

Transforming Leadership for Girls

Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council Slide Presentation

Transcript

Slide 1:

At the Regional Meetings this past January, we began a discussion about how Girl Scouts was changing. We introduced some new ideas and some new phrases that we will hear more and more in the future. Girl Scouts, even in its transformational phase, is still centered on the **girl**. That has not changed.

Slide 2:

If you were asked to think about one person who has shown leadership in your personal world, hopefully, the qualities you remember are positive ones. You might have identified some qualities you possess and perhaps some you might like to have! More importantly, we hope you have identified leadership qualities that you would like your daughter and the other girls in your troop or group to have, as they become leaders of today and tomorrow.

- Whenever we think about the many changes (or transformations) we are making in Girl Scouts, we must remember how very important our own “people role” is in Girl Scouting. We’re all in this together and we must be very purposeful in our approach to Adult Leadership.
- When you’re home and thinking about the overall transformation of Girl Scouts to an organization that builds leaders, we hope you’ll have some time to consider how the ‘keys to leadership’ apply to you – and how important your efforts are to move the Girl Scout Movement forward for the girls.

Slide 3:

There’s been a lot going on in Girl Scouting these last several years! It’s really important that everyone has an understanding of what we are trying to accomplish.

What follows is a quick summary of the Core Business Strategy that continues to serve as our road map. The center of our national strategy is **girls** --- and we need to say that very clearly --- it will always be the **girls**. The role of the adult volunteer will change a bit because our actions will be intentional – always with a purpose – and, we will be able to see the difference we make in the girls’ lives.

As you can see, the columns on the left are now transforming into those statements on the right. The result will be a stronger organization all around.

Slide 4:

This diagram represents the complete Leadership Experience and is called the ‘engine’ of what Girl Scouts is about. It will, in essence, ‘drive us’ or take us to the goal of “transforming leadership” -- on the part of the girls AND the volunteers working with the girls. On the left side – the 3 Leadership Keys and the 3 processes – the keys are the

activities or **what** the girls will do; the processes are the “how” they’ll be doing these activities.

By participating in activities based on the 3 Leadership Keys, the girls are **discovering** their own abilities, interests, and values, **connecting** with others to learn and experience something new, and are ready, able, and willing to **take action** with what they’ve learned to make a difference in their world or community.

We’ve always reminded volunteers that the girls should choose their troop activities – and as the girls get older they will be able to take more responsibility in the troop. Well, it’s official – starting at the younger levels, activities can and should be **GIRL led**. Girls will be making more and more decisions – even at the Girl Scout Daisy level! Activities will have an *intentional purpose* [within the Discover, Connect, Take Action focuses] where the girls will **learn by doing** – not just listening – and where they can **learn cooperatively** (or together). Activities are so much more interesting and fun if they are hands-on and done with others.

With the right focus, and the right processes meaning ways of working with the girls, this will ‘drive’ us to the intended destination that we’ll call ‘outcomes’. The word ‘outcome’ is a term used by funders and educators. Other words we can use are ‘benefits’ or ‘results’. The ‘benefits’ to girls are well-defined noticeable results that tell you if the activity was successful in its purpose and how it was accomplished. It is our hope that this will become second nature to us and we won’t have to remember this chart – but you can see the value of putting this into a visual for all of us to remember.

If you are interested in reading more regarding the measurable results of typical Girl Scout activities, you will find the GSUSA publication Transforming Leadership very interesting. The book describes the processes, and especially the ‘outcomes’, in all that we do with the girls. It is available on line for purchase from GSUSA – or can be downloaded from the GSUSA web site: <http://girlscouts.org/research/publications/> .

All this ‘drives’ everything we do to the Girl Scout mission, which is our long term outcome: To develop girls who can lead with courage, confidence, and character to make the world a better place.

