements with them on a regular basis (monthly highly encouraged).

Closing

- Bring the girls back to the main group. Encourage the girls to share with the adult group what they were working on – learned a new song, performed a skit, made a craft, etc.
- Thank parents/guardians for coming. Collect any paper registration forms, troop dues, Girl and Adult Code of Conduct Agreements, Girl Health History Forms, Product Sales Permission Form, GIFTS for Girls Form and Ways Adults Can Help Forms. Ask if there are any questions.

Please Note

The girls in your troop are going to have many different backgrounds and needs. Often parents may share information with you about their daughter to help you understand and work with her. Please remember that you need to keep any information shared with you confidential, unless the parent specifically states they want to share the information with other parents or girls.

If you have girls in your troop with whom you need additional assistance, please contact your troop support specialist. We can give you lots of tips and ideas to try as well as additional resources as needed.

Thank you for welcoming all girls in your troop.

Girl Scout Inclusiveness Statement

Girl Scouts is an inclusive organization and accepts all girls who identify culturally as females, as well as all adults, who are willing to live by the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

The volunteers, girls, and families in your troop will come from different socioeconomic and religious backgrounds and have a variety of needs. Some may have physical, mental, or behavioral special conditions. Some may identify in the LGBTQ+ community. Parents or volunteers may share information with you about their daughter or themselves to help you better understand and work with them. Please remember to keep such information confidential, unless the parent or volunteer specifically states that it is fine to share it.

Your troop support specialist is the expert who can provide tips and ideas, as well as additional resources if needed.

Thank you for welcoming all girls, volunteers, and families into your troop.

Helpful Tips to Get You Started



1. Check out the Volunteer Toolkit on the GSNI-M website.

The Volunteer Toolkit is a digital planning tool that gives you resources and program content to get your year started—and keep it going smoothly! Fully customizable, the toolkit is digitally responsive so you can plan and prepare practically anywhere. Girls have more fun when they can shape their own experience, do hands-on activities, and work together as teams. With the new toolkit, girls and leaders can explore meeting topics and program activities together, manage the troop, and follow the fun as they plan their Girl Scout year. Parents can also access the Volunteer Toolkit to keep informed of troop plans. You can find the Toolkit by going to “MYGS” from our website, gsnim.org.

2. Keep parents/guardians in the loop

It will be helpful for you to keep your parents/guardians informed and up-to-date on news and information about the troop. Keeping parents and guardians updated helps them to feel like they are participants in their daughter’s activities, and may increase the likelihood of getting them to help with the troop. There are several ways to do this: the Volunteer Toolkit, email, phone, newsletter, website, or Facebook.

3. How to determine troop dues

There is no set amount or magical number for troop dues. Each troop must decide what is best based on the needs of the troop and the financial situations of the girls’ families. Average troop dues are \$20–30/per year or \$1 per meeting. Some questions to consider when setting troop dues are:

- What is a reasonable amount for parents or girls to give each meeting?
- How much do you need based on the activities your troop wants to do?
- What are the troop’s plans for earning recognitions?

All troop activities and materials should be paid from troop funds. Troop leaders are not expected to support the troop with their own funds.

4. Organize your troop’s earned recognitions (Journeys, badges, petals)

You may find that your troop is earning so many recognitions and that you are having a hard time keeping track of which ones they have already earned. You can track these using the Volunteer Toolkit to help you stay organized. You can also devise your own system, or you can use the badge tracking chart. A sample “Summary of Completed Recognitions” is included in this booklet.

5. Establish troop guidelines

Girls should be involved in the development of the troop’s guidelines/agreement so they will take ownership of their behavior and actions. Use the Girl Scout Law as a guideline for behavior standards.

6. Use a kaper chart

Kaper is the Girl Scout word for “chore.” A kaper chart is a system for rotating chores and responsibilities. Getting girls to participate in the running of the troop meeting is an important step to a successful troop. You can find many examples of kaper charts online.

