Thank You For Helping Future Business Women

The Girl Scout Leadership Institute is a career readiness program that inspires and equips girls to pursue educational and career goals through interacting with successful leaders in a variety of industries. Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors (grades 9-12) had the opportunity explore the various career opportunities available at Amegy Bank, AT&T and BHP this summer.

Amegy Bank showed the girls different aspects of finance. From visiting the security deposit vault to trying on Amegy’s World Series Astros replica ring, girls learned and explored every corner of the banking world. They also received career advice from a panel of top-level female executives in the company. “Girl Scouts are developing the next generation of female leaders, and Amegy Bank wants to be a part of that and other organizations should want to be a part of that too,” said Natalie Garza, senior vice president with Amegy Bank.

Similarly, Girl Scouts toured BHP Billiton and explored the company during a scavenger hunt to learn about BHP’s history. The girls especially enjoyed sitting down and chatting with engineers, a career path many hope to follow. According to Kellyanne Lochan, a representative from BHP, the company is committed to developing and maintaining a diverse and inclusive workplace because it drives success. “Research has shown that diverse companies and teams are more successful,” said Lochan. “Those dominated by one gender or ethnicity tend to have poorer decision making, while diversity leads to more scrutiny and questioning of decisions and ideas.”

Girl Scouts who visited AT&T were also able to interact with employees from various departments, and they enjoyed exploring the on-site museum. According to Lolile Ramirez-Bennett, the associate director – AT&T finance results manager and CEO/president for Women of AT&T Houston Chapter, this program helped Girl Scouts understand the different professional opportunities available to them. “I believe that it is important for our young girls to be exposed to various careers to help them understand that they have so many different choices as to what career they wish to pursue,” said Ramirez-Bennett.

Through networking with industry leaders, girls received the latest information and instruction from experts in the field. They also visited with female role models and gained professional skills related to their various interests.

Want to host a GSLI event for Girl Scouts at your company? Contact Princess Zambrano at 713-292-0231 or pzambrano@sjgs.org for more information.

Girls learned about career opportunities as engineers while visiting BHP Billiton.

Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors visit with female executives at Amegy Bank.

“i am a woman in process. i'm just trying like everybody else. i try to take every conflict, every experience, and learn from it. life is never dull.”

—Sarah Vining

AT&T hosted a Girl Scout Leadership Institute event over the summer to show girls various career paths they can follow.
Your support helps girls travel the world

By Paige Cromley, Girl Scout Ambassador

I was so excited to be accepted into the Girl Scouts Destinations 2018 Switzerland trip. I spent the weeks before packing and imagining how beautiful the Alps would be. I stayed at my aunt’s house the night before we would all meet at JFK Airport, and I couldn’t stop talking about how excited I was to be traveling to a new country to embark on outdoor adventures. I was one of the first girls at the airport, and while we waited for everyone to arrive, I found myself getting a little nervous. After all, my family was back in Houston, and I didn’t know any of the girls I was traveling with. But my worries ceased as soon as we all started talking and laughing. These were going to be my sisters for the next week as we explored Switzerland together.

That first day was mostly travel. We took various buses and trains to Adelboden, the town where Our Chalet is and where we’d be staying. I was amazed immediately getting off the bus at the mountains - we didn’t have those back in Houston! The wildflowers and the intricate architecture of the buildings also caught my eye. We headed straight for Our Chalet, which sits on a slope overlooking the town. Everyone was so sweet when we arrived, and I felt very welcomed. I stayed in the attic with about 13 other girls. We all became friends almost immediately. I loved exploring Our Chalet and looking at the beautiful views, whether I was craning my neck up to see the peaks of surrounding mountains or staring down at the lights of Adelboden at night. But the biggest adventures were yet to come.

My favorite part of the whole trip was the overnight hike up Bunderspitz, a mountain you could see from Our Chalet. We left in the evening and hiked up a steep trail, passing by many cows, to a cheesemaker’s hut where we would get a few hours of sleep. It was around 11 p.m. when we arrived and were given some delicious hot chocolate. We crawled into our cots and fell asleep, only to wake up two hours later. We stumbled in the dark to put on our shoes and gloves. Exiting the hut, we all looked up and expressed surprise at how many stars we could see. Everything was so still and peaceful. I could hear tinkling bells in the distance - eventually, I realized it was the cows in the fields below us.

The hike got steeper and more difficult from there. Despite all of my warm layers, the frosty air bit into my toes and fingers. We even walked through a patch of snow. Then we reached the summit. As we sat down under the wooden cross marking the peak, I rubbed my hands together in an effort to bring warmth back into them. I gazed out at the view, which took my breath away. I waited for sunrise, which happened so suddenly and spectacularly that I didn’t blink once during it. Then we headed back down the mountain, back to Our Chalet, where we pointed to the peak of Bunderspitz with the knowledge and pride that we had made it all the way up there in the dark. It felt like such an amazing accomplishment, and it brought us all so much closer together.

