



What Our Volunteers Say: 2010 Troop Volunteer Review



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Kim Hull

Author

Hillary Blevins, Research Analyst

Inquires related to *What Our Volunteers Say: 2010 Troop Volunteer Review* should be directed to:
ATTN: Research, Girl Scouts of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois
2011 Second Avenue
Rock Island, IL 61201

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**Take A Closer Look:
About Girl Scouts of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois**

Girl Scouts of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois serves more than 18,000 girls and 4,000 adult volunteers in 31 counties in Eastern Iowa and seven counties in Western Illinois.

For more information, visit www.GirlScoutsToday.com.

Girl Scout Mission:

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

Girl Scout Grade Levels:

Girl Scout Daisy	Grades K-1	Girl Scout Cadette	Grades 6-8
Girl Scout Brownie	Grades 2-3	Girl Scout Senior	Grades 9-10
Girl Scout Junior	Grades 4-5	Girl Scout Ambassador	Grades 11-12

What Our Volunteers Say: 2010 Troop Volunteer Review

Overview of the 2010 Troop Volunteer Review

Offered annually, the Girl Scouts of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois (GSEIWI) Troop Volunteer Review provides an opportunity for Girl Scout volunteers working directly with girls to look at accomplishments and think about ways to expand or improve. Troop volunteers in a leadership role (leaders, co-leaders, assistant leaders) can take this opportunity to reflect on their own achievement, and what support might better serve their needs.

The 2010 Troop Volunteer Review was offered as both an online survey and paper survey. Surveys were included with the 2010 Spring Registration material, which was distributed to all troops in March/April 2010. Troop leaders and co-leaders were invited to participate. The survey was also promoted through several volunteer communications and available online at www.GSEIWI.org.

Between late March and November 2010, 559 troop volunteers completed the 2010 Troop Volunteer Review. Among those that indicated a county, thirty-five counties are represented; no one completing the survey identified with Butler, Jackson, or Louisa counties. The following counties are represented by one respondent: Henderson, Howard, Jefferson, Jo Davies, Jones, Van Buren, and Warren. More than one hundred (119, 21.3%) respondents chose not to identify their county of residence.

All but two respondents (99.6%) indicated the Girl Scout grade level(s) they work with most often (n=559). A total of 673 grade levels were selected, indicating up to 116 volunteers working with two or more grade levels. The sample mirrors the distribution of registered leaders and co-leaders for the 2010 membership year, within three percent for each grade level. See table.

Grade Level Distribution	Girl Scout Daisies (Grades K-1)	Girl Scout Brownies (Grades 2-3)	Girl Scout Juniors (Grades 4-5)	Girl Scout Cadettes (Grades 6-8)	Girl Scout Seniors (Grades 9-10)	Girl Scout Ambassadors (Grades 11-12)	Total
Sample (n) =	165	197	152	103	38	18	673
Sample % =	24.5%	29.3%	22.6%	15.3%	5.6%	2.7%	100.0%
Pop. Total (N) =	745	889	685	358	94	85	2856
Pop. % =	26.1%	31.1%	24.0%	12.5%	3.3%	3.0%	100.0%
Deviation =	-1.6%	-1.9%	-1.4%	2.8%	2.4%	-0.3%	

The majority (70.9%) of survey participants were returning troop volunteers, as opposed to first-year/new troop volunteers (29.1%, n=162). First-year/new troop leaders were mostly likely to work with Girl Scout Daisies (55.6%) or Brownies (40.1%) (n=162). Returning leaders were most likely to work with Girl Scout Brownies (33.5%) and Juniors (32.7%) (n=394). More than half (55.6%) of the returning leaders had 2-5 years experience (including the 2010 membership year) as a Girl Scout volunteers, 26.4% had 6-9 years experience, and 18.0% had ten or more years experience (n=383). A strong majority (87.3%) would like to continue in their troop leadership position (n=479). A small group (13.6%) expressed interest in another or different volunteer position (n=471).

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Troop Experience

Troop volunteers were asked to select up to five activities that the troop focused on the most. The most common responses were: community service/Take Action projects (68.9%), performing and/or visual arts—including crafts (66.6%), healthy relationships and/or self-esteem (62.7%), health/wellness and/or sports (61.9%), and environmental awareness (59.0%) (n=515). The least common responses were: leadership and advocacy (30.7%), careers (27.6%), diversity (24.5%), financial literacy (13.0%), and literacy (10.1%).