7. Find start-up supplies

When starting a new troop, you’ll need some basic supplies to get you started. Here are some suggestions on how to acquire supplies for your troop:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Parents/Guardians: | Ask them to donate items they have around the house. |
| Businesses: | Ask them to donate office supplies. |
| Hospitals: | Ask for donations for the troop’s first-aid kit. |
| Birthday Party: | Juliette Low’s birthday is October 31. Ask girls to donate needed resources as a troop gift to our founder’s birthday party. Serve cake and punch to celebrate. |

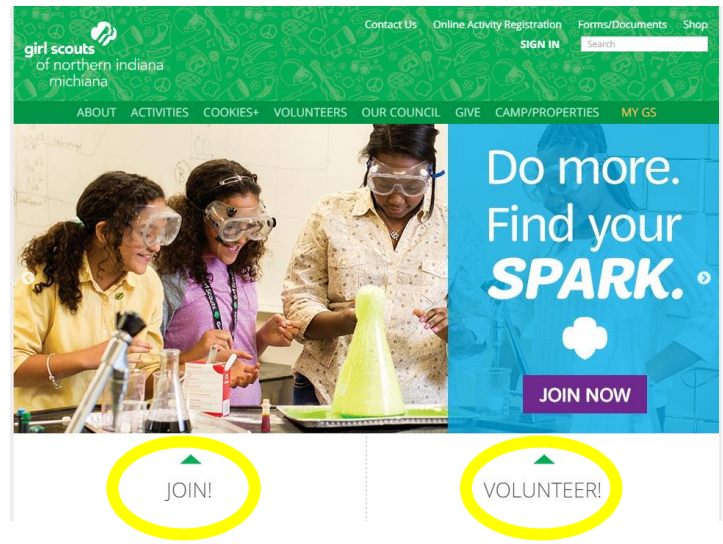


How to Register Members

Online Registration

Registering members online from the www.gsnim.org website is the easiest and quickest way to register both girl and adult members.

Simply go on the website. On the home page click “Join” for registering girls or “Volunteer” for registering adults. This system is usable on mobile phones, tablets, laptop and desktop computers.



Paper Registration Forms and Financial Assistance

Paper registration forms are always an acceptable way to register. Follow the directions below for completing and submitting paper forms.

- Girl Form.** Girls complete the *Girl Registration Form* and submit the \$25 national registration fee plus \$10 council service fee.
- Adult Form.** Adults complete the *Adult Registration Form* and submit the \$25 national registration fee. Adults that will be helping the troop on a regular basis, transporting girls or handling troop money should register.
- Important Info:
 - o Council code – 438
 - o Service Unit /Team – Community number
- Financial Assistance.**
 - o Use a *2018 Application for Membership Subsidy Form* to apply.
 - o All applications must be accompanied by a *Registration Form*
- Paperclip the girl’s and adult’s payments to their registration form and write the parent a receipt.
- Turn in to any council service center. You may make copies of the forms for your own troop records.

Submit registration forms to the service center as soon as possible.

DO NOT HOLD ON TO THEM.

TROOP/GROUP ATTENDANCE RECORD

(This record is kept by the troop leader, group coordinator, or by a troop/group member.)

Troop/Group number: _____ Year: _____

Names	Month/Day																	
1																		1
2																		2
3																		3
4																		4
5																		5
6																		6
7																		7
8																		8
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17																		17
18																		18
19																		19
20																		20
21																		21
22																		22
23																		23
24																		24
	Total registered																	
	Total not registered																	
	Total visitors																	
	Total attendance																	

At the end of each month, a vertical line may be drawn in red.

GIRL'S RECORD

(Most of the information for this section may be copied from the girl's application or parent consent form.)

(This record is kept by the troop leader, assistant troop leader or group coordinator.)

Name: _____

Date of birth: _____

(month) (year)

Address: _____

(Street and Number)

(Apt. No.)

City, State, Zip _____

E-Mail address: _____

Telephone number: _____

(area code)

Parent's or guardian's name(s): _____

Any health condition that might limit or affect participation in Girl Scout activities: _____

Registration Record* (Most of this information may be copied from the Troop/Group Membership Registration Roster.)

Registration Date	Expiration Date (year)	Registration			Troop/Group Number	Age Level	School		Age	Date of last Health Examination
		New	Rereg. Same	Rereg. Diff.			Name	Grade		
	10/									
	10/									
	10/									
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Reason for leaving Girl Scouting _____

Camping Experience (Most of this information should be secured from the girl)				Girl Scout Service Record
Year	Name of Camp	Type Of Camp**	Total Days Attended	List here service given

*The entries for this registration record should correspond to the entries made on the Troop/Group Membership Registration Roster.

**Core, day or established camp

IMPORTANT

This record should be forwarded as the leadership of the troop/group changes, when the girl transfers from one troop/group to another or the council if the girl drops out of Girl Scouting.