Slide 5:

As we talk more about Girl Scouts becoming a leadership-driven organization, we’d like you to understand why Leadership was chosen as the number one priority – the number one purpose for the organization. Although we take girls camping, we are not a camping organization. We do crafts, but that is not our strength; we sell cookies but we are not a bakery and we are not trying to turn all our girls into saleswomen! So, what do we do best? What do we do that no other organization does? We encourage girls, give them opportunities that they would not normally have, and we teach girls the skills they need to be successful leaders. We even give them opportunities to lead younger girls.

So, what does leadership mean to today’s girls? The transformation of leadership came from the Girl Scout Research Institute where, after much surveying of girls of all ages (both Girl Scouts and non-members), it was discovered that, most often, girls did not like the traditional ‘one-person leader at the top’, and everyone else in the group is left out. It takes a long time to get a chance to “lead” if there is only one leader at a time.

The 'team' model was preferred by most girls, where everyone works and learns together.

The research indicated that girls view the purpose of leadership differently from the traditional model. Power and status are not typical goals for girls. The teamwork approach is preferred because the work can be shared by the participants and usually produces successful results. Teamwork also allows each participant to demonstrate leadership qualities.

The Girl Scout Research Institutes' study on the topic of leadership has been published in a volume called Exploring Girls' Leadership and is available on line, or again, for free on the GSUSA web site.

Slide 6:

So, you can see the value of the new leadership experience. Discovering, connecting and taking action actually transforms our girls into leaders. It will transform our volunteers into more effective leaders as well.

Slide 7:

What is a Journey?

- A nationally packaged journey is designed to make it easy for girls and the volunteers who guide them to engage in the Leadership Experience. By following the journey plan—girls and adults will be “doing the leadership experience”--- without having to deeply know all the concepts.
- A journey puts themed activities, discussions, team building and reflections in a sequence that makes sense. The “sample sessions” in the adult guides are intended -- not as a “set number of meetings” -- but to provide momentum and a road map for a ‘whole adventure’ that has more impact than any one activity in the journeys. No matter how much time girls spend on a journey, the whole is always greater than any single part.
- The journeys have been created to provide meaningful experiences centered on both the keys to leadership – Discover, Connect, Take Action -- and the processes— girl led, learning by doing and cooperative learning.
- Journeys will provide an important foundation for each age level in Girl Scouting for girls and volunteers. Just by following a journey, members will be engaging in the New Girl Scout Leadership Experience (and practicing some Girl Scout traditions!). When the journey ends, girls and their volunteers can apply what they have learned to everything else they do in Girl Scouting.

Slide 8:

The first journey series is called: **“It’s Your World – Change It.”**

- That's because, the major focus of this journey -- at every grade level -- is girls learning to *Take Action* to change their world.
- **Taking Action is different than service** – we are really talking about girls exploring some of the values, team building and critical thinking skills that enable them to get at root causes of problems and begin to create solutions that contribute to change.
- Let's take a look at how this “It's Your World – Change It” journey series will provide Girl Scouting with a clear ladder of leadership skills and values that girls will climb as they advance in Girl Scouting.

Slide 9:

In the series girls at every level have a unique call to action as leaders.

- The **Daisy Flower Garden** is a journey for kindergarteners and first-graders where a favorite pastime, gardening, meets the Girl Scout Law. The result is a storybook world of flowers and little girls who, together, do great things. Girl Scout Daisies will especially enjoy meeting the colorful, international characters who teach them to live the Girl Scout Law. The adult “how-to” guide offers Garden Story Time tips, key ideas for garden projects, and all the Girl Scout history and traditions needed for an adventure starring Amazing Daisy, a new flower friend for the girls.
- What are the most important keys for a Girl Scout to own? The **Brownie Quest**, which has second and third graders traveling along two colorful trails – one they can enjoy on their own and one they explore with their Girl Scout group – answers that question in a very special way. Along the Quest, Girl Scout Brownies will meet three new friends and a bright and shining elf – in a brand-new Brownie story meant to inspire their own Take Action Projects. The accompanying adult guide offers all the tips needed to create and maintain a sense of fun and mystery along the entire Quest. Instructions for a Brownie Brainstorm, Brownie Team Trade, and other activities ensure a quality and fun time for the girls.
- **Girl Scout Juniors** go even further with their journey called **Agent of Change**, which is filled with ceremonies and circles, real-life heroines, and special new characters, including the fashion-savvy spider named Dez. Along the way, girls learn how their own power combines into team power and then moves out to become community power (kind of like how Dez weaves her web from the inside out.) The journey's centerpiece is a comic story of girl heroines who will inspire the Juniors to create their own stories – on paper and in life.

