

The Case for Girl Scouts:

The Power of a G.I.R.L. (Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader)[™]: Harnessing the Unique Strengths of Girls Everywhere

If I could name only one thing girls learn when they're involved with Girl Scouts, it's that they become capable of tackling pretty much anything. From building robotic hands to creating libraries that teach new immigrants how to read English, Girl Scouts have over 100 years of amazing accomplishments. Most notably I have learned that with the right encouragement, guidance, training and confidence, Girl Scouts grow into women who lead by example to do great things for the world.

Through vigorous, interactive programs, Girl Scouts take the lead in a range of activities as they learn more about themselves, their peers and the world around them. With more than a century of experience, Girl Scouts brings a wealth of knowledge to programs that provide cornerstone experiences for girls that last a lifetime. Put simply, Girl Scouts works. It's the best leadership experience for girls in the world because it's girl-led!

Girl Scouts helps girls unlock their potential and unleash it in their communities and throughout the globe. Because we're the world's largest leadership development organization for girls, we welcome girls of all backgrounds and interests who want to develop the courage, confidence and character to make the world a better place. Our program bolsters the benefits of school by fostering a safe, inclusive, girl-led and all-female environment where girls are free to practice different skills, try new things and take on leadership positions. In fact, the all-girl environment is one of the major keys to our success. Research shows that girls learn best in an all-girl, girl-led and girl-friendly environment where their specific needs are addressed and met.

Creating more female leaders means starting young and making sure today's girls are acquiring the skills they will need to take on the 21st century leadership roles of their futures. Girl Scouts are the proven experts at giving girls the tools they need to empower themselves. We teach girls that their voices count. We instill in them to stand up for what they believe in. And we certainly make sure they understand that all girls have the strength to lead.

I know our current Girl Scouts, future Girl Scouts, our volunteers and our alumnae will contribute to moving this state forward. At Girl Scouts, we have always known that girls are the key to our collective future. Gender balance in the workplace and in the public sphere are vital to ensuring every voice is heard and every outlook is considered. To us, there's no mystery why corporate boards with more gender balance outperform male-dominated boards. One of the best things we can do to ensure the long-term strength of the United States is to invest in girls. Women bring an invaluable perspective to the courtroom, the classroom and the caucus room.

The options for fun, exploration and leadership are endless in Girl Scouts. Girls can participate in outdoor activities like hiking, camping, canoeing and archery to have exciting, girl-led adventures while learning important life skills. At Girl Scouts, we ensure that every girl has an opportunity to take the lead in the world of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) through hands-on learning by doing. Our iconic Girl Scout Cookie Program is unrivaled in its ability to teach girls financial literacy skills for today and tomorrow. Additionally, one-of-a-kind civic engagement programming gives girls the chance to take the lead on issues they care about in their communities and be recognized by their peers and neighbors as the societal champions they are.

And, of course, only Girl Scouts gives girls the chance to pursue the most challenging, rewarding and life-changing award for girls in the world: The Girl Scout Gold Award. Earned by fewer than 6 percent of Girl Scouts annually, the Gold Award requires girls to demonstrate their leadership skills by addressing a local or global community issue. Girls typically spend one to two years on their projects and must establish sustainability that benefits the chosen community in the long term. Girls' projects range from addressing poverty to illiteracy to environmentalism. These remarkable young women are essentially the finished product that Girl Scouts offers the world.

Invest in our future. Invest in girls. Let's move forward together. #ChooseGirlScouts

Beth Casey is the CEO of the Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council and has worked professionally for Girl Scouts since 1992. She has been a Girl Scout since second grade and earned her Girl Scout Silver and Gold Awards. Beth is mom to Hannah, a 4th generation Girl Scout and Matthew, a 2nd generation Boy Scout. Her favorite Girl Scout Cookie is the Thin Mint and she considers herself blessed to work for the organization that gave so much to her growing up.