Name of Girl: _____

Leadership Experiences

Year	Position	Year	Position

Girl Scout Events Attended

(Inter-troop/group, council, inter-council, national, international)

Girl Scout Trips Taken

Year	Event	Year	Trip

Training Taken

Year	Training	Year	Training

Achievements

(List here Girl Scout recognitions and badges.)

Date	Achievement	Date	Achievement

Girl Scouts of Northern Indiana-Michiana
SUMMARY RECORD OF COMPLETED RECOGNITIONS

(To be used to summarize activities completed by members of troop/group.)
 (Badges, patches or other Girl Scout Achievement Awards.)

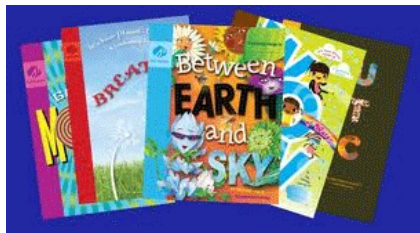
Girls' Name ↓	Name of Recognition														
	Date each recognition was completed														

*This worksheet is to be used to summarize all recognitions completed by the troop/group.

Girl Scout Program



Girl Scout Leadership Journeys



Girl Scout Leadership Journeys are a program that helps girls explore a theme through a sequence of fun and challenging experiences. Journeys also help girls develop leadership skills, explore their interests, try new things, meet different people and make the world a better place. There are three journey series with books available for all grade levels: *It's Your World - Change It!*, *It's Your Planet - Love It!* and *It's Your Story - Tell It!* More information can be found at www.girlscouts.org/program/journeys/. **New this year** are three Journeys for Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors, as well as Multi-level troops in grades K-5. These Journeys are *Think Like an Engineer*, *Think Like a Programmer*, and *Think Like a Citizen Scientist*. They are available on the Volunteer Toolkit. The Outdoor Journey is available for Daisies, Brownies, Juniors, Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors, and is also available on the Volunteer Toolkit.

Tip: The Volunteer Toolkit also contains new badge programs for different grade levels. Daisies have a new Civic Engagement Badge, Daisies and Brownies have an Engineering Badge, Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors have a Robotics Badge, and all Girl Scout Grade Levels have a new Troop Camping Badge.

The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting

Each grade level has a *Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*, which is the official handbook for all Girl Scouts. The guide includes three sections: Grade Level Handbook, Requirements for Grade Level Badges and My Girl Scouts, a section for girls to document their experiences that includes pages to scrapbook, draw, journal or save special moments. This is a great resource to share with parents!



Tip: Working with your girls on the first two weeks of any year plan in the Volunteer Toolkit will enable them to decide which Journeys and Badges they would like to work on first.

Safety Activity Checkpoint Pages

When preparing for any activity with girls, always begin by reviewing the *Girl Scout Safety Activity Checkpoints* written about that particular activity. *Safety Activity Checkpoints* can be found on the council website by searching "safety activity checkpoints".

Product Sales Program & The Girl Scout Leadership Experience

Girl Scout Cookies and Fall Product Programs are an integral part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, built around financial literacy. In fact, the Girl Scout Cookie Program is the leading entrepreneurial activity for girls. No university has produced as many businesswomen as has the Girl Scout Cookie Program.

Girls that participate in the Girl Scout Cookie Program and Girl Scout Fall Product Program not only earn money for their troop so they can **discover, connect, and take action**; they also learn skills that will help them grow into leaders in their own lives, leaders in business and leaders in the world. There are five identified leadership skills developed by participating in Girl Scout Product Programs:

Goal Setting

Decision Making

Money Management

People Skills

Business Ethics



Troop Leaders: Encourage the girls in your troop to build courage, confidence and character by participating in Girl Scout Cookie & Fall Product Program!

As a Girl Scout leader, your primary responsibilities for Girl Scout Product Programs are to:

- **Recruit a Troop Product Coordinator, also known as a “cookie mom or dad”.**
It’s okay for the leader to also be the troop product program coordinator - but remember that you have a lot to do already. It’s suggested that you first see if another adult with the troop would be willing to take on this responsibility. The local Product Coordinator or designee will train your Troop Product Coordinator.
- **Communicate with parents/guardians and encourage their involvement.**
- **Guide girls in budgeting, planning, and goal setting.**
- **Allow the Troop Product Coordinator time at a troop meeting to conduct training with girls and parents, emphasizing the importance of safety.**

What do I do once I have a volunteer?

