



Girl Scouts of Southern Alabama, Inc.

Dear Girl Scout Volunteer,

Our founder, Juliette Gordon Low, expressed extraordinary vision in 1912 as she organized the first Girl Scout troop. As a Girl Scout volunteer, you are part of the world's pre-eminent organization for girls, and being prepared for your important role is crucial as we seek to fulfill our organization's mission and Juliette Low's legacy. The Leader Notebook provides information and resources you need to meet the challenges of each program year.

In planning for your troop year, remember the following opportunities and resources are provided to assist you.

- **Council-wide Events** - *Connections* provides a calendar of exciting events presented by our council.
- **Service Area Meetings** - Routine meetings scheduled and managed by volunteers provide an ideal forum for sharing information, answering questions and networking with other volunteers.
- **GSSA Weekly** - Our weekly e-newsletter is full of information on troop happenings, council events, training opportunities and Girl Scouts of the USA news. Sign up at our website, www.girlscoutssa.org.
- **Volunteers and Staff** - The Service Area Manager, a volunteer like you, can help with many elements of troop management. In addition, the council's Volunteer Services Department is eager to provide any assistance you may need.

Please don't hesitate to call on our staff! We'll do our best to answer your questions, and we always appreciate your comments and suggestions on ways to better serve you and your girls.

On behalf of Girl Scouts of Southern Alabama, Inc., I thank you for your leadership and commitment and wish you a wonderful year of Girl Scouting!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth M. Brent". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Elizabeth M. Brent, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Office

GIRL SCOUTS OF SOUTHERN ALABAMA, INC.
FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Service Area (SA) _____ Troop Number _____ Grade Level _____

Service Area Meeting Place _____ Day _____ Time _____

Service Area Manager (SAM) _____ Phone _____

E-mail _____ Phone _____

Troop Leader Coach _____ Phone _____

E-mail _____ Phone _____

Service Area Registrar _____ Phone _____

E-mail _____ Phone _____

Volunteer Services Liaison Cheryl Miller _____ Phone 334-312-0433

E-mail cmiller@girlscoutssa.org _____ Phone 800-239-6636

Director of Volunteer Development Nancy East (River Region) _____ Phone 334-272-9164

E-mail neast@girlscoutssa.org _____ Phone 800-239-6636

Director of Volunteer Development Teri Eversole (Gulf Region) _____ Phone 251-344-3330

E-mail teversole@girlscoutssa.org _____ Phone 800-476-3747

Field Executive _____ Phone _____

E-mail _____ Phone _____

Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday - Friday
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GIRL SCOUTS OF SOUTHERN ALABAMA, INC.

On October 1, 2007, after months of planning and preparation, 30 counties from five councils joined together to form Girl Scouts of Southern Alabama, Inc. Girl Scouts of Southern Alabama, Inc. (GSSA) is a non-profit corporation licensed to do business in Alabama. It is chartered by Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) to use its copyrighted program of informal education for girls by developing and administering Girl Scouting in 30 counties of central and south Alabama. GSSA is one of 109 councils in the United States.

GSUSA is open to all girls grades K through 12 who subscribe to its ideals as stated in the Girl Scout Promise and Law; it is part of a worldwide family of girls and adults in more than 140 countries through its membership in the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS).

- Juliette Gordon Low ("Daisy"), founder, organized the first group of girls on March 12, 1912, in Savannah, Georgia.
- Incorporated in Washington, D.C., June 10, 1915.
- Chartered by the United States Congress, March 16, 1950.
- Girl Scout National Headquarters, the research and development center of the nationwide Girl Scout organization is located in New York City.
- Juliette Gordon Low Girl Scout National Center, birthplace of Girl Scouting's founder, is located in Savannah, Georgia.

There are approximately 3 million girl members and more than 600,000 adult members (women and men), including leaders, consultants, board members, and staff. Girls and adults participate in Girl Scouting through group activities in almost 200,000 troops, including USA Girl Scouts Overseas serving U.S. military and civilian families living abroad.

