

# Volunteer 411

## Family Connection

### *A Guide to Welcome Families to Girl Scouts*

The Girl Scout Family Connection is an introduction to all things Girl Scouts. It is provided in new troop packets for every new Girl Scout. We will also mail a copy to new girls joining existing troops. A digital copy is available for returning troops at:

[bit.ly/FamilyConnections2026](http://bit.ly/FamilyConnections2026).

Use this guide at your first parent meeting to introduce Girl Scouts to families.

There are sections about:

- The Girl Scout Promise and Law
- Badge and patch placement on sashes and vests
- Girl Scouting's Highest Awards to which girls aspire
- The Girl Scout Cookie Program
- Summer camp
- Family involvement and how to help out the troop leaders
- Financial assistance
- Council contact and shop information
- A yearly calendar

We want every new Girl Scout to receive a Family Connections guide. Please let us know if you need additional copies and we will get them to you.

## To Reregister Your Troop:

Troop leaders should have received an email listing all girls and adults in your troop. If you need it sent again, send an email with your troop number to [nate@gsmanitou.org](mailto:nate@gsmanitou.org).

1. Review the information. Note where there are changes (addresses, email addresses, grades, schools attending, members not returning, etc.) to **reregistering** members so you can mark those on the registration form. Gather the names and corresponding email addresses for **new** girls and adults joining your troop. (You will not be paying for new girls or adults with this form, however.)
2. Click on the link provided in the email. Complete the information, and submit it with the \$65 girl membership dues and \$30 adult membership dues for each **reregistering** member, in the form of credit or debit card, PayPal, or program credits (you will need the program credit code for each girl using program credits).
3. Once we receive your reregistering information, we will send you an email to send to all new girls and new adults joining your troop. (Be sure to include your name, email, and troop number when you send it to them, as they will need this info to register!) The email you send them will include a link where they can submit all necessary information, along with their membership dues. You will receive confirmation when they have done so. That's it!

## To Register a New Troop:

Troops of all new girl and adult members will need to have parents (of girl members) and adult members complete the appropriate registration form provided in your troop packet, collect the membership dues (\$65 for girls, \$30 for adults) for each person, and mail or deliver the membership forms and membership dues to the Girl Scout Center. This can also be completed online.

## Congratulations, Cova!

Girl Scout Cova from Two Rivers recently received a \$5,000 scholarship from Girl Scouts of the USA for her Gold Award. Cova's project focused on raising awareness of the importance of music education.

**[Read more about her Gold Award & story on the OUR STORIES section of our website!](#)**

## Preparing New Troop Leaders

We want all new troop leaders to feel confident, prepared, and ready to lead their troop. Girl Scouts of Manitou requires a two-step training process for all new troop leaders to set them up for success.

### **Step One: In-person orientation with troop organizer or staff member (Approximately one hour)**

New leaders will participate in orientation with a trained volunteer or staff member in-person or virtually to learn about how to hold a parent meeting, decide when and where to hold troop meetings, how to set up a bank account, council activity, overnight transportation requirements, safety information, cookie sale and other money earning activities, and much more.

### **Step Two: New Leader Onboarding: Online Courses (self-paced)**

- **New Leader Onboarding — Your First Troop Meeting:** This course guides you through planning a successful first meeting that welcomes girls and sets the tone for the year.
- **New Leader Onboarding — Safety:** Learn essential safety protocols to keep your troop safe during activities and outings.
- **New Leader Onboarding — Funding the Fun:** Explore options for financing troop activities, including budgeting, fundraising, and the Girl Scout Cookie Program.
- **New Leader Onboarding — What Girl Scouts Do:** Uncover the exciting world of Girl Scouts, exploring the program for each age level and the amazing experiences it offers girls.
- **Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Training:** This training provides essential knowledge and tools to identify, report, and prevent child abuse and neglect, fostering a safer environment for all children.

Following completion of each of these courses, you will receive a confirmation email from Hope Spies, our Director of Program Quality, telling you a few additional bits of information about that particular topic in Manitou Council. The entire training must be completed by new leaders within three months of appointment.