Community service projects was the most popular topic of troop activities; however, nearly one-third (31.5%) of troops did not complete a community service project in the 2010 membership year (n=517). Of those that did offer service, popular projects related to: the environment and animals (44.1%), helping to meet basic needs (37.3%), assisting senior citizens (25.4%), and services to benefit children (13.3%) (n=354). Returning leaders were more likely than new leaders to incorporate Community service projects (respectively: 74.7%, n=371; 54.2%, n=144). See page 8 for select comments.

Service and leadership was further developed in Girl Scout Junior-Ambassador troops in multiple ways:

- 24.1% took on a leadership role with a younger group of girls (n=514). Just over thirty percent (30.9%) did not take on a leadership role with younger girls and this question did not apply to 44.9% of the respondents who worked with Girl Scout Daisy and Brownie troops. Popular project topics included: helping with Girl Scout events/troop meetings (88.7%), teaching a specific skill (14.5%), service projects (9.7%) (n=124).
- 12.1% earned a Girl Scout high award: the Girl Scout Bronze Award (Juniors, 8.7%), Girl Scout Silver Award (Cadettes, 2.6%), or Girl Scout Gold Award (Seniors and Ambassadors, 0.8%) (n=508). More than one-third (35.2%) did not earn a high award and this question did not apply to 53.9% of the respondents who worked with Girl Scout Daisy and Brownie troops.

Camping/outdoor skills was selected as an activity focus by 40.6% of the respondents (n=515). Returning leaders were more than twice as likely as new leaders to incorporate camping/outdoor skills activities (respectively: 48.5%, n=371; 20.1%, n=144). However, when asked to describe their troop's experience at Girl Scout Camp, an average of 78.4% had attended "none" of the four GSEIWI-owned camp facilities for a council event, service unit (neighborhood) event, troop day trip, troop overnight camping trip, or summer resident camp (average n=454). For first-year troop volunteers, this average jumps to 89.7% (average n=133). Girl Scout day camps and community/state parks/campgrounds were commonly attended.

Resources used by troop volunteers "most of the time" or "always" include: Girl Scout badge books (72.8%, n=514), *Safety-Wise* (43.2%, n=266), and Girl Scout handbooks (37.2%, n=511). Resources used by troop volunteers "sometimes" or "never" include: the "It's Your Planet—Love It!" journey series (79.4%, n=490), the "It's Your World—Change It!" journey series (77.1%, n=485), "uniquely ME!" resources (69.9%, n=480), and the GSEIWI Program Resource Guide/Volunteer Resource Guide (68.6%, n=261).

When asked about different aspects of troop management and involvement, troop volunteers frequently marked the following statements as happening "most of the time" or "always":

- National and local safety guidelines and policies were followed for all activities (97.5%, n=517).
- Families were kept informed of plans and encouraged to become involved (95.0%, n=519).
- Girls were encouraged to discuss options and make decisions (85.0%, n=519).
- A troop representative attended service unit meetings (69.0%, n=519).

When asked about different aspects of troop management and involvement, troop volunteers frequently marked the following statements as happening "sometimes" or "never":

- Parents of the girls operated as a troop committee (73.0%, n=519).
- The troop participated in activities/events hosted by the council (72.6%, n=508).
- A troop representative attended council meetings (70.0%, n=516).
- The troop participated in activities/events hosted by the service unit (54.5%, n=517).

See page 8 for select comments.

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Volunteer Experience

All Girl Scout experiences are intentionally designed to tie to one or more of the 15 national leadership outcomes, or benefits, categorized under three keys to leadership: discovering values and using knowledge and skills to explore the world; connecting, caring about, inspiring, and teaming with others locally and globally; and take action to make the world a better place. Troop volunteer were asked which of these outcomes they developed through their Girl Scout volunteer experience. An average of seven items were chosen. The top responses were: cooperation and team building (75.9%), positive values (65.2%), the ability to educate and inspire others to act (59.3%), and the ability to resolve conflicts (55.1%). The least-chosen responses were: a connection to local and global communities (30.6%), the courage to seek challenges in the world (29.4%), and the ability to advocate for themselves and others (27.9%). See chart.

