

April 20, 2018

Dear members and friends of Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council:

**We need your help to ensure that families and schools know about the power of Girl Scouts for girls – our values, our program, and our results.**

Now that the Boy Scouts are recruiting girls, starting at age 6, I am hearing lots of stories about confusion at schools, at places of worship, among parents, and from donors:

*“Are Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts the same organization?”*

*“Are all scouting programs the same?”*

*“When will girls in Boy Scouts start selling cookies?”*

*“Why don’t you just go co-ed?”*

If you are reading this, then you likely know that we are very different organizations, with very different programs. Both the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts care about building character and leadership. We go about it in different ways – and our Girl Scout way is based on research and over 100 years of experience about how to build confidence and leadership identity in girls.

**This update is about the facts:**

- The power of Girl Scouts for girls
- Why parents and schools might be confused and why their confusion creates risk for Girl Scouts
- How you can be a champion for Girl Scouts

**The power of Girl Scouts for girls.**



**Now, more than ever, girls face unique challenges in school, social settings and as they enter the work place.** Our proven Girl Scout program is based on years of research about girls' development and is designed to:

- Close the confidence gap (research is clear – it starts for girls at age 6, when they start to believe that they are less capable than boys, and it accelerates in middle school and continues through college);
- Develop and fortify girls' belief in their identities as leaders;
- Inoculate girls against the constant drum of media that tells them they must be perfect and sexually desirable; and
- Strengthen them to stand up to the peer pressure and bullying that girls experience starting in elementary school.

I am incredibly proud of Girl Scouts' history of *inclusion* and *girl safety*, and our *legacy of women leaders* (including 70% of today's women senators, 100% of women Secretaries of States, and almost all astronauts who have flown in space). I also am proud of our commitment to reaching girls in under-resourced communities. We need to stay strong for all girls.

[Here is a fact sheet](#) that identifies *what* girls need and that also informs *how* the Girl Scout program works with girls – to build their social and emotional skills, close confidence gaps, and develop their identities as leaders.

## **Why parents and schools might be confused and why their confusion creates risk for Girl Scouts.**

I am alarmed by what I am hearing from our volunteers and staff in the field and from my fellow Girl Scout CEOs around the country, including, but not limited to, the examples below.

We know that 53% of non-scouting families think that Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts are the same organization. Therefore, we also know how easy it is to confuse schools and families into thinking that “Boy Scouts for girls” is the same as Girl Scouts. The Boy Scouts want to reverse their declining membership by adding girls, so there is no reason for the Boy Scouts to reduce this confusion, in fact, they benefit from it.

This is why we need you to help us make the case for Girl Scouts – in person, via social media, and in your communities – so that families have all of the facts when they decide how to invest their time and resources for their daughters.

**Here is some of what I am hearing from volunteers, staff, and other Girl Scout councils, that concerns me:**

- **Boy Scout social media marketing materials include the words of Girl Scouts' founder, Juliette Gordon Low, without naming Girl Scouts.** In California, one of our

sister councils shared this photo from a Boy Scout social media campaign. I hope in the future, Boy Scouts will, at least, explain that Juliette Gordon Low is the founder of the Girl Scouts.



- **Boy Scouts in some areas have convinced schools that they no longer need to provide meeting space or recruitment nights for Girl Scouts.** Girl Scout Council CEOs have reported that Boy Scouts in their areas are meeting with school principals to explain that since "scouts" is now co-ed, there is no reason for the school to make room for both Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts. Girl Scout councils are actively meeting with principals and superintendents to ensure that schools understand that we are different programs and that Girl Scouts offers unique experiences and benefits for girls.
- **Boy Scouts convinced a long time funder for a western Girl Scout council that Girl Scouts should no longer be a funding priority.** A council CEO reported that their council recently lost a long time recurring \$125,000 annual grant. The funder explained that they increased their grant award to the Boy Scouts, since the Boy Scouts will now be serving boys and girls in a scouting program.
- **Our staff, at girl recruiting events, are hearing Boy Scouts repeating false myths about Girl Scouts:** *"Girl Scouts don't do anything - Boy Scouts offer way more activities than Girl Scouts - especially outdoor stuff."*

All of these things add up, and they will take a toll on Girl Scouts if we stand by, “too nice” to set the record straight.

The Boy Scouts have many powerful allies who, even if it is unintentional, could fall into the trap of implicit gender biases and spread myths that Girl Scouts is “less than.” Implicit biases are real and they are powerful, and we know that risk is increased because we are an organization led primarily by women for girls.

Girl Scouts also has many powerful allies – our male and female adult volunteers, our families, our alums, our donors, and our corporate and community partners. We need to call out sexism when we hear it, we need to speak out against misinformation, and we need to amplify over 100 years of amazing work by the Girl Scouts to build women of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place. This is what we owe our girls.



## How you can be a champion for Girl Scouts.

- **Girl Scout pride:** We are calling all girl members to wear their uniforms to school. Adults, please feel free to join the girls – wear your pins, and camp and “man enough to be a Girl Scout” t-shirts!

- **Make the case for Girl Scouts with your school Principals (and other Girl Scout champions in your schools):** E-mail a message to school principals in your area, making the case for Girl Scouts.
- **Be prepared to be a myth buster:** We are hearing a lot of myths (and stereotypes) about Girl Scouts – starting with, Girl Scouts is the “pink toy aisle option,” and if you want adventure and challenge-seeking experiences for your daughter, join Boy Scouts. That is just so wrong it makes me crazy, but it is a deeply-held belief that is reinforced by gender stereotypes. You - our volunteers, alumnae, families, and girl members - are the best representatives to counter the myths!

**Here is a handout** to help you tell our story, counter the myths, and advocate for Girl Scouts (feel free to also share this with educators and parents). If you hear a myth that is missing from our list, or have a great story to counter a myth, please send it to us!

- **Join the just-launched Girl Scout Network on LinkedIn.** Follow this link to the [Girl Scout Network](#) and follow the Network to stay on top of what’s going on in the Alumnae community.

**Thank you for taking action** to make the case for Girl Scouts, so that families have all of the facts when they decide how to invest their time, and to keep Girl Scouts strong and thriving for all girls!

With deep gratitude and appreciation for all that you do for girls,

*Yours in Girl Scouting,*

Beth Casey, CEO

Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council