When someone volunteers as the Troop Product Coordinator, give their name, address and phone number to your local Product Coordinator. Please make sure that your volunteer is registered with Girl Scouts of the USA as soon as possible and has completed the background check (www.gsnim.org). If you have any questions, please contact your local Product Coordinator, Troop Support Specialist or the Answer Center at 800-283-4812, ext. 2 or 0.



Planning and budgeting the finances of the troop is an ongoing process that requires input from the girls, parents, and leaders. For the most part, troop or group budgets are built on dues and profits from the annual cookie and fall product sale (if the girls choose to participate), and troop fundraising activities. Girls should be involved in troop finances including planning the budget, estimating costs of activities and materials and management of the troop funds/bank account, when age-appropriate. Even the youngest girls can begin to learn financial literacy skills by being included in troop financial management discussions.

Establishing a Troop Bank Account



Because troop/group funds are owned collectively by the girls, proper handling and accounting of the funds is imperative. **All troop funds must be run through the troop bank account.** The following will help you establish a troop bank account:

Important Guidelines:

- ◆ **Keep receipts** for all transactions in the troop records. This includes deposit receipts. Keep at the very least all receipts for the current Girl Scout year, and the previous Girl Scout year.
- ◆ **Write receipts for parents** anytime you collect money from them. Give the parent a copy and keep a copy for the records.
- ◆ **GSNI-M may audit the account at any time.** Be prepared to submit current records and any receipts that may be requested.
- ◆ At any time, **parents/guardians may ask to see the troop finances**, and you must provide the records.
- ◆ Troop funds are the property of the troop and should be used for troop activities. **Never use the troop account for personal transactions.**

- GSNI-M is working to establish relationships with banks that will accommodate its needs as a Girl Scout Council. Banks that enter into an agreement will be a **GSNI-M Preferred Bank**. Once preferred banks are established, new troops will open their account at a preferred bank, if there is one in their county.
- It is GSNI-M policy that once a troop has accumulated \$25 it must open a bank account. To help you get started, GSNI-M is giving all new troops \$25 to get their account opened right away. Your Troop Support Specialist will give you instructions about that process.
- At that time your Troop Support Specialist will also discuss how to open a bank account with you and if there is a preferred bank set up in your county. They will give you the paperwork needed to open the account so that it is opened properly. For example, the paperwork will ensure that the account is opened under the GSNI-M federal tax identification number. *Do not use your personal social security number for troop accounts!*
- By opening a Girl Scout checking account, the troop will have the option of obtaining a debit card for their account. This comes in handy when registering online for events, trainings, etc.
- Each troop checking account must have at least 2 signers. One signer should receive or check the monthly statements and the other hold the checkbook. If statements are to be mailed do not use the council address as the mailing address. Bank statements should be sent to the signer responsible for reconciling the account each month, the troop treasurer. Once you have determined a troop treasurer, please let your troop support specialist know.
- The 2 signers for the checking account must be approved, registered adult members of the Girl Scouts. This includes having completed a background check.
- Once the troop bank account is set up, the **Bank Information and Agreement** must be submitted within a week to your nearest council service center or emailed to frontdesk@gsnim.org. All signers on the account must sign this form. In the future, if there are any changes to signers or the account, submit this form again.



Please read the Financial Policies in **Volunteer Policies** for additional guidelines for the account.



Remember: Keep your bank informed of changes to names and addresses!

Ins and Outs of Managing the Troop Funds

Managing your troop bank account and finances is like managing your own personal checking account. Your troop will have income (from dues, money-earning activities and fall product and cookie sales) and expenses (program fees, supplies, food, and event costs). You will keep track of the income and expenses through the troop bank account.

Document the income and expenses as they happen. You will do this through the *Group Financial Record*. There are two versions of this record that you can choose from – a hard copy (PDF) version, and an Excel version. The Excel version has formulas that keep a running balance and add the income and expense categories together for you. You can find both versions of the record at gsnm.org by typing “Group Financial Record” into the search box on the Forms/Documents page.

To help with the troop budget, you will label each transaction with the appropriate Income or Expense category. All categories are explained on both versions of the *Group Financial Record*. At the end of the year, you will report on the total Income and Expenses, so don't forget to use the categories!

Below are a few simple tips to help you successfully manage the “ins and outs” of the troop account.