Which of the following skills/attributes do you think you have developed through your adult Girl Scout volunteer experience? (check all that apply)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strong Sense of Self	45.3%	229
Positive Values	65.2%	330
Practical Life Skills	40.3%	204
Courage to Seek Challenges in the World	29.4%	149
Critical Thinking	37.5%	190
Ability to Develop Healthy Relationships	44.5%	225
Cooperation and Team Building	75.9%	384
Ability to Resolve Conflicts	55.1%	279
Appreciation for Diversity	37.0%	187
Connection to Local and Global Communities	30.6%	155
Ability to Identify Community Needs	42.7%	216
Resourceful Problem Solving	46.2%	234
Ability to Advocate for Themselves and Others	27.9%	141
Ability to Educate and Inspire Others to Act	59.3%	300
Empowerment to Make the World a Better Place	46.6%	236
Other	3.0%	15

answered question 506
skipped question 53

GSEIWI is fortunate to have strong adult role models for girls. Troop volunteers identified highly with the following skills and attributes:

- encouraging application of Girl Scout experiences to other areas of the girls' lives (99.0%, n=507),
- acquiring the necessary skills to work effectively with girls (98.0%, n=507),
- creating opportunities for team-building (96.4%, n=504),
- encouraging hands-on learning (96.0%, n=503),
- persevering until their voice is heard (85.6%, n=506),
- making informed decisions and goals (85.5%, n=498),
- solving problems creatively (84.7%, n=503),
- effectively communicating in different ways (77.3%, n=502),
- creating opportunities for girls to lead (77.3%, n=502), and
- rallying support for causes they care about (72.5%, n=502).

Troop volunteers felt they had major accomplishments in the following areas: troop program and activities – including badges and awards, events and trips, community service, and product sales (50.7%); working effectively with girls and parents (43.3%); and growing/maintaining the troop membership (14.0%) (n=322). Common challenges related to: group management (40.9%), lack of positive parental involvement (15.9%), and lack of time/other conflicts and responsibilities (13.8%) (n=384). Troop leaders would benefit from assistance with activity ideas and resources, conflict resolution/bullying, building motivation, and managing a group of girls at different developmental levels. See page 9 for select comments.

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Support for First-Year Troop Volunteers

Nearly a quarter (23.2%) of the returning troop volunteers surveyed served as a leader mentor for first-year troop volunteers. There was a 1.9% decline in the interest in repeating this position in the future. See page 9 for select comments.

Forty percent of first-year leader respondents were connected with a leader mentor; 50.7% were not and 9.3% were unsure/did not indicate a connection (n=150). Of those that were connected with a leader mentor, 84.7% of first-year troop volunteers were contacted by the leader mentor (58.3% were contacted frequently) and 84.5% found the information they received through this connection beneficial (n=60). See page 9 for select comments.

More than half (57.3%) of first-year volunteers received the “Steps of Support” (SOS) quarterly mailing for new volunteers; 24.0% did not receive the mailing and 18.7% didn’t recall (n=150). Of those that did receive SOS, 83.7% found the information to be beneficial (n=86). Of the first-year volunteers with a leader mentor connection, 70.7% received SOS and 62.5% found it beneficial (n=60).

Support for all Troop Volunteers

Survey participants attended the trainings offered to troop volunteers in large numbers: Orientation to Girl Scouting (94.3%, n=459), Getting Started (93.6%, n=456), and Leadership Essentials (83.0%, n=404). Many respondents found training to be valuable (93.6%, n=484), have easy and timely access to the information they need (90.0%, n=479), and are aware of a variety of resources to assist them (88.5%, n=480). Sixty-one percent (60.9%) felt the journey resources made their work as a Girl Scout volunteer easier; 19.3% were unsure, and 19.8% disagreed (n=481).

The main areas of additional support needed by troop volunteers were parental involvement (27.4%), resource/program support (18.4%), and strong co-leaders (13.2%) (n=190). See page 10 for select comments.