## Updated Council Approval Application Process

The upcoming 2026-2028 Safety Activity Checkpoints (SAC) introduce streamlined processes, significantly reducing administrative steps so you can get your troop outside faster.

### **What Has Changed?**

- **Fewer Approvals Needed:** Many activities that previously required council clearance are now approval-free.
- **Automated Transportation:** All transportation authorizations are now automatically gathered at the time of activity registration, saving you paperwork down the road.

### **What Still Requires Prior Council Approval?**

Prior council clearance is now strictly reserved for select high-adventure activities. You **MUST** submit an approval application for:

- Overnight camping
- Archery
- Swimming
- Horseback riding
- Activities requiring chartered buses or ground transportation
- Sensitive or controversial topics

### **New Accountability Requirements**

For the activities listed above, troops must now complete the following steps prior to the activity:

1. **Collect & Verify:** Gather signed Parent/Guardian Permission Forms for every participating girl.
2. **Review Eligibility:** Check pages 25-29 of the new guide to review the updated “Activities at a Glance” master chart for specific grade-level eligibility.

## First Aid/CPR/AED Certification

We are offering blended learning (in-person & online) First Aid/CPR/AED classes this fall and winter at the Girl Scout Center in Sheboygan. This American Heart Association course provides step-by-step, hands-on training that enables participants to respond effectively in emergencies and life-threatening situations. There will be an online portion you need to complete before attending one of the in-person skills training sessions. Once registered, you will receive an email with the requirements. Upon completion, you will receive a two-year certification through the American Heart Association. If you can't attend any of these classes or have questions, please contact Program Specialist, Abby Weber, at [abby@gsmanitou.org](mailto:abby@gsmanitou.org).

### Dates:

- Saturday, August 8
- Saturday, September 12
- Saturday, October 17
- Saturday, November 14
- Saturday, December 12

**Cost:** \$60 per person

*Please note: The cost includes all materials needed, including an adult/child & infant CPR Mask in a soft case.*

**All classes are 8:00 a.m. to Noon**

**REGISTER AT:**  
[bit.ly/3U73uSM](https://bit.ly/3U73uSM)

## Online Outdoor Adventure Training

While Outdoor Adventures Training is no longer a required prerequisite under the updated Safety Activity Checkpoints, stepping out into nature is always better when you feel entirely prepared! This online learning course, available on gsLearn, is designed to give you the ultimate toolkit for creating safe, unforgettable, and confident outdoor experiences with your troop.

To get started, simply search for the course in your assigned training on gsLearn. If you have any questions, please contact Director of Program Quality, Hope Spies, at [hope@gsmanitou.org](mailto:hope@gsmanitou.org).

A group may request an Outdoor Adventures Training session at either Camp Evelyn or Camp Manitou by contacting [hope@gsmanitou.org](mailto:hope@gsmanitou.org).

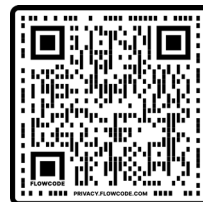
## Junior Jamboree: Adventure & Leadership Day

Join us for a day of discovery and sisterhood at the Camp Evelyn Junior Jamboree! This year, we are thrilled to offer a dual-track experience: a high-energy adventure for Girl Scout Juniors and a learning track for Junior troop leaders.

**When:** September 19 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**Cost:** \$25 per person

**REGISTER using the QR Code!**



### For Girl Scouts:

Campers will dive into a fast-paced day of outdoor mastery and creative exploration. Under the guidance of our enthusiastic counselors, girls will work toward three badges in one day:

- Camper: Master the essentials of fire-building and shelter-building.
- Animal Habitats: Explore the natural world and the creatures that call Camp Evelyn home.
- Craft and Tinker: Get hands-on with tools and design thinking.
- Classic Camp Fun: Enjoy archery, team building, and singing your favorite camp songs!

This will be a drop-off event for girls. Leaders are invited, but not required to attend the skills workshop.