Over the trip, I learned independence, grew more confident and tried so many new things. I made lifelong friends, explored a new country and climbed a mountain, and I wouldn’t trade these experiences for the world.

Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place and explore new worlds! Your support of Girl Scouts makes experiences, like Destinations trips, possible for all girls. To donate, visit gssjc.org/donate.
The Many Faces of Girl Scouts: Jean Janssen

Over the past year, GSSJC has been introducing southeast Texas to the Many Faces of Girl Scouts. These are the girls, parents, volunteers and staff who make up our Movement and show there is no single way to experience Girl Scouts – it’s truly whatever you make of it.

For Jean Janssen, GSSJC’s former president of the council and chair of the board, that’s meant serving the organization for the past 30 years. It all began when she fell in love with the Girl Scout mission after serving as the attorney to the council in 1988. “When I retired from the practice of law, I became a volunteer with the council almost immediately and have worked with them ever since,” Janssen said.

The Girl Scout mission is what Janssen believes makes Girl Scouts such a great organization to get involved with. According to her, if empowering women is something you believe in strongly, then Girl Scouts has a place for you.

“There are so many ways that Girl Scouts empowers women, and I don’t think you have to have a Girl Scout background to appreciate what this organization could do,” Janssen said. “There’s no barrier to be a volunteer. If you’re devoted to the empowerment of women, to furthering that group that represents over half of our population, then you have a place in this organization.”

While the role of president and chair of the board requires a fair amount of time leading board meetings and working with volunteers, Janssen’s favorite part of the job was getting to spend time with the girls. The Girl Scout program has a positive impact on girls, and Janssen has been able to witness it first-hand. “I see a girl that’s quiet and shy become a stronger young woman,” she said. “I see young girls that go out and go to college and channel their Gold Award project into their college major and, ultimately, their career. That’s what drives me because I know that our programs truly work.”

According to Janssen, Girl Scouts is inclusive in every sense of the word because it doesn’t matter what you look like or what your religious beliefs are so long as you’re helping strengthen women. For her, seeing women working together in harmony for a common goal is very powerful. “My fondest memories were those circumstances where I could look around the room and see girls from every socioeconomic level, from every background, the color of their face was different from one another, the head covering they wore or their religious belief was different from one another, and they were all enjoying the same thing together and supporting one another,” Janssen said.

Although Janssen’s term is over, she will still be helping lead our council. Five days after her roles officially ended, she was back at our headquarters and attending a taskforce meeting. She’ll also continue serving on the Board Development Committee, and continue to work the properties committee and on the 10-year property strategy. “It’s exciting to start a project, but it’s really wonderful when you can see it through and these opportunities allow me to continue that,” Janssen said.

To meet more of the Many Faces of Girl Scouts, visit www.manyfacesofgirlscouts.com.

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Local Gold Award Girl Scout Earns National Award

Susan Soh addressed the issue of illiteracy and primary school readiness in Guatemala

Girl Scouts of the USA announced that Susan Soh, a senior at Memorial High School in Houston, was named a 2018 National Gold Award Girl Scout, the national organization’s most prestigious honor.

Each year, thousands of girls in grades 9 - 12 nationwide are recognized as Gold Award Girl Scouts for transforming an idea and vision for change into an actionable plan with measurable, sustainable and far-reaching impact at the local, national and global levels. Approximately five percent of all eligible Girl Scouts earn their Gold Award each year, and just 10 girls in this already high-achieving group receive the National Gold Award Girl Scout honor.

For her Gold Award project, Soh addressed the issue of illiteracy and primary school readiness among young Mayan children in Guatemala. In this country, many children speak Mayan dialects while Spanish is taught in school. They struggle to learn to read and write Spanish, resulting in high drop-out rates: most boys stop attending school in sixth grade, and girls drop out even earlier, in second grade.

Soh partnered with SANA, a nonprofit medical clinic, preschool and library in the village of Santa María de Jesús. She created an audio book center at the library so parents and children could listen to books in Spanish together. With a team of 15 volunteers in place, Soh was able to record more than 100 books in Spanish to serve more than 400 children who visit the library monthly.

To ensure her library lives on, Soh also created detailed instructions for the recording process for future volunteers and continues to recruit donors to the program. She even inspired a fellow Girl Scout to replicate her idea by creating a Hindi audio book library for a village in India.

“It’s an honor to have one of our Girl Scouts recognized as a National Gold Award Girl Scout,” said Mary Vitek, CEO of GSSJC. “Through Girl Scouting, girls like Susan discover their strengths and passions and use the leadership skills they learn to make a difference in our society. They become the next generation of women leaders and pave the way for other girls to follow.”