Contributions to Girl Scouting from many of the troop volunteers were recognized by Girl Scout staff, volunteers or other community members (84.2%, n=481). Survey respondents felt the most valued when parents expressed their appreciation and girls said thank you (or gave hugs) (84.2%, n=393). To a much lesser extent, volunteers felt valued by: watching girls grow and continue to participate in Girl Scouting (10.2%), appreciation from other leaders or council staff (7.1%), or receiving Girl Scout awards for volunteer service (1.3%) (n=393). See page 10 for select comments.

More than half (58.6%, n=501) of troop volunteers attend service unit (neighborhood) meetings “most of the time” or “always.” However, 48.0% of first-year volunteers (n=144) and 36.2% of returning volunteers (n=356) say they attend meetings only “sometimes” or “never.” Scheduling conflicts and poorly-run meetings are the most common deterrent to more frequent attendance. The service unit meetings are meeting or exceeding the expectations of troop volunteers in many ways: information received (82.7%, n=504), support from service unit leadership (82.2%, n=501), networking opportunities (75.5%, n=503), and newsletters for service unit team leadership (71.1%, n=488).

Three-quarters (75.2%, n=501) of troop volunteers believed the service unit meeting was valuable and a good use of their time. The most beneficial aspects of service unit meetings included: networking with other volunteers (47.0%) and receiving current information on events, product sales programs, and council news (47.8%) (n=349). Reoccurring suggestions for improvement included improved time management and meeting organization (50.0%) and more opportunities for networking and training (32.3%) (n=158). Many volunteers feel that service unit meetings could be improved with a more formal structure, such as sending out an agenda prior to the meeting, starting on time, reducing redundant information and extraneous conversations, keeping meetings to no more than an hour in length, and sending out notes after the meeting. Adjusting the meeting days/times to accommodate seasonal weather is also recommended. See page 10 for select comments.

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Support for all Troop Volunteers, continued

Troop volunteers felt supported by the council staff (78.5%), especially their Regional Membership Manager (75.3%), who works most directly with troop volunteers (n=498). Nearly twenty percent of first-year volunteers had no opinion on the support they received from Regional Membership Managers or other council staff (19.7% and 18.9%, respectively; n=142). More than four-fifths of all troop volunteers surveyed agreed that the council valued local volunteers (85.3%, n=479) and felt personally valued (84.8%, n=479) and supported (80.2%, n=481) by the council. Nearly three-quarters (73.9%, n=479) were aware of several opportunities for them to share their opinions and suggestions concerning the work of the council. Sixty-five percent (64.9%, n=479) agreed that the council incorporates volunteers' suggestions into the work of the council; 25.5% of all volunteers (n=479) and 40.4% of first-year volunteers (n=136) were unsure. See page 11 for select comments.

Since 2007, the Girl Scout Movement has been going through a process of transformation. It's touched everything—from the uniforms Girl Scouts wear and the programs they take part in, to the structure and brand of the Girl Scout organization itself. The intention of these wide-reaching changes is to make us better able than ever to carry out our mission: Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place. The 2010 membership year falls in the middle of this multi-year transition period, which culminates in 2012, with the 100th anniversary of the founding for Girl Scouts. Troop volunteers were split as to how they felt about these changes; 40.0% believed that too many changes were happening at the same time, 36.0% disagreed, and 24.0% were unsure (n=475).

Nevertheless, troop volunteers believe in the Girl Scout Movement and its mission. Nearly all survey respondents agreed that "girls can take action to make the world a better place at any age" (98.3%, n=472). They are able to explain the Girl Scout mission to others (87.4%, n=477), feel that the organization understands the challenges faced by volunteers (76.4%, n=478), and think that the movement is headed in the right direction (74.9%, n=475). See page 11 for select comments.