<p style="text-align: center;">Income (Ins)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">As money comes into the troop/group, be sure to do the following:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Expenses (Outs)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Record your expenses in a similar way as your income:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deposit all troop funds into the troop bank account as soon as possible. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Document the income in the “Income” column of the <i>Group Financial Record</i>. Be sure to write a description of the income in the “description” column of the record and the date of the deposit. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On the <i>Group Financial Record</i>, label the transaction with the correct income label in the “category” column. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keep all bank receipts and any other income receipts with troop financial records. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> When bank statements are received, check the statement against your documented income on the <i>Group Financial Record</i> and the receipts in the envelope. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Document expenses in the “Expense” column of the <i>Group Financial Record</i>. Be sure to write a description of the expense in the “description” column. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On the <i>Group Financial Record</i>, label the transaction with the correct expense label in the “category” column. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Label all receipts from any expenses. For example, if you bought markers for the troop to use during meetings, label the receipt, “troop supplies.” If you went camping and have a receipt for food, label it “camping food.” <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> When bank statements are received, check the statement against the expenses recorded on the <i>Group Financial Record</i> and the receipts in the envelope.

Organizing for Success

The following tips will help you successfully complete the *Group Financial Record*:

- Get organized from the start. Have a file/envelope for expenses and one for income. (See examples below.)
- Review the *Group Financial Record* at the beginning of the Girl Scout troop year.
- Make sure to label each transaction with the correct Income or Expense category.

Financial Organization Ideas

Organizing with an envelope

- Take an envelope and write “Troop Income” on the front of it.
- Put all bank receipts and any other income receipts in this envelope.
- Label a second envelope with “Troop Expense” on the front of it.
- Put all expense receipts in this envelope.
- Follow the steps in the chart above for documenting.



OR

Organizing with an accordion folder

- Label the tab with a month of the year.
- Place each month’s receipts in the corresponding slot.
- Follow the steps above for documenting.



Checks and Balances

Make sure that there is accountability with the troop account. Although each troop will have a **Treasurer** that is primarily responsible for keeping track of and reporting on the finances, he/she should meet with the other signer(s) on the account to review the *Group Financial Record*, receipts, and monthly statements on a regular basis (monthly is strongly encouraged).

When reviewing the financial records, look for discrepancies and resolve them. For example, you may find that a troop check that was written has not been deposited yet, or that the Treasurer transposed a couple numbers when filling out the *Group Financial Record*.

Reporting to Parents

Since the money that the troop earns belongs to the troop as a whole, it is very important that you share the troop financial records (*Group Financial Record*, monthly bank statements, and receipts) with the parents on a frequent basis. **Monthly is strongly encouraged** (after all, you get the statements monthly, so that is a good time to look everything over). **Do not wait until someone asks to see the records, be proactive!**

Here are a couple ideas on how you can share financial information:

- Bring the records to the troop meeting and lay them out on a table. After the parents drop their daughters off, ask them to take a few minutes to review.
- After it is reconciled with the monthly bank statement, email the parents an up-to-date copy of the *Group Financial Record*. Let them know that the bank statements will be available for review at the upcoming troop meeting. Avoid as much as possible emailing bank statements unless you cover up the account number and other private details of the account.

CFO Patch

To further support financial literacy, GSNI-M has introduced a CFO Patch. This was modeled after a successful program from Girl Scouts of North East Ohio. Girls can earn this patch every year and there are progressive guidelines for all grade levels. Besides the actual patch, there are year rockers available.

What makes this program awesome is that it uses the troop bank account and finance records to teach girls different concepts. To learn more about this program and the guidelines, please search “CFO Patch” on the Forms/Documents page of gsnim.org.

Reporting Concerns



Members of the group – parents and volunteers – have the ability to anonymously submit any financial concerns to **Red Flag Reporting**. GSNI-M shares information about this organization directly with parents, and instructs them to contact this organization if they see “red flags” with the group finances, or if the group leaders do not share group financial information upon request. To contact Red Flag with a concern, visit www.RedFlagReporting.com, or call 1-877-647-3335. Use client code “GSNIM.”

Reporting to the Council

Although you report to the troop on a monthly basis, you will submit financial records to the Council on an annual basis.

When it is due: The *Group Financial Record* is due annually by July 31 along with monthly bank statements. Since you are a new troop, you will turn in information from the opening of the account through June 30. That gives you one month to double-check the records and turn them in. Beginning July 1, you will start a new *Group Financial Record* that you will turn in the following year.

