

# The Case for Girl Scouts: Key Messaging

## *Communicating the importance and impact of girl-centered experiences to fuel the female leadership pipeline*

### TOPLINE MESSAGES

- Girl Scouts is the BEST girl leadership experience in the world, period.
- Only Girl Scouts brings the time-tested methods and research-backed programs that speak to the strengths of girl leadership development.
- What's behind our success? The Girl Scout Leadership Experience, a one-of-a-kind, proven leadership development program that pairs girls with strong, caring female role models and mentors who prepare them to take the lead from age 5 to 18 and into adulthood.
- We are the organization creating—through our skill-building Girl Scout Leadership Experience—the female leadership pipeline. The go-getters, innovators, risk-takers, and leaders of tomorrow.
- No one does this better than us. Compared to women who weren't Girl Scouts in their youth, Girl Scout alumnae soar in life. For example, they:
  - Have more successful careers
  - Enjoy higher household and personal income
  - Are more active as mentors and community volunteers
  - Vote more regularly
  - Are better educated
- Offering hands-on, girl-led, girl-centered learning in STEM, the outdoors, and entrepreneurship, and abundant opportunities to develop invaluable life skills, Girl Scouts helps all girls take the lead early and often. And we're backed by more than 100 years of experience and expertise in the field.
- Only Girl Scouts offers girls a one-of-a-kind opportunity to engage in leadership at the highest levels while addressing an issue they feel passionately about—this opportunity is the Girl Scout Gold Award, the most prestigious award in the world for girls.
- Girl Scout Gold Award recipients rate their general success significantly higher than their peers and report greater success in reaching their goals in many areas, including:
  - Higher education and careers
  - Life skills
  - Community involvement
- The Girl Scout effect is proven: in the U.S., 90 percent of female astronauts, 80 percent of female tech leaders, 75 percent of current senators, and 50 percent of female business owners are Girl Scout alumnae!

## **MESSAGING BUCKETS**

### ***Girls' Leadership Development***

- Girl Scouts understands the vital connection between young girls' development and their future success, and offers a leadership experience like no other.
- As the world's premier leadership development organization for girls, Girl Scouts welcomes girls of all backgrounds and interests who want to develop the courage, confidence, and character to make the world a better place.
- At Girl Scouts, everything we do is designed with and for girls.
- Our data-backed, time-tested programs are designed to meet the unique needs and specific interests of girls, including the way they learn best.
- The single-gender environment offered by Girl Scouts creates an inclusive, safe space in which girls are free to explore their potential and take the lead without the distractions or pressures that can be found in a coed environment.
- The inclusive, girl-led, all-female environment of a Girl Scout troop creates a safe space in which girls can try new things, develop a range of skills, take on leadership roles, and feel comfortable failing, dusting themselves off, and trying again!
- We compared women who were Girl Scouts in their youth to those who weren't. We found that Girl Scout alumnae experience much greater lifetime benefits. They:
  - Have more successful careers
  - Are more active as mentors and community volunteers
  - Vote more regularly
  - Are better educated
  - Enjoy higher household and personal income
- Through our exciting and challenging programs, Girl Scouts not only participate but also take the lead in a range of activities—from kayaking, archery, and camping, to coding, robotics, and financial literacy training (and beyond)!
- Research shows that girls learn best in an all-girl, girl-led environment in which their specific needs are addressed and met.
- With more than 100 years of experience, Girl Scouts brings a wealth of knowledge to programs that deliver girls cornerstone experiences with benefits to last a lifetime.
- Put simply, Girl Scouting works. It's the best leadership experience for girls in the world because it's girl-led!