Recommendations

- Additional resources and support may need to be developed to encourage and guide troop volunteers through activities related to service and leadership and outdoor skills. There is a significant opportunity for growth in troop participation in these areas.
- Among those that expressed an opinion, the journey curriculum is not yet well-understood or well-received. Initial volunteer training and continuing support should be enhanced to assist troop volunteers in working with the program materials, customizing the activities to meet their girls' needs, and fostering an appreciation for the goals and structure of the program.
- The troop structure would benefit from increased parental involvement with troop operations and increased troop volunteer involvement with council operations. The messages communicated and the support methods in place should be examined to ensure a welcoming, accessible environment at all levels.
- The leader mentor program for first-year troop volunteers is well-received by those that have participated. A strong effort to match all new volunteers with a mentor (or at least a list of local fellow volunteers) should be made.
- Volunteer suggested several easy-to-implement methods for improving service unit meetings. These ideas should be incorporated into an opportunity for coaching/development of the service unit team leadership, so that a positive, vibrant, welcoming environment is created for all volunteers.
- Communication from the council staff regarding opportunities for volunteers to share their ideas, and the actions taken (or not taken) based on their ideas, should be improved.
- Future Troop Volunteer Reviews should incorporate the following updates: resources should be updated to current offerings, including the council and national Girl Scout websites; common leadership activities with younger girls can be listed (bridging activities, community service projects, event/meeting assistance, teaching a specific skill); and common community service project topics can be listed (animals, children, environment, the less-fortunate, military, senior citizens).

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What Troop Volunteers Say about Their Troop's Community Service/Take Action Projects

- Both troops voted to give 20% of their profits from Fall/Cookie sale programs to the Humane Society. Both troops collected items from the Humane Society's wish list and we delivered them as a troop.
- We collected food for the Food Pantry, collected Books for a Book Drive, participated in Cookie Share and collected letters to be sent with the cookies overseas, and adopted a family that needed assistance at Christmas.
- The girls sang Christmas carols and visited the nursing home to pass out Christmas cards they had made to residents. The girls also cleaned up a memory garden at their local elementary school by pulling weeds, putting down mulch, and planting flowers in the garden.
- Using the Wonders of Water book, we established a water-saving project first in our own homes, then including the second graders at their schools, and finally school-wide.
- We painted flower pots to beautify the flooded Cedar Rapids neighborhood, adding messages learned from their Journey.
- We donated some of our cookie money to purchasing various items and gift cards and donated them to Bethany for Children and Families. The girls in the troop also donated additional items to Bethany. We took a tour of the Bethany facility. We are also making stepping stones to beautify our school grounds - there is a path we take from the school to our meeting room that is muddy and messy throughout the winter and we will use our stepping stones to make this path less messy.
- We made blankets with Miss Junior Iowa for NICU babies. We participated in Join Hands Day at Modern Woodman Park. We deliver Valentine's Day cards to a local nursing home each year. We are giving the Clarissa C. Cook Hospice House Girl Scout Cookies from our Cookie Share project.

What Troop Volunteers Say about Their Troop Working with Younger Girls

- My troop helped run the sessions at our service unit Cookie Rally in January. My Juniors planned and ran a Badge Day about the history of Girl Scouting; they earned their (Girl Scout) Bronze Award.
- We started working on our Junior Aide (award) and worked with a Brownie troop to help them earn a Try-It.
- Our school does a monthly meeting with all the troops. My Junior troops does help lead the younger girls.
- Our troop hosted the Fall Frolic at Camp Little Cloud.
- We taught them the flag ceremony. We also worked with them teaching songs and playing groups games.

What Troop Volunteers Say about Troop Management and Involvement

- We started in February, so we haven't met much. Service meetings are (held at the same time as) when the leader and myself work, so we are unable to attend. It's not that we choose not to attend. We don't get information on everything, but we get stuff from another troop.
- The most difficult part of the year for me as a leader was negotiating conflict with two moms of girls in the troop. Both of these parents are interested in telling me what to do but offer very little assistance and a lot of criticism. I am actually considering not returning as a leader next year.
- We didn't attend any council events unfortunately because the main leader felt it was too much money and with the cost of gas, it was not worth going. This is going to change next year.
- Council activities are usually a long way to drive.
- Our girls are older and we only meet once a month. The girls planned and had a Haunted House for young children. We did (participate in) the fall sale and cookie sale programs. The girls have been planning a trip for the end of the year and decided on Chicago.