### For Leaders:

While the girls are out exploring, troop leaders are invited to join us for a day of growth and networking. This is your chance to:

- Skill-up: Participate in hands-on workshops to take back to your troop.
- Collaborate: Share best practices for troop management and engagement with fellow leaders.
- Resource Share: Get a first look at upcoming council opportunities.

# Ghostly Ghou Scout Trail Walk at Camp Evelyn

Come out to Camp Evelyn for a special Ghostly Ghou Scout Trail Walk. Our Girl Scout troops have created special exhibits throughout camp for your viewing. Each exhibit includes a spooktacular scene with a Girl Scout twist. All exhibits will be kid-friendly, so feel free to bring the whole family along. Warm refreshments will be available, and our camp store will be open for shopping during the event, so you can score some discounted camp gear. Costumes are welcome! Make sure to cast your vote for your favorite scene before you head out.

**When:** October 17 from 5:00-8:30 p.m.

**Cost:** \$5/person in advance

\$10/person at the gate or after October 13th at 8:00 a.m.

**REGISTER at [bit.ly/GhouScoutWalk2026](https://bit.ly/GhouScoutWalk2026) by October 13th at 8:00 a.m. for the \$5/person price**

Does your troop have what it takes to create a spooky Girl Scout scene? We're looking for troops to participate in our Ghostly Ghou Scout Trail Walk on October 17. One group from each Girl Scout level will win a free stay at one of our camp buildings. This will be based on votes received during the trail walk. There will be a limited number of spots available so **register at [bit.ly/3Dh3NSt](https://bit.ly/3Dh3NSt)** soon! The full set of rules is available on the registration form.



Girl Scouts love the outdoors, especially our state parks! Girl Scouts of the USA and the National Association of State Park Directors partner in hosting the annual, Girl Scouts Love State Parks, a weekend dedicated to showcasing the stunning beauty of state parks and Girl Scouts' passion for exploring the great outdoors.

**Girl Scouts Love State Parks 2026 is September 12 & 13.** Girl Scouts, troops, and families are encouraged to get out and explore Wisconsin's beautiful, and many, state parks during this weekend. We will have a limited number of the special Girl Scouts Love State Parks patches to give away for free! To receive a free patch from us:

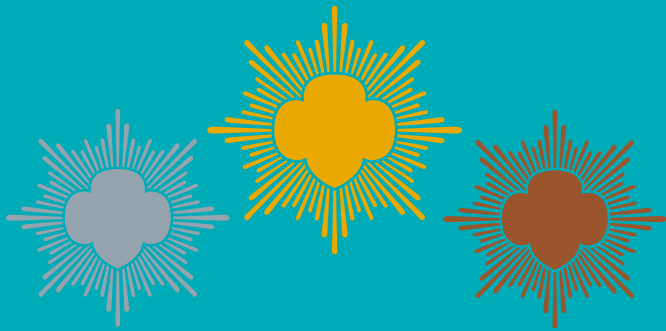
1. Get out at a state park during Girl Scouts Love State Parks weekend!
2. Parents or troop leaders take pictures of their Girl Scout(s) at the park.
3. Send the photos to [cassie@gsmanitou.org](mailto:cassie@gsmanitou.org).

We always love seeing what our Girl Scouts do for State Parks Weekend! Last year we had over 130 Girl Scouts participate, visiting 16 different parks. Let's see if we can beat that this year! Get ready to get outdoors Girl Scouts!





## Girl Scouting's Highest Awards



Do the girls in your troop want to earn their Bronze, Silver, or Gold Award but do not know where to start? Our Program Specialist, Abby Weber, would love to meet with your troop to discuss these wonderful Highest Awards in Girl Scouting and the opportunities they offer.

Contact Abby at [abby@gsmanitou.org](mailto:abby@gsmanitou.org) to schedule a meeting.

## Destinations



Girl Scout Destinations are the ultimate adventure for individual girls in 6th grade and up! With different trips every year, there is something amazing for everyone. Not only will girls have life-changing experiences on their Destination, but they will also meet new friends from across the country and maybe even the globe. Girls apply and submit reference forms for Destinations online. Girl Scouts of Manitou Council helps cover the cost of Destinations and aids girls in planning for money-earning, so do not let cost be a deterrent to girls applying.