Slide 10:

- Life is a ‘**Maze**’ of relationships and this next journey has **Girl Scout Cadettes** maneuvering through all its twists and turns to find true friendships, plenty of

confidence, and maybe even peace. As they focus on the relationship skills we all need as leaders, they learn skills to resolve conflicts and to cope with bullies. The adult guide offers tips for talking about relationship issues with girls, and pointers for understanding Cadettes' development and creating a safe, welcoming space.

- **Girl Scout Seniors** know the world is not ideal. Their journey, called **GIRLtopia**, is their chance to imagine a perfect world – *for girls*. What if we could all learn to read? What if there was no violence in the world? They're invited to create their vision as an art project – in any medium they choose. Then they'll take action to make their vision a reality through action projects that bring the world a little closer to ideal!. Leaders, after all, are visionaries!
- How often have you seen something that really needed to be changed and wondered “Why isn't someone doing something about that?” The journey called **Your Voice, Your World: The Power of Advocacy** gives **Girl Scout Ambassadors** a way to be that someone – an advocate with the power to start the first flutter of real and lasting change. While creating their own “butterfly effect,” they'll gain an array of skills – such as networking, planning, and learning to speak up for what they believe – that will benefit them as they prepare for life beyond high school.

Slide 11:

So, at every level, this series of journeys invites girls to be leaders who see that they have a role in changing the world---and encourages them to start doing it right now!

- Girl Scouting is probably the only organization in the country where we start telling kindergarteners that they are leaders – now ... not just in the future – and we continue that all the way up the ladder. Each journey uses the three keys to leadership: our values (as we discover what is important to us), our caring and teaming up (making connections with others) and the actions we take to make a difference in the world.
- Here, as Tula talks about having courage, we are reminded that “courage” comes from the Latin word “heart” and when we “encourage” others to act, we are giving them heart as well!

Slide 12:

These journeys have been designed to be fun for girls!

- At the youngest level, we are very excited to have characters — like Tula for Girl Scout Daisies — who, through their stories, help girls translate their values and emotions into actions.
- At every level, the journeys use design elements, stories and ideas to show how fun, relevant and challenging Girl Scouting is for girls.

- And underneath the colors and the personalities and the fun ideas, is a return to our core values — the principles that have informed and motivated Girl Scouts of every generation for almost one hundred years.

Slide 13:

Girls Scouts around the country, at every age, have let us know how important it is to them to proudly wear their achievements on their vests and sashes. And so, each journey offers girls the opportunity to earn awards — which gives them an opportunity to understand their meaning and importance. When a Girl Scout journey comes to a close, girls and their adult volunteers will truly feel a sense of accomplishment. They will be changed in some way, and they will have made a difference in their world. The girl and adult books provide many tips for ceremonies and reflections to make earning the awards a more meaningful part of Girl Scouting.

It is not unusual to find girls who are more interested in how many badges they have instead of what they learned and did to earn them. This must have been the case even in Juliette Gordon Low's time. She once said: "Badges are not medals to wear on your sleeve to show what a smart girl you are." The awards girls earn on journeys mark their growth and their achievements – so let's encourage everyone to take their time with the 'learning and earning'!

Slide 14:

GSUSA has created volunteer guides for each girl journey that are dedicated to every adult in Girl Scouting who has ever said: "I am busier than ever." "I am tired." "When I get to that school cafeteria or church basement in the evening—I just need to know what to do with girls."

GSUSA wants adults to know, step by step, how to bring the leadership experience to life – and, most importantly, why it matters---how activities and experiences and discussions are intended to impact girls. So, these guides provide step by step instructions to make it easy for volunteers to guide girls through the leadership experience. The beauty of this is -- as you follow the guide and bring the journey to life with girls, you will, at the same time, be learning about the leadership experience, and some Girl Scout history and tradition.