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What Troop Volunteers Say about Their Major Accomplishments

- I enjoyed forming a close bond between the girls in the troop, building the excitement of Girl Scouting, and offering them many opportunities to explore the world and Girl Scouting.
- The girls began to take the lead in choosing activities and planning them.
- It was rewarding to help a girl with behavior problems become an effective member of our troop.
- We earned all of our Girl Scout Daisy petals in creative and fun ways, which the girls enjoyed.
- We were able to complete a journey and begin to plan working on the Girl Scout Bronze Award with the girls.
- Growing the troop from 1 to 15 girls was something I'm proud of.
- It was amazing to have the girls so excited about helping others in the community that are less fortunate than themselves. It was neat to see them understanding the impact and meaning behind it.
- I was honored to have gained the trust of the girls and their parents.
- Our girls did an outstanding job with cookie sales this year and went past their goals.
- I think it's great being able to meet with so many different people from around the community that I normally wouldn't think of calling if I wasn't a Girl Scout volunteer.
- Not only do I feel that I have made a difference in the lives of these girls, but I feel that they have made a difference in mine as well.

What Troop Volunteers Say about Their Greatest Challenges

- It was difficult to fit time in to volunteer around work, personal responsibilities, and family commitments.
- Getting my troop to listen to me, settle down, and follow the rules they made up themselves was hard.
- I had to get over my fear of messing up. I want to keep the girls interested and teach them new experiences, but at first I was terrified of messing up, and of being in charge.
- I am very organized and had to learn when to let some things go, let the girls do it themselves.
- It was hard incorporating the journey materials into troop meetings and activities. The girls are too young to read, and they just weren't interested in the journey book.
- My greatest challenge: inside voices.
- I tried to keep everyone involved and make them feel special.
- There was a lack of planning and commitment from co-leaders. As the "leader," I am looked to do the majority of the planning, organizing, and tracking.

What Returning Troop Volunteers Say about the Leader Mentor Program

- I wish I'd had a formal leader mentor! This experience would have been less stressful and more enjoyable!
- I don't mind helping new leaders but I don't have the time to commit to additional meetings.
- I would love to help train leaders and build the program in my area.
- As a training mentor, I noticed a disconnect between leaders. An idea would be to have a council member come speak to new leaders and answer questions.

What First-Year Troop Volunteers Say about Support

- I loved the SOS Letter! It answered all my questions and concerns.
- Our service unit did not have a leader mentor this past school year.
- I received very little mentor help on how to start up a new troop.
- I contacted another leader whom I adopted as my mentor. I was never assigned one.
- I would have liked to have had a leader mentor. I ended up contacting my Regional Membership Manager for everything.
- Distribute a contact list of all leaders, grades, schools, and service unit leadership, for better access to support.

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What Troop Volunteers Say about Additional Support They Need

- I would like to get to know the parents of my girls better.
- It would be helpful to have more materials/guidelines for new leaders on how to structure and plan.
- We need more leaders. People are not willing to step forward to take on the role. They will help when needed, but do not want to take on the responsibility of being a leader.
- Add another day to week?
- There should be better communication between council and leaders. We are told do something differently by several people and it gets confusing, to the point you do not want to even bother.
- Continued support is what I would say; the council was very good this year in providing support!
- Every leader should be provided with a mentor and every troop should be given a set of books for their level.
- It would be nice if minutes from the Service Unit meetings were sent out. I found them very helpful, but have had conflicts with the time the last several months and have been unable to attend. I am always wondering what I am missing!

What Troop Volunteers Say about Recognition and How They Felt Valued

- School staff compliment me and thank me for my service regularly.
- I was awarded Outstanding Volunteer this year and Outstanding Leader last year.
- I really enjoy being in the background and allowing my girls to shine!
- The girls will stop you at the store and hug you. It melts my heart when they are so happy to see me.
- I feel like I am helping young girls get involved with something they can use throughout their lives.
- I felt good to know that I was able to help so many girls participate in Girl Scouts this year and have had several new girls express interest in joining next year.
- Parents really appreciate all the time and effort I make to our troop. I feel very valuable.
- The council is very good at saying "Thank You!" to volunteers. It means more to me to see the girls enjoy themselves and get something out of our time with them.
- The girls have fun and my daughter enjoys Girl Scouts, and that is the true value I find in volunteering. I also like getting to know the girls in her class and their families.
- The girls looked up to me, which made me work harder to be a better role model.
- The service unit is always making us feel good by helping us with problems and genuinely making us feel important by not putting off anything we ask for help on.