## ***Psychological and Physical Safe Space***

- Girl Scouts is the best leadership experience for girls in the world, created specifically with and for girls.
- At Girl Scouts, girls find a safe haven—a girl-inclusive space where they're free to be themselves without the pressures and social anxiety that can result from a mixed-gender environment.
- Our leadership model is designed to meet girls' interests and needs because it's collaborative and values a diversity of perspectives.
- At Girl Scouts, everything we do—from troop meetings, cookie sales, and camping, to STEM and beyond—is girl-led and girl-focused and takes place in the safe space of an all-girl environment.
- Our leaders, camp counselors, and volunteers are all thoroughly vetted, and although moms, dads, brothers, and sisters are all welcome, the focus is always on creating girl-inclusive safe spaces where girls are free to be themselves.
- The girl-only, girl-led, and all-around girl-defined aspects of Girl Scouting are crucial to what we offer, because not all girls have access to the single-gender environment of, for example, the private school system.
- The fact is, most of a girl's life is coed. But the emotional, girl-inclusive safe space offered by Girl Scouts fosters collaboration instead of competition, and promotes support among girls, enabling them to stretch beyond their limits and transfer valuable knowledge and skills to any environment, both now and in the future.

## ***STEM and Robotics***

- Girl Scouts gives girls opportunities to take the lead in the world of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) through hands-on “learning by doing” in a girl-focused, girl-led environment.
- At Girl Scouts, we’re committed to increasing girls’ involvement in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) and ensuring that every girl has opportunities to explore and build potential career paths in these important fields.
- Girls are interested in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM)—but too many don’t see a future for themselves in these fields. A Girl Scout Research Institute study, *Generation STEM: What Girls Say About Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math*, found that:
  - 74 percent of girls say they’re interested in STEM.
  - Only 13 percent of interested girls say a career in STEM is their first choice.
  - Half of all girls feel that STEM isn’t a typical career path for girls.
- At Girl Scouts, 81 percent of girls who took part in a robotics evaluation agreed that because of Girl Scouts, they’ve been a leader in more activities with friends, in class, or in their community.
- Girls lead their own explorations in Girl Scouts’ science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programs. A majority of girls in these programs agree that they have many opportunities to decide what they do and how they do it and that they have more of a say than they do in other programs.
- Hands-on learning techniques are at the core of Girl Scout programming and have been since 1913, when Girl Scouts created its Electrician and Flyer badges, the very first STEM-related badges.
- No other organization comes close to providing the scope and variety of evidence-based out-of-school educational and leadership opportunities, including those in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), specifically designed for girls.
- There is no other organization that provides the breadth and depth of year-round science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programming specifically for girls. Our STEM programs:
  - Adopt a collaborative approach to scientific problem solving and experimentation
  - Allow girls to see themselves in STEM careers by getting them excited about the subjects at an early age
  - Demonstrate how STEM fields make a difference in the world
  - Build girls’ self-confidence and expose them to role models and careers in STEM
  - Teach them to challenge gender stereotypes
- At Girl Scouts, we recognize that the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) professional of tomorrow is different from the STEM professional of yesterday.
- We strive to create experiences in different forums in order to reach as many girls from as many different backgrounds, including income levels, as possible.
- We never want a girl’s circumstances or gender to block her from exploring her abilities and interests in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM)!

