YOUR support sent girls to camp this summer!

Each year, camperships send girls to summer camp to develop an appreciation of the outdoors, make new friends and try new things.

During the summer of 2015, your generosity made a camp experience possible for 262 girls who would not have otherwise been able to attend. The GSSJC Campership Committee reviewed applications and approved $89,387 in assistance just for this summer.

You, and other donors like you, made this possible. Please continue your support in making these life-changing experiences possible for girls. Donate at http://donate.gssjc.org and mark campership under the designation.

How YOU can help now!

It costs $259 per girl to make Girl Scouting happen

Ever wondered how much Girl Scouting costs? On average, it takes $259 to make Girl Scouting a reality for girls in our Council. Your tax-deductible gift before the end of 2015 can help continue to make Girl Scouting possible in southeast Texas.

How your gift can impact girls:

$2 per week for one year: ($104)

7 girls become Girl Scout members for an entire year

$5 per week for one year: ($260)

2 Girl Scout troops (14 girls) participate in team building activities on the Challenge ROPES course

$10 per week for one year: ($520)

50 low-income families experience outdoor activities during Family Day at Girl Scout camp

$20 per week for one year: ($1,040)

26 girls experience an introduction to sailing where they learn STEM-related topics such as weather, harnessing the wind, and aquatic wildlife

$50 per week for one year: ($2,600)

65 girls from low-income families experience a five-day/day/twilight camp

Get ready for #GivingTuesday, Dec. 1

We have a day for giving thanks. We have two days for shopping deals. Now, we have #GivingTuesday, a global day dedicated to giving back. On Tuesday, December 1, 2015, charities, families, businesses, community centers and students around the world will come together for one common purpose: to celebrate generosity and to give.

Give back to Girl Scouts this #GivingTuesday! Mark the date on your calendar and stay tuned to gssjc.org for more details.
Each year Girl Scouts across the country are given the opportunity to travel to foreign countries on trips designed just for them. From Costa Rica to Wales to the Virgin Islands, Girl Scout Destinations trips are one of the great opportunities provided for girls who want to explore the world and experience new things.

During the summer of 2015, Girl Scout Katie H. from Troop #3023 was one of 15 girls nationwide selected from a pool of applicants for a guided tour of China.

**Here is her experience:**

After more than a day of traveling to China, we finally arrived to start our Destinations trip the morning of July 2. In Chengdu we met our translator and went shopping on a traditional street where I bought Tibetan beaded bracelets made by local villagers. There they also sold beautiful leaf drawings with hand painted pictures of panda bears, which I also purchased. It was really fun learning how to barter with the shopkeepers! While out in the city, many people stopped our group and asked for pictures because they liked our lighter hair and complexions. Other people just held up their phones and took pictures as we walked by.

On day two, we toured our first giant panda center in Ya'an. It was amazing to see this endangered species up close for the first time ever. We also visited the center’s veterinary hospital and had a question and answer session with one of the panda doctors.

The next two days we volunteered at the Dujiangyan Panda Valley. We spent the day cleaning enclosures, making panda cakes, watching a documentary on the panda release program and, best of all, feeding the pandas. Feeding and scratching the pandas was the absolute best experience in the world! We also weeded in the center’s tea garden and hiked through the mountains of the panda center. We walked around Dujiangyan at night and listened to a couple of street performers. It was magical.

The next day we toured the Chengdu Giant Panda Breeding Center and saw newborn pandas. Later that evening, we went to a Chinese variety show and saw a Chinese opera with fire eaters, puppets, shadow dancers and mask changers!

On July 7 we flew to Beijing and had breakfast at a Chinese McDonalds! We spent the rest of the day exploring the Forbidden City, some pagodas and hiking up a nearby mountain looking over the city. We took the subway around Beijing to go to an indoor bazaar. There were mopeds everywhere, and the women in the city were dressed very trendy from their hair down to their shoes – even when riding on the mopeds!

On our final day, we walked to Tiananmen Square to see the daily flag raising ceremony. There were thousands of people who came every morning to see China’s flag raised and hear the national anthem.