- National Honorary President: The First Lady of the United States
- CEO: Kathy Cloninger
- President, National Board of Directors: Patricia Diaz Dennis

Membership - is open to all girls from the grades of K - 12. GSSA serves more than 10,000 girls annually.

The Girl Scout Program is delivered to the following grade levels:

Girl Scout Daisy (K - Grade 1)	Girl Scout Cadette (Grades 6-8)
Girl Scout Brownie (Grades 2-3)	Girl Scout Senior (Grades 9-10)
Girl Scout Junior (Grades 4-5)	Girl Scout Ambassador (Grades 11-12)

GSSA has a volunteer board of directors, consisting of officers and members-at-large, which is elected by the delegate membership. These men and women represent the geographic, racial, ethnic, religious, age and socio-economic diversity in our council and are selected for their knowledge and expertise in specific areas. The board liaison/delegate structure is the way your council provides for two-way communication and decision-influencing between the board of directors and the council membership, which includes all registered Girl Scouts 14 years of age and older residing within our council. The By-Laws of GSSA, Inc. specify the use of a corporate management system in which policy determination is distinct and separate from operations. Policy determination is the role of the Board of Directors, and operations are delegated by the board to the chief executive officer, council staff and service area volunteers.

Small geographic areas, called Service Areas, are designated by the Chief Executive Officer to facilitate the delivery of services to our girl and adult members. These smaller areas are easy for volunteers and employed staff to manage and are designed to carry on the day-to-day operations of the council.

Very Important Notice
Registered & Approved Adults

Registered Adult	Registered & Approved Volunteer
<p>Any adult who:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Wants to be a member of Girl Scouts, completes the GSUSA membership form and submits the \$10 annual membership fee to the council.2. These adults can participate at troop meetings.3. These adults can participate in troop activities.4. These adults can serve on troop committees in a position that does not involve handing finances, transporting or chaperoning girls, or overnights.	<p>Any adult who:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Wants to be a member of Girl Scouts and completes the GSUSA membership form and submits the \$10 annual membership fee to the council.2. Any and all adults who:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transport Girl Scouts in a vehicle• Serve as a Chaperone• Attend an overnight event (this includes camping) with the girls• Handle troop or service area money3. In order to be "Approved," the adult must complete the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authorization to Release Information Form• Adult Volunteer Application• Driving Record Request form<p>These forms must be returned at least four weeks prior to an event for the council to complete the approval process. The Driving Record Request form is needed only if you will be transporting girls.</p>4. Once the volunteer's application has been "Approved," the council sends a written notice to the volunteer and will notify the SA Manager and Troop Leader.

What is Girl Scouting?

You've probably heard that Girl Scouting is made up of cookie sales, nature walks, knot-tying, and flag ceremonies, but there are wonderful surprises in store for you. Girl Scouting is much, much more. It brings new friends, ideas, skills, adventures, and experiences to girls as well as adult volunteers. And most important, it brings the Girl Scout Leadership Experience to girls!

The Girl Scout leadership experience offers girls a broad range of activities which address both their current interests and their future roles as women. This experience is adapted to meet the developmental, educational, emotional and social needs and interests of girls at all grade levels. Girls participate in the Girl Scout leadership experience through many pathways, such as troops, groups, or as a Juliette (individual members).

As you will learn, the Girl Scouting leadership experience is designed to allow each girl to "Be Her Best" to develop into a person who believes in herself, her organization, her community, her nation, and her world.

Girl Scouting is Special Because...

- Girls are the only reason for Girl Scouting. Everything in Girl Scouting is designed for their particular needs and interests.
- It is based on a code of values expressed in the Girl Scout Promise and Law that every girl can understand and apply in her everyday life.
- It is contemporary. Since its beginning in 1912, it has kept pace with the changing lives of girls and women.
- GSUSA is one of the world's oldest and is the largest voluntary organization for girls.
- It is part of a worldwide youth movement for girls with members in more than 140 countries. This sisterhood builds awareness of kinship with people around the world.
- It is multicultural. The movement not only welcomes but also seeks members from all racial, ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic groups.
- It appeals to girls through activities that are fun and personally fulfilling for them.
- It offers personal satisfaction and growth to the adults who make it possible.
- It is supported by the community, which recognizes that Girl Scouting enriches the lives of both girls and adults.