Destination information can be found at [girlscouts.org/travel](https://girlscouts.org/travel).

Have questions or want more information? Contact the Program Specialist, Abby Weber, at [abby@gsmanitou.org](mailto:abby@gsmanitou.org).

## Girl Scout Teen Advisory Board

Shout out to all Girl Scouts in 6th grade and up! We would love for your teen Girl Scouts to be a part of our Teen Advisory Board. This opportunity will allow girls to help make informative decisions on programming and more. We will select 10 girls from across our council area to serve a one-year term. Most Teen Advisory Board meetings will be held virtually. Get ready for your voice to be heard and take your experience to the next level. Apply at: [bit.ly/ManitouTeenAdvisoryBoard](https://bit.ly/ManitouTeenAdvisoryBoard) by November 2nd!

After the review of your application, you will be contacted for an interview. Please note that current members will not need to reapply. If you have any questions about the Teen Advisory Board, please contact the Program Specialist, Abby Weber, at [abby@gsmanitou.org](mailto:abby@gsmanitou.org).

## Petals to Patches & Uniform Updates

Exciting news! Updates are coming to Senior and Ambassador uniforms! Seniors and Ambassadors are getting their own color uniforms. Seniors will have dark green-inspired by the 1950 Girl Scout uniform. Ambassadors will have slate blue—a visual representation that they are close to transitioning to adult navy blue. There will also be a modern, comfortable blazer option for Seniors and Ambassadors. The new sashes and vests will be available later this fall and the blazers will be available spring 2027.



Don't forget: You can shop for all Girl Scout uniforms, badges, patches, and more at our council store: Petals to Patches! Visit us Monday-Thursday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. or shop online at [petalstopatches.company.site](https://petalstopatches.company.site). All orders ship for free!

# 2027 Girl Scout Cookie Sale



Say hello to Sally — the curious lop-eared mascot for this year's **Ready to Explore** Cookie Season! Sally is named after Sally Ride, the first American woman in space — an explorer who showed the world that big dreams can take you anywhere.

## Important Cookie Sale Dates

- **January 1:** Digital Cookie open for all orders. Door-to-door sales begin.
- **January 24:** Deadline for all troop initial cookie orders to be submitted.
- **January 24 - March 21:** Digital Cookie remains open for shipped & donated cookies.
- **February 5 - March 21:** Booth sales.
- **February 11-22:** Cookie delivery to communities/troops.



## Introducing Two New Online Exclusives

New Girl Scout **Sparkables™**—celebrate your inner spark with these crunchy oatmeal chocolate-chip cookies, joyfully baked and allergen-friendly. Available exclusively through Digital Cookie—these yummy new allergen-friendly cookies help more people enjoy Girl Scout cookies and will draw attention to girls' online shops, while helping Girl Scouts practice modern marketing skills.



Introducing **Patch Pals™**—soft-baked, blueberry muffin-flavored dog cookies that will have your four-legged bestie smiling from head to tail. Only available exclusively through Digital Cookie, the online home of Girl Scout Cookies—they'll arrive at your (doggy) door, lickety-split!



But shhh...let's keep these a secret for the time being! Girl Scouts of the USA plans to officially announce these two new online exclusives in early September. But as a key volunteer, we wanted you to be one of the first to know!

## Troop Cookie Sale Manager:

If you have not already done so, please register your troop cookie sale manager as a member. Troops must have a registered troop cookie sale manager before they can receive their troop cookie sale materials, have access to the cookie sale software (eBudde), and for girls/parents to be able to access Digital Cookie.

## Cookie Awards

While you are planning your Girl Scout year, don't forget about the Cookie Business and Financial Literacy badges, and the Cookie Entrepreneur Family Pin, that Girl Scouts can earn each year they run their own cookie business. These badges are perfect for girls to earn during cookie season and help them take their skill building to the next level. Check out this flyer at [bit.ly/4lry0my](https://bit.ly/4lry0my) for more details about the badges available for each level.