I had a wonderful experience in China. I learned a lot about the Chinese culture and a ton of facts about the endangered giant panda. **Thank you so much, GSSJC, for supporting me and helping me get ready for this amazing trip!**

**Girls who travel on Destinations are eligible for Council scholarships, which help make these world-wide excursions a reality for nearly every girl applying. Your support of GSSJC can help a girl travel the world, experience new things and grow her confidence. Give at http://donate.gssjc.org.**
From s’mores around the campfire to gourmet s’mores desserts at Main Kitchen

Erin Smith, the executive chef for Main Kitchen at the JW Marriott Houston Downtown, has dazzled and delighted taste buds with her culinary prowess from New York to San Francisco—and to think she might never have been a chef! She’s returned to her hometown where she has worked at restaurants like Blacksmith, Plonk! and spent nine months as the culinary director for the Clumsy Butcher restaurant group. But another lifetime and a few decades ago, Erin was a Girl Scout with Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council.

GSSJC: How do you think your time in Girl Scouts helped you?
ES: Certainly it impacted me. It’s the first time in a girl’s life where we are making friendships in an all-girl environment where there isn’t pressure to compete in a male hierarchy where you’re just trying to find a place. Every girl had a place, and we were learning to lead and work towards our goals.

GSSJC: And that team aspect plays well in the kitchen?
ES: Yeah, absolutely. In this hotel we have a lot of women in powerful roles, like our female pastry chef, and that’s interesting because we work well together. We have a lot of really strong, opinionated women here, and it works.

GSSJC: What was your favorite part about being a Girl Scout?
ES: Many of my fondest memories are of going to resident camp during the summer. A big part of that was about going into a different environment together and living those friendships. One memory I have is of building gingerbread houses. It’s funny because that is something I do professionally now. And s’mores, of course. Not too long ago [at Main Kitchen] we featured a dessert that was our take on s’mores, and that certainly brought back a lot of sweet memories.

GSSJC: What skills did Girl Scouts teach you that you use today?
ES: Girl Scouts taught me how to own my decisions. You have to have confidence in yourself to do something that scares you. You don’t have to have the entire world’s support, but you do have to have your own support. The fact that you want to do it is the only reason you need.

GSSJC: What is something you would want to cook for Girl Scouts if you took them camping?
ES: I think it would be fun to make a rustic cornbread, like they did in the old days with just a skillet and your fire. Maybe we’d even catch a fish and grill it. There is something to be said about connecting nature with us, and we can do that through our food.

GSSJC: What would you tell the girls of today?
ES: Women are smart. We all have something to bring to the table whether that’s passion, brains or both. A lot of women feel societal pressure to stay in certain roles or careers, but you need to be able to step out and do what you want. You have to stand up for yourself and who you are.

Your continued support of Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council helps build courage, confidence and character in girls, like Erin, who go forward in their adult life to take on important leadership roles. Please support Girl Scout programs that teach girls leadership skills by giving generously at http://donate.gssjc.org.

Join today!
The Emerald Circle helps girls go to college

It’s time again for The Emerald Circle to reach out and welcome new and renewing members for 2015-2016, and you are cordially invited to join. All it takes to become a member is a commitment to support GSSJC, the desire to encourage outstanding Girl Scouts to continue developing as “leaders of tomorrow” and a financial contribution at whatever membership level you choose.

New for this year only is a special $100 membership category in recognition of the 100th anniversary of the Highest Award. You can join online at GSSJC’s donation page—https://donate.gssjc.org/. (Under Amount, choose Other and fill in the membership fee; then click on Gold Award Scholarships in the Designation drop-down menu. Click on Add Donation. In the next screen, type TEC membership in the Comments section under Additional Information.)

Membership is open to anyone, woman or man, who supports higher education for girls and The Emerald Circle’s goal of “changing the world one girl at a time” through the Gold Award Merit Scholarship program. The scholarships and follow-up with scholarship recipients provide a connection to Girl Scouting beyond high school.

Since 1996, 406 Gold Award Merit Scholarships have been awarded by The Emerald Circle, and a total of $564,000 has supported Ambassadors who have earned the Gold Award and gone on to attend college and to make a difference in the world!

If you have questions about membership, send an email to emeraldcircle@sjgs.org.
Girl Scout creates labyrinth at MECA to earn Gold Award

Francesca Farris, a graduate of James E. Taylor High School, earned the Girl Scout Gold Award – the highest award in Girl Scouting. The award recognizes girls in grades 9 through 12 who demonstrate extraordinary leadership through sustainable and measurable Take Action projects.