How to submit: The preferred method for submission is the **Finance Tab** on the Volunteer Toolkit. The annual report that is on the Finance Tab will ask you for high-level information about the account – including a summary of all the income and expenses (so don’t forget to use those categories!). After you fill out the report and review it for corrections, you will be asked to attach documents to the report. This is where you will attach the *Group Financial Record* and monthly bank statements.

If you are unable to use the **Finance Tab**, there is a hard copy of that report, called (conveniently) the **Annual Report**. The **Annual Report** asks you for the same exact information that is in the **Finance Tab**, nothing more, nothing less. It is simply a PDF version. Just like with the **Finance Tab**, you will turn in the **Annual Report** with the *Group Financial Record* and monthly bank statements. You can drop off hard copies of those things to either service center, or mail them to the Northern Indiana Service Center.



Cheddar Up

As a troop leader, you may collect money from parents for various reasons. Perhaps your troop has decided to collect dues, or the girls are planning an extended trip in the summer and the families are supplementing a portion of the fees.

In order to help you, GSNI-M has partnered with Cheddar Up. Cheddar Up is a web application that lets parents pay the troop with either an online check or their debit/credit card. When a parent pays this way, they get an email confirmation/receipt.

There is a small fee the parents will pay. If a parent is paying via debit/credit card, they will incur a 3.5% + \$0.45 fee per transaction. If the parent uses the online check option, the fee is only \$0.45 per transaction. There is not a fee involved for the collector (i.e. the troop) to use Cheddar Up.

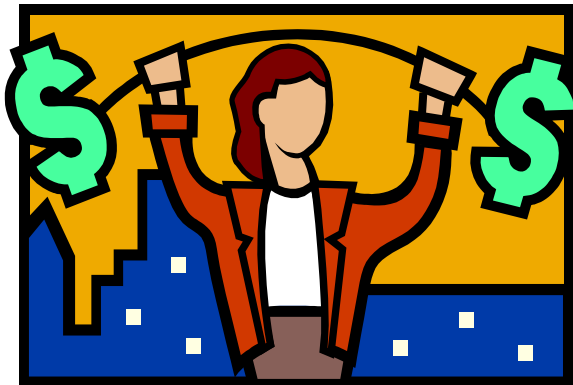
To get started, visit <http://go.cheddarup.com/girlscoutsnim>.

Planning the Troop Budget

Girls Scouts, like many other youth activities, depends on Product Program participation by the girls and active adult involvement (volunteers). The “learnings and earnings” from the Cookie and Fall Product Program are what girls use for planning, budgeting, and paying for most of their own activities. In addition, the girls in the troop agree to collect a small amount of money at each meeting called “troop dues”. Typically, for new troops, uniforms and books are purchased by the parent/guardian.

So, what kind of expenses can be expected for the troop? Every troop budget will be different, depending on the girls and the activities in which they decide to participate. The following are some possible expenses that should be considered when planning your troop budget:

- **Craft/activity supplies**-Get creative. Hold an arts and crafts scavenger hunt. Give each girl a list of items needed; scissors, glue, felt, paper, markers, etc. Have the girls bring as many of these items that they can find at home to the next meeting.
- **Snacks**-Have a snack sign-up sheet with meeting dates listed and ask every parent to sign up to bring snacks for a meeting.
- **Program Participation**-Check out the [events calendar](#) on the website to see upcoming events and trainings.
- **Field Trips**-There are tons of FREE places to take the girls; the fire station, police station, library, etc. Your Troop Support Specialist probably has some great ideas for field trips in your area.
- **Badges/Patches/Pins**-Badges and patches cost on average \$2 - \$6 each. Some are slightly higher.
- **Service Projects**-Try to get supplies donated for any troop community service projects.
- **Ceremonies/Parties**-Look at the calendar with the girls and decide what special occasions your troop wants to celebrate.



Troop Budget Worksheet

Estimated Troop Income		Estimated Troop Expenses	
Troop Dues • Dues amount x number of girls x number of meetings _____		Supplies* • Snack Items • Troop Activity Items • Troop Recordkeeping Supplies • Materials for Community Service & Take Action Projects • Journey Books / Girls Guide to Girl Scouting	
Fall Product Sale Profit • This will depend on number of items sold by girls x profit amount _____		Badges/Uniforms/Pins, Etc. • Girl Scout Pins ^ • Uniforms & Insignia • Journey Leadership Awards ^ • Earned Badges ^ • Additional Awards ^	
Cookie Program Profit • This will depend on number of boxes sold by girls x profit amount _____		Membership Registration Dues • Costs incurred by group for paying annual membership dues • Troop encouraged to contribute towards this cost	
Approved Money-Earning Projects • Additional money-earning projects must be approved by GSNI-M • Check out money earning policies & procedures. _____		Trip Costs • Field trips • Camping • Travel	
Fees Collected for Trips/Events • Any money collected from parents to cover the cost of trips, activities, and other events • Includes registration fees collected for Community and Council events _____		Event Costs • Local • Council Sponsored • Other	
Other Income (like the \$25 the troop gets for start up) _____		Other Expenses _____	
Total Income		Total Expenses	