I don't know anything about Girl Scouting!

Welcome to your first year as a Girl Scout Volunteer! First, remember that Girl Scouting is a learning and growing experience for both you and the girls in your troop. You already have interests and abilities, and Girl Scout staff will help you to learn additional skills you may need.

To learn the ABC's of the Girl Scouting leadership experience and to find out how your talents can be best used with the girls, it is mandatory that you complete Girl Scout learning courses within 3 months of appointment. Our basic leadership course will help you get started, and grade level provides more information about the particular program level of your troop. Classroom courses offer the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas with other volunteers.

As a registered member, you will receive *Girl Scout Leader* magazine, a GSUSA quarterly publication. It contains information from the national level and many helpful articles about different aspects of Girl Scouting. It also contains news of what troops are doing in different parts of the country and overseas.

New Leader Orientation & Appointment

Upon completion of the volunteer screening process, you will meet with the Volunteer Services Department for orientation

- Leader notebook provided and discussed
- Troop number assignment
- Sign statement agreeing to read volunteer policies & procedures and position description; leave with individual conducting orientation to be returned to council
- Discuss adult learning opportunities
- Troop Leader Coach support explained and contact information given

Volunteer Courses

- Basic, Grade Level, and Journey Leadership courses: within 3 months of appointment (online, home study or classroom course)
- First Aid/CPR: someone else in the troop may be certified as first aider
- Venturing Out: a home study course that must be completed to take your troop away from the regular meeting place
- Preparing for Troop Camping: a home study prerequisite for Basic Camping Skills or for day trips to camp
- Basic Camping Skills: course offered at one of our campsites, which provides you with the skills necessary to take your girls camping
- Camping Adventures: course offered at some locations, which provides you with the skills necessary to take your troop camping. Daughters are invited.

Program Goals

The Girl Scout leadership experience provides many opportunities for age-appropriate activities that provide a basic framework for troop activities and help girls become well-rounded citizens. The Girl Scouts leadership development model guides what girls do in Girl Scouting.

The Girl Scout Journey is organized around the Girl Scout three keys to leadership: Discover, Connect, and Take Action, which are based on the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Discover, Connect, and Take Action outcomes represent short-term and intermediate benefits to girls as a result of their participation in the Girl Scout leadership development program.

Discover

- Girls develop a strong sense of self
- Girls develop positive values
- Girls gain practical life skills
- Girls seek challenges in the world
- Girls develop critical thinking skills

Connect

- Girls develop healthy relationships
- Girls promote cooperation and team building
- Girls can resolve conflicts
- Girls advance diversity in a multicultural world
- Girls feel connected to their communities, locally and globally

Take Action

- Girls can identify community needs
- Girls are resourceful problem solvers
- Girls advocate for themselves and others, locally and globally
- Girls educate and inspire others to act
- Girls feel empowered to make a difference in the world

Getting Parents Involved

How can I do all of this alone?

Feeling a little overwhelmed at this point? Beginning to wonder what happens if you are ill, have to go out of town, or just need a day off? Never fear! Help can be just a phone call or parent meeting away. Remember, the Service Area has a Troop Leader Coach (TLC) and the council has the Volunteer Services Liaison who are here to help.

Getting Parents Involved With Your Troop

Troop leaders/advisors invest time to attend courses to prepare for the safe and efficient management of a Girl Scout troop. Parent support is important for the girls to realize the greatest benefits from their participation in Girl Scouting. There are so many ways that busy parents can help make exciting opportunities available to girls.

You can ask them to:

- serve as an assistant leader/advisor
- coordinate the troop's Product Sale Activities
- conduct the troop's Family Partnership Campaign
- drive to an event or field trip (must be registered as a Girl Scout member and an approved volunteer)
- help with other troop program activities
- keep troop records
- provide phone-calling assistance
- sign and return permission slips
- help their daughter attend meetings regularly and on time
- participate in parent meetings
- show appreciation to the troop leaders on Leader's Day (April 22) each year
- become a Family Partnership Campaign contributor
- provide the opportunity for girls to work on new skills
- teach new skills to girls
- plan and present activities to help girls in their leadership experience
- encourage their daughter to talk about what she is doing and learning
- attend family activities and other troop functions as invited

Ways I can support our troop!