To earn the award, Farris built a labyrinth on the Multicultural Education and Counseling through Art (MECA) campus in Houston to raise awareness about the spiritual and cultural significance of the ancient archetype. A labyrinth is a single path used for personal and psychological transformation through a journey.

“I chose this project because this past year I participated in the Sacred Sites Quest program with the Boniuk Institute at Rice University,” said Farris. “Over the course of a year we visited 13 different faith-based institutions and the culminating project was to build a labyrinth in the historic Freedman’s Town of Houston’s 4th Ward. I wanted to continue spreading the education of labyrinths by building one at MECA.”

The labyrinth in 4th Ward stood as a landmark to prevent developers from destroying a historic part of Houston. “For centuries the labyrinth has been a symbol of pilgrimage,” said Alice Valdez, executive director of MECA. “It is fitting then for MECA to sponsor the creation of “Earth, Wind and Light” a labyrinth for the Old 6th Ward which has been home to new immigrants or pilgrims. They were searching for a better life from the “old world” to the “new world.”

The installation of the labyrinth took place in mid-July. It took several months for Farris and MECA to finalize the design that compliments the existing architecture and surroundings of MECA’s campus and to collect supplies.

“MECA has played a key role in procuring a site for the project and obtained a sizeable, in-kind donation in the form of 270 cement pavers that will line and adorn the labyrinth path,” said Armando Silva, MECA’s development director. “To further enhance the project, MECA’s artistic team has developed a themed curriculum centered on labyrinth culture that will be implemented in its Summer Sunburst Arts Camp.”

Her team of recruits consists of volunteers who helped build the Freedman’s Town labyrinth, including Reginald Adams and Jay Stailey, and members of the MECA community. Adams is a local artist who leads diverse groups in the design and production of community-based art and Stailey is an expert on labyrinths and builds and leads walks through Houston’s most notable archetypes.

At the end of summer camp, a site specific recital was presented on the labyrinth that correlates the healing qualities and design of it with similar qualities found in the arts. This summer project was titled Tierra, Viento, y Luz/Earth, Wind, and Light.

“I know from experience that building a labyrinth will create a deeper spiritual connection to MECA,” said Farris. The creation and installation of the labyrinth will benefit MECA’s community in several ways. It will serve as a vehicle through which the community can focus and engage students in non-arts areas of study like mechanical engineering, civil engineering, and other STEM fields. For MECA’s neighborhood it will serve to make use of and beautify a currently vacant lot. Because the property owners have agreed to maintain the installation for a minimum of two years, the labyrinth will be used as a public space that neighbors can visit as often as they choose. Finally, MECA will include those neighbors wishing to participate in the installation thereby giving them a sense of ownership also. In this way we are strengthening the bond between MECA and its neighbors.

In addition to building the labyrinth, Farris plans on hosting walks with groups of people from all ages that visit MECA to teach them about labyrinths.

Your support of GSSJC helps girls like Francesca achieve the highest honor in Girl Scouting. To learn how to donate, visit http://donate.gssjc.org.
As Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council’s longest consecutive year corporate donor, you might say Randalls knows a few things about giving back to the community. From support through their Good Neighbor program to in-kind donations and table sponsorships for Council events and, of course, allowing girls to host cookie booths at their stores, Randalls is a model corporate partner for GSSJC.

“Randalls has always believed in giving back to the communities we serve,” said Community Relations Manager Dawne Proffitt. “Being involved and lending a hand when needed unites people and builds stronger communities.” Supporting Girl Scouts has been key for Randalls since the partnership with GSSJC began in 1992.

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“Girl Scouts provides programs and a platform for girls to become courageous, competent and confident leaders of tomorrow,” said Proffitt. “The girl you support today could be a future leader of your company.”

Their belief in instilling leadership skills in girls is at the core of their commitment to Girl Scouting. “Communities need strong leaders to unite, care for and serve its people,” said Proffitt. “Girls become women and leaders of companies, civic organizations, schools and in their own home.”