## ***Camping and Adventure***

- One of the foundations of Girl Scouts is an appreciation for nature and exposure to the great outdoors.
- Activities such as hiking, camping, canoeing, and archery offer girls opportunities to have exciting, girl-led outdoor adventures while learning important skills that teach valuable life lessons, like self-reliance, leadership, and perseverance.
- Most importantly, at camp, girls take the lead in an all-girl safe space where they're free to explore, learn, and have fun without the pressures and social anxiety that can result from a coed environment.
- That's why, for more than a century, camping has been a cornerstone of the Girl Scout experience. Our organization remains committed to ensuring that girls have opportunities to take part in everything that camp has to offer.
- According to the Girl Scout Research Institute, nearly 100 percent of Girl Scouts participate in at least one outdoor activity, and more than half participate in high-adventure experiences like canoeing, archery, and ropes courses.
- Through girl-led outdoor activities, the Girl Scout experience truly comes to life. Girls:
  - Seek challenges
  - Become resourceful problem-solvers
  - Work cooperatively
  - Develop a strong sense of self
- Girl Scouts also facilitates girls' outdoor experiences in unique ways. In our research:
  - 50 percent of girls said that Girl Scouts provided them with opportunities to experience the outdoors in ways they could not have otherwise.
  - About 75 percent said that Girl Scouts gave them the chance to build their skills or try new outdoor activities.
- Girls who participate in girl-led, girl-centered outdoor activities had the following to say about their experiences:
  - "I got over my fear of heights! I climbed the 35-foot tower!" —12-year-old Girl Scout, Florida
  - "It was my first time on the water, in a lake. I was scared at first, but when I started to paddle, I got the hang of it. I really loved it." —10-year-old Girl Scout, Missouri
  - "I was afraid because I don't like heights, but I tried and was able to do the zip line. I really had fun!" —10-year-old Girl Scout, California
  - "I go camping with Girl Scouts every year, and every year we get more responsibility, which makes it more fun! This year we did most of the cooking ourselves, and we also had more responsibility in cleaning our cabins." —11-year-old Girl Scout, Massachusetts
  - "I like camping because you can talk with your friends and do fun things and get to know everyone better." —9-year-old Girl Scout, Texas
  - "It was really fun to be out in nature." —12-year-old Girl Scout, Texas

## **The Girl Scout Gold Award and the National Young Woman of Distinction Honor**

- The Girl Scout Gold Award and the National Young Woman of Distinction honor are the most prestigious recognitions in Girl Scouts.
- The Girl Scout Gold Award, earned by less than 6 percent of Girl Scouts annually, requires girls to demonstrate their leadership skills by tackling a community or global issue.
- Girls typically spend one to two years on their projects and must create long-term sustainability plans that benefit the community.
- Girls Scouts of all ages are top contributors to our community at large, both global and local, and make the world a better place.
- The Girl Scout Gold Award recognizes young women who have designed service projects that tackle community issues, either locally or globally, such as poverty, illiteracy, and the environment.
- These remarkable young women are a result of what Girl Scouts offers—programming that develops girls of the utmost courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place.
- Each year Girl Scouts chooses, from among an elite group of Gold Award recipients, its prestigious National Young Women of Distinction.
- The National Young Woman of Distinction honor is a special honor that recognizes ten Girl Scout Gold Award recipients each year whose final projects demonstrated extraordinary leadership, had a measurable and sustainable impact, and addressed a local challenge related to a national or global issue.
- Without question, earning a Gold Award and being recognized as a National Young Woman of Distinction are among the most renowned, challenging, and gratifying things a girl can do in Girl Scouts—and anywhere.
- Only Girl Scouts offers girls this one-of-a-kind opportunity to engage in leadership at the highest levels while taking on an issue they feel passionately about.
- Girl Scout Gold Award recipients rate their general success significantly higher than their peers and report greater success in reaching their goals in many areas:

### Higher education and career

- Gold Award recipients stand out in the college admissions process.
- Gold Award recipients earn college scholarships.
- Gold Award recipients enter the military one rank higher than their peers.

### Life skills

- Gold Award recipients are seen as role models and distinguished leaders.
- Gold Award recipients have masterful time management skills.

### Community

- Gold Award recipients turn vision into change.
- Gold Award recipients tackle issues locally and globally, to make the world a better place.
- Gold Award recipients build your community's legacy by implementing sustainable solutions to local problems.
- Gold Award recipients establish support networks to last a lifetime.