Total Income (\$ _____) – Total Expenses (\$ _____) = \$ _____ Does it balance?

*Use your Girl Scout resources wisely and ask your Girl Scout families and supporters for donations of supplies.

**Girl Scout families generally cover these expenses.

^Troops provide earned awards.

Troop Budget Tips

Make It a Girl Led Discussion

Financial responsibility is a big part of running a troop and an important life skill to possess. Be sure to include the girls in all aspects of the troop's finances. Guide the girls in figuring out what the troop can and cannot afford to do. Lead them in setting troop goals for product sales. Help them develop budgets for troop events and trips, etc.

Proposed Expenses

Start with figuring out your proposed expenses based on your troops plans for the year.

Things to consider:

- Do you need start-up supplies?
- How many earned awards might your troop receive this year?
- Do you need books and recordkeeping supplies?
- What activities do your girls hope to do?
- What events, camping or other trips are part of the troop's plan?
- Will you need money or supplies for community service and Take Action projects?
- Will the troop or the families be supplying snacks?

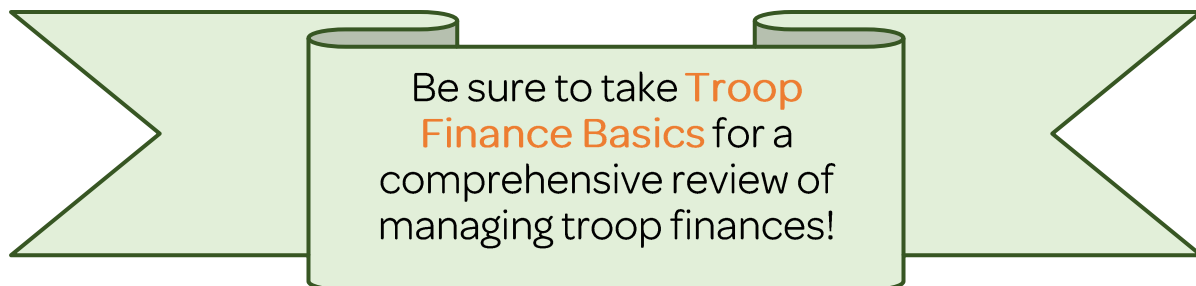
Proposed Income

List sources of troop income.

- Troop dues – Collected at each meeting or once or twice a year? Can all girls afford the dues?
- Fall Product Sale – How many girls will be participating? What is the troop's goal? Will you reach that goal?
- Cookie Sale – How many girls will be participating? What is the troop's goal? Will you reach that goal? What level of profit will your troop reach?

Income vs Expenses – Make It a Girl Led Discussion

Subtract the estimated total expenses from estimated total income. What's the result? Remember to make this a Girl Led activity and ask the girls this question: Will the troop have enough money to cover the cost of all they want to do for the coming year? If the answer is yes, great! If the answer is no, ask the girls for ideas. Guide them through developing a plan to balance their budget.



Getting Organized is Easier Than You Think!

Need help getting organized? These pages are intended to give you a rough outline for organizing your Girl Scout materials. Under each section heading is a list of materials you can file in this section. Feel free to develop and use your own system, too! Girl Scout traditions can be confusing also. Check out some [Girl Scout Traditions](#).

Grab a binder, some divider tabs, and let's get started!

Section 1: Troop Information

Volunteer Toolkit

Keep your year plan up to date and make sure all your meetings and field trips are listed on the calendar.

Attendance Sheet

Create an attendance sheet for your troop. Make sure to keep attendance at every meeting; this way, you will always know who is present at your meeting.

Troop Dues Record

Keep a record of troop dues. Dues should be decided by the girls and are usually 50 cents to \$2 per meeting.

Earned Recognition Sheets

These forms can be used to track what recognitions the troop has earned. You may also choose to keep a sheet for every girl individually.