While their support touches many areas of the Council, the most visible is their support of the Girl Scout Cookie Program, which teaches girls important financial literacy skills that will last a lifetime in addition to providing them with funds for activities. “Hosting Girl Scouts in our stores provides girls with many retail-related experiences such as creating a display, approaching people to invite them to make a purchase, handling money, tracking sales and inventory, scheduling shifts and even how to handle rejection,” said Proffitt.

Without support from companies like Randalls, many programs and opportunities in GSSJC – like hosting cookie booths – would not be possible.

For more information on how your company can give back to Girl Scouts, visit gssjc.org and click on Our Council, Donate.

Donor Highlight...Randalls

Great care has been exercised to ensure the proper recognition of our donors. If an error or omission does occur, we apologize and hope you will bring it to our attention. Contact 713-292-0273 or sboak@gssjc.org. Honorariums listed are $250 and above. 

(Contributions made June 1-August 31, 2015)

$25,000+ Ambassador

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In honor of Jack and Claire Bevis
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In honor of John and Marie Graham
In honor of Dr. and Mrs. W.M. Lamphere
In honor of Dr. and Mrs. Reginald E. Proctor
In honor of Dr. and Mrs. James C. W. Bland
In honor of Dr. and Mrs. F.P. Rhine
In honor of Dr. and Mrs. Calvin F. Mathers
In honor of Dr. and Mrs. Estelle A. DuBois

Honorariums

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Coralee Blytas
In honor of George Ann Barrett
Cheryl L. O’Brien
In honor of Linda Betts
Andrea J. Hyde
Paul Procoehl
In honor of Adriene Crosby
Beth Shea
In honor of Marlene Edwards
Coralee Blytas

In honor of Lucille Feigenbaum
Deborah G. Beatty
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Coralee Blytas
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In honor of Donna Rolland
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Janna Laudato
In honor of Louise Villejo
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In Memory of George Rook Edwards
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In memory of Helen Wilburn
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Janna Laudato

In honor of Janie Proffitt
Margaret W. DeMoss
Janna Laudato
The North Face Awards GSSJC Explore Fund Grant

GSSJC was awarded The North Face’s 2015 Explore Fund grant this summer that will benefit the Council’s backpacking group. This $6,000 grant will provide GSSJC with the funds to purchase approximately 41 backpacks and 18 tents that girls can check out for weekend trips. These supplies will last 5-10 years as Council backpackers learn backpacking basics and take backpacking trips across Texas during the Girl Scout year. Find out how your corporate gift can benefit girls by emailing donate@sjgs.org.

Why I Give

Monica Maby King, J.D.

As a Girl Scout growing up in Houston, Monica Maby King loved canoeing, camping, sailing and horseback riding. Her first overnight camping trip was to Camp Robinwood, located in Willis, where she won a campfire building award. It’s fair to say if it was outdoor activity, Monica was excited to experience it!

Monica was re-acquainted with Girl Scouts 10 years ago. “My husband and I were impressed with the great work GSSJC was and is doing. I also began to reflect on how fortunate I had been growing up to have so many wonderful women take the time (and it takes a lot of time) and step out of their own comfort zone to attend the training so they could be our leaders and allow us girls to have so many wonderful experiences that I would have never had otherwise.”

Some of that reflecting allowed Monica to realize that although she didn’t have daughters, her Girl Scout adventures – including earning Girl Scouting’s highest honor, the First Class, which is now called the Gold Award – helped her become a better leader for her sons when they entered Boy Scouts. She also felt the call to give back to San Jacinto Council, including terms on the board of directors, of which she is a current member, an Urban Campout chair and a Board Development Committee chair in addition to supporting the Council financially.

“From that first Urban Campout that I volunteered at, I was blown away with the passion and dedication of so many volunteers from all over the Council who worked so hard to make the event a success,” said Monica. “And it wasn’t just for that event; it is for everything related to Girl Scouts from the employees to troop leaders to the cookie program. Helping girls reach their potential and beyond is the priority and it shows.”

Make a gift to GSSJC in your will. One of the simplest ways for you to make a future contribution is to include Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council in your will. If you have already made GSSJC one of your nonprofit beneficiaries, please share this with us. For more information, contact Diane Pavey at dpavey@sjgs.org or 713-292-0277.