## ***Female Leadership and the Leadership Pipeline***

- From the boardroom to the courtroom to the caucus room, the need for female leadership has never been clearer or more urgent than it is today—and only Girl Scouts has the expertise to give girls and young women the tools they need to empower themselves and assume their rightful role as leaders.
- Gender balance in the workplace and in the public sphere is vital to ensuring that every voice is heard and every outlook is considered. Girl Scouts has more than 100 years of experience teaching girls that their voices count and that they must stand up for what they believe in and expect to take the lead.
- To create more female leaders, we need to start young and make sure today's girls are acquiring the courage, confidence, character, and other skills they need to take the reins of leadership in the 21st century. Girl Scouts understands this vital connection between youth and future success and offers programming specifically designed with girls in mind.
- To prepare girls for the leadership roles they'll take on in the future, we need to provide them with an unparalleled leadership experience now—an experience that can only come from the best leadership organization for girls in the world: Girl Scouts.
- Women bring invaluable perspectives to the courtroom, the classroom, and the caucus room. If the United States is to maintain its competitive edge in the fast-paced environment of today and tomorrow, we must leverage the full potential of our workforce. Girl Scouts, the best leadership experience for girls in the world, brings more than a century of experience helping girls unlock their potential and unleash it in our world.
- Girl Scouts has been a key driver of workforce development for women for over a century.
- The lifetime benefits of Girl Scouting include the confidence women need to lead in the careers of today and the future.
- The workforce pipeline Girl Scouts creates starts as young as five, when girls sell their first Girl Scout Cookies, and in the process, learn vital financial literacy skills that benefit them their entire lives.

## ***Family Engagement***

- As experts in girls' development and leadership, we offer parents and caregivers invaluable guidance on raising girls today, as well as easy, everyday ways to engage their girls in attaining the leadership, values, and skills promoted through Girl Scouts.
- Girl Scouts offers flexible ways for parents and caregivers to support their girls' leadership development through activities that enhance their experiences at home.
- Girl Scouts strengthens family ties. It is a way for parents to be closer to their girls. And as girls get older and advance in Girl Scouts, girls and parents alike benefit from troop and other female leaders who serve as vital role models. (In fact, research shows that as girls get older, their experiences in Girl Scouts are further enhanced by their interactions with other girls and female role models who share their family's values.)
- Girl Scouts is about girl leadership development. Through Girl Scouts, a girl learns invaluable life skills in everything from STEM to financial literacy and beyond.
- A crucial element of Girl Scouts is helping girls develop the independence, critical-thinking skills, and judgement that lead to strong character.
- Our program is the best girl leadership experience in the world in part because we augment the classroom experience in an all-girl, girl-led setting away from the family unit.
- When girls learn collectively with one another, they are more apt to take risks, try new things, and take on leadership roles.
- With their Girl Scout sisters, girls can try new things and take on roles and challenges they may not feel as open to in their families.
- The girl-led, single-gender space is where girls thrive, and our programs are tailored to maximize impact by teaching girls in the ways they learn best.
- That's why Girl Scouting is so often a generational experience—one passed down from mother to daughter—through which a girl can find the confidence to one day lead her own troop. It's a legacy we share and a sisterhood we all belong to.

## ***Faith Based***

- Girl Scouts is proud of its more than 100-year history of inclusivity and openness to girls of all faiths.
- Our programming encourages girls to explore their personal faith, and to develop a deeper understanding of the role it plays in their own lives.
- Pledging to serve "God and my country" is part of the Girl Scout Promise and Law.
- As with academics, Girl Scouts seeks to enhance a girls' personal faith journey.
- However, we do not align ourselves with, or offer programming through the lens of, any particular religious beliefs or institution.
- We aren't here to dictate what a girl's faith should be or to encourage her to incorporate any particular practice or belief into her life—we believe matters of personal faith are best left to families.

## ***Convenience***

- Something that sounds too good to be true usually is!
- The proposed boy and girl parallel tracks won't necessarily result in a more convenient "one-stop shop" for parents.
- As long as boys and girls are still expected to participate in separate activities with separate leaders, the challenge for volunteers and leaders remains the same.
- Further, by sharing program focus, participating girls don't get the sort of girl-centered, girl-led experience offered by the best girl leadership development program in the world: Girl Scouts.