Section 2: Girl Information

Troop Roster

Keep a copy of your troop roster, available on the Volunteer Toolkit, or paper copies of registrations for all girls registered in your troop. File forms alphabetically for quick access to girl contact information.

Health History

It's very important to have the health forms on hand at all times! You'll know who has allergies, asthma or other medical conditions. A new form should be completed each year.

Phone tree or email distribution list

Make a phone tree for your troop or distribute an email contact list so parents/guardians can be notified quickly if there is an emergency or a sudden change of plans.

Section 3: Trips/Events

Troop Trip Request Forms

- Trip Planning Basics home study training or in person group training is the training to take before your first outing away from the regular meeting location. Outdoor Basics is required before the first outdoor cooking, fire building and/or camping experience. First Aid/CPR certification may be required also.
- For trips 3 days or less and 2 nights with no activities that require council approval submit the following information to frontdesk@gsnim.org – Trip date, time, activities planned and location along with a roster of girls and adults going on the trip. Indicate any adults that are driving on the trip.
- Specialized activity approval – With activities such as swimming, horseback riding, archery, climbing, boating, etc. prior council approval is required. Submit *the Specialized Activity Form* to frontdesk@gsnim.org at least one month prior to the event. This form is not needed if the activity is happening at a council sponsored activity or event.



- For Extended Trips (more than 3 days and 2 nights) – Complete *the Extended Trip Form* and submit to frontdesk@gsnim.org at least 6-12 months in advance, 18 months – 2 years for international trips. See Group Policy 8 for more information.
- ❑ **Program Registration Forms**
A copy of the receipt of registration should be kept for troop records when registering for council sponsored programs or any program outside of council.
 - ❑ **Permission Forms**
When you're going on a trip either near or far, make sure you have a parent/guardian signed permission form for each girl.
 - ❑ **Additional Insurance**
Every registered Girl Scout and registered adult member in the Girl Scout Movement is automatically covered under the basic insurance plan upon registration. That coverage will help if there are injuries at troop meetings and other short-term events. If you will have non-registered children, siblings or adults participating in your short-term events, you should purchase additional event/activity insurance; see *Volunteer Essentials*, Chapter 4. Troops/groups taking extended trips of more than three nights are required to buy Girl Scout trip insurance; see *Volunteer Essentials* Appendix: For Travel Volunteers. This insurance is available through the council at a nominal fee. Find the form on the website or call the Answer Center for more details.
 - ❑ **Accident-Incident Report Forms**
You can never be too careful! Keep several blank copies of the Accident/Incident Report Form so you can make sure to document any accidents or injuries.

Section 4: Adult Information

- ❑ **Adult Registration Information**
Keep information for all your registered adults on hand. Leaders and helpers must be registered and complete the volunteer application process. This includes any adult that will serve as a troop driver or will be handling money.
- ❑ **Ways Adults Can Help forms**
Have parents/guardians complete this form at your parent/guardian meeting when you start each year. Let them share their talents.
- ❑ **Troop Trip Driver Policy**
Going on a trip? All drivers must be approved, registered members. This means that they must have completed the Girl Scouts of Northern Indiana-Michiana volunteer application process prior to transporting girls other than their own daughters. For more information about the Girl Scout troop driver policy see the *Safety-Wise* section of *Volunteer Essentials*, Chapter 4.
- ❑ **Certifications**
You may have parents/guardians in your troop that possess certifications that will be helpful during troop activities. Licensed nurses, doctors, EMTs, dentists or adults certified in First Aid and CPR are among those that can serve as the troop first aider. Certification in lifeguarding, archery, canoeing, troop camping may prove helpful with other troop activities. Keep copies of their certification on file in your troop information.

Section 5: Finance

- ❑ **Envelope for receipts** – Punch holes in one side of an envelope to store in a three ring binder and use it to collect your receipts. Keep all receipts for the current Girl Scout year, and the previous Girl Scout year.
- ❑ **Copy of Bank Information and Agreement** – Keep a copy of the current Bank Information and Agreement.
- ❑ **Bank Statements** – Share the bank statements with your co-leader to reconcile the bank account transactions. Also, share on a regular basis with the girls and parents.
- ❑ **Group Financial Record** – Be sure to keep this up-to-date at all times. Work with your Co-Leader to reconcile with the monthly bank statements, and remember to share with the girls and parents on a regular basis. This is submitted to council annually with the bank statements. Keep copies for your troop records.