What Troop Volunteers Say about Service Unit Meetings

- I really don't see a benefit to attending the meetings. I will not make the effort next year.
- The meeting runs too late because it does not follow a agenda and there is too much extra talking. I find it a waste of my time and I dread going.
- It is not a benefit to receive the same information that was send by mail or e-mail. Service unit meetings need to have information that I have not gotten somewhere else first to be a wise use of my time.
- I feel like there is no one in the service unit that I can go to, to get help or support. I am very disappointed; since this is a Girl Scout organization, I thought that it would be a nicer and more helpful environment.
- I enjoy connecting with the other leaders, discussing ideas, learning what issues they've faced, and how they handled it.
- The meetings foster a sense of community, knowing I can ask a question and there are resourceful people that can give me answers.
- There was always some information available about resources or upcoming events that I had not heard of before; this helped me to pass information along to the families of our Girl Scouts.
- We added a training to the second half (of our meetings) this year and it was great and well-received.

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What Troop Volunteers Say about Their Girl Scout Council

- I feel like the council is disorganized. It takes a long time for me to get/find answers.
- We need continuity in positions - it's hard to keep track of who does what - I hope our Regional Membership Manager is around for a long time.
- I have found the professional staff to be very responsive and helpful. (Thanks!)
- I love all of the community action/outreach programs that the council does.
- Programming needs to be improved - we need more choices - not everyone wants to do journeys - we want to explore different topics.
- The council as a whole forgets about the rural areas.
- I feel that, being in Illinois, we are not always included as much as we could be.
- I feel our council has not been there for us and our voices are not being heard.
- (The council) tries to incorporate opinions/suggestions, but it could do better explaining why suggestions are not implemented.
- I have been involved with more than one council and GSEIWI really does listen to the volunteers. The efficacy of the council's ability to implement the opinions/suggestions is difficult to measure as some ideas don't work in all service units.

What Troop Volunteers Say about the Girl Scout Movement

- I have not found the journeys to be helpful or interesting to the girls in my troop. They much prefer to work on the Girl Scout Daisy petals and other badges.
- I'm not convinced that the journeys are a good thing, but we haven't given it a try other than to skim the materials and decide not to use them. Hopefully, we are wrong and other troops are enjoying them. I really haven't heard any feedback. We intended to use the badge book instead and purchased copies, but the requirements for many seemed overwhelming. Thus, the girls are not interested in using those materials, so we're pretty much making up our own activities.
- There seems to be a lot of paperwork involved in every aspect of troop leadership. I was very surprised by that. Also, it seems a bit strange that leaders/co-leaders have to pay to participate when there wouldn't be a troop without their volunteer service.
- Broken homes, unemployed parents, and uninvolved parents make challenges difficult for leaders.
- The focus is too broad. I wish Girl Scouting would focus less globally and really work on building girls' self esteem and relationships.
- The Girl Scouting Movement would do better, in my opinion, to go back to basics and find its niche rather than trying to be everything to everybody.
- I am concerned that Girl Scouts is headed too far into the eco-recycling world. I think the goal of Girl Scouts should be more about the girls and less about the environment. As a rule, we hear the environmental message on a daily basis. Although I agree it is important to be responsible for our actions and to keep our wastefulness to a minimum, Girl Scouts does not need to hammer this message constantly. Let the girls do traditional Girl Scout activities sometimes without an environmental twist. Sometimes, they just want to be girls (not adults) and have fun!
- We need to stop empathizing "being green" and focus more on academic and physical challenges and being a leader in all areas.
- The girls must be urged to make the world better, not just be an observer.



girl scouts of eastern iowa and western illinois

**Girl Scouts of Eastern Iowa
and Western Illinois**

800-798-0833
www.GSEIWI.org

**Burlington Area
Leadership Center**

1308 Broadway Street, PO Box 190
West Burlington, IA 52655

**Cedar Rapids Area
Leadership Center**

317 Seventh Avenue SE, Suite 201
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401

**Decorah Area
Satellite Office**

801 Commerce Drive
Decorah, IA 52101

**Dubuque Area
Leadership Center**

2644 Pennsylvania Avenue
Dubuque, IA 52001

**Quad Cities Area
Leadership Center**

2011 Second Avenue
Rock Island, IL 61201

**Waterloo Area
Leadership Center**

2530 University Avenue, Ste 1
Waterloo, IA 50701

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