Even after this journey ends, you can take the elements you have learned---and keep going throughout the Girl Scout year!

Here are some important things to know about the journey books:

- *The journey is best experienced when every girl has their own book.* The girl book becomes a journal of sorts as the girls work through the activities. Keep in mind, the journey book is not the only source of activities for the girls and is not meant to be a school workbook!

- The volunteer guides provide more information to volunteers than ever before — however that means there is more to read. The good news is that they are well designed, and the volunteer can go through the guides little by little — as they spend time with girls.
- The Journeys suggest 6 or 7 “Sessions” for its completion. Please be aware that a ‘session’ may be multiple meetings and the hope is where the girls show interest, you will find additional activities to dig deeper.
- GSUSA has worked hard to provide an excellent value on the journey books for girls and the companion guides for adults. The girl books will be \$7; the adult sets, consisting of a girl book packaged with the adult guide (plus a full-color poster for both the Daisy and Brownie journeys), will be \$15. These prices are the same at every grade level.

Slide 15:

WHAT girls do in Girl Scouting is a big part of our work. That’s **the Journey**.

HOW the girls and adults belong in Girl Scouts, that’s the **Pathway**.

Right now, about 2/3 of the national membership ‘belongs’ through the troop experience — and that remains important. However, the other 1/3 of our membership ‘belongs’ in the ‘other than a troop’ way – and we need to remember that they are REAL Girl Scouts, too.

GSUSA now strives for consistency in the way program is delivered in troops and councils across the country.

Slide 16:

As we are headed into the future, the goal is for every Girl Scout to benefit through the Leadership Experience.

We know as girls grow up and as families and volunteers are busy – they will likely move in and out of different pathways. But – what if – we really manage the membership of every girl so she has a K-12 experience tied to the leadership outcomes! That’s the work of pathways.

We had originally thought the immediate changes to Girl Scouting included the Pathways approach to girl and adult membership. We brought that information to you in January thinking that it was coming this fall – in 2008. We have learned that the Pathways approach will be in place and working for the 2010-2011 membership year. That’s good news! It gives us time to embrace the Leadership Experience and to see where that is taking our organization – and our girls! More information about the Pathways and their purpose can be found on the GSSJC web site.

Slide 17:

As you explore all these ideas over the next few days, weeks or months, we also want to reassure you –

- Change doesn't happen all at once!
- Just as some stepping stones got us here, more will carry us from here. You can see the planned phases of the continued transformation in this slide.
- Headed right up to our 100th anniversary, where we'll be demonstrating that we are one movement dedicated to girl leadership.

Many facilitators from across the Girl Scout community (including two from our own Council) have been working hard at the conferences across the nation to get a consistent word out. Our Council wants to have the same consistent message go out to all our girls, troop volunteers, service unit volunteers and staff members. It is important that everyone gets the same message.

Slide 18:

Sometimes the demand for specific information undermines the focus on our intentions for girls. So, in the hopes of freeing you to dive in and explore the future, we want to assure you that you really do have the one word answer that you will need for most of the questions you'll be asking (and trying to answer) as Girl Scouts moves through our transformation:

- Can girls keep earning badges? [*YES!*]
- Can girls do journeys and earn badges? [*YES!*]
- Can girls have a mix of old and new awards on their uniforms? [*YES!*]
- Are troops important in Girl Scouting? [*YES!*]
- Do the Bronze, Silver and Gold awards remain the highest awards in Girl Scouting? [*YES!*]

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience is a transformation of our intentional purpose – and it encompasses a vision that will take our girls to a higher level in all that they do.

- Can we work together to make the Girl Scout Leadership Experience the engine for everything we do? [*YES!*]
- Can we imagine the results when millions of girls of every age are taking action to change the world? [*YES!*]

Well, here we go -- with our hearts and our minds -- it starts right here and now, in every one of us -- let our journey begin!