Girl's Name _____

Adult Volunteer Name _____

Home Telephone # _____ Work # _____ Cell # _____

Email Address _____

Please Check All That Apply

I am willing to commit to helping for one month in one of the following capacities:

- Prepare and/or serve snack during meeting time
- Plan and present activities to help girls on their journey
- Attend meetings and assist where needed
- Teach a skill such as a craft, recipe, or ability

I am willing to help on an "as needed" basis in the following capacities:

- Help transport girls to an event or field trip (must complete a Volunteer Application, Authorization to Release Information Form and Driving Record Request Form and have a valid driver's license, liability insurance on your vehicle, and have enough seatbelts for all passengers)
- Facilitate a workshop (Topic: _____)
- Assist the leader with planning and programs

I am willing to take the required courses and help in one of the following capacities as needed:

- First Aid/CPR: take Red Cross or other GSUSA-recognized certification and accompany the troop on field trips
- Assistant leader/advisor: take basic leadership course
- Troop Camper: take Council-sponsored outdoor courses and help plan and carry out camping trips
- Troop Product Sale Chair: attend required courses and manage the troop's Fall Product or cookie sale program

Other ways I would be willing to help _____

Some Suggested Positions for Troop Committee Volunteer Sign-Up

Job Title	Time/Duties	Requirements	Strengths	Volunteer Sign-Up
Leader, Assistant Leader, Advisor	Varies with planning for meetings, troop meetings and other events	New Leader Orientation Age-Level , Venturing Out, others as indicated Must be registered and approved	Ability to work with girls. Patience and understanding.	
Troop Cookie Chair	1 hour to orient girls, 2 weeks taking orders, 3 weeks for delivery and direct sales, completing report and depositing money	2 hour course given by Service Area Cookie Chair in your local area. Must be registered and approved	Organization and ability to keep accurate records. Trustworthy. Relate to girls.	
Troop Fall Product Chair	1 hour to orient girls, 2 weeks taking orders, 2 weeks delivery, completing report and depositing money	1.5 hour course: given by Service Area Fall Product Chair. Must be registered and approved	Organization and ability to keep accurate records. Trustworthy. Relate to girls.	
Transportation Chair	1 to 2 hours telephone time for each trip	Familiar with <i>Safety Wise</i>	Reliable Pleasant on phone	
Emergency Contact	Available at home whenever the troop goes on a trip, camp out or other activity	Keep list of girls and phone numbers Familiar with Safety-Wise	Reliable Pleasant on phone	
Record Keeper	2 or 3 hours per month Dues, attendance, financial reports and records.	Leader will introduce you to record keeping Must be registered and approved	Organization Write legibly	
Outdoor Chair (Day Trips and Activities)	Varies according to activity	Venturing Out Course Must be a registered and approved	Relate to girls Knowledge of outdoors	
Troop Camper (Overnight)	All day/overnight camping trips. Work with girls and leaders before going.	Venturing Out Course Preparing for Troop Camping Basic Camping Skills or Camping Adventures Must be registered and approved	Relate to girls Knowledge of Outdoors Willingness to go on day/overnight trips	
Refreshment Chair	As needed to arrange for refreshments for special events		Organization Reliable Pleasant on phone	
Troop First Aider	Depends on activity	First Aid/CPR Familiar with <i>Safety Wise</i>		

NOTE: To be returned to Troop Leader. All troop committee volunteers must register with GSUSA using "03" position code on GSUSA Adult Membership Registration Form

Community Service is a Way of Thinking

Girl Scouting is often defined by service to our communities. In fact, our promise states that “On my honor I will try to serve...” In Girl Scouting, service provides opportunities for girls to learn new skills, experience girl leadership and teamwork and become more aware of the needs the community and people around them. Girl Scouts of all ages should plan and implement a variety of character-building community service projects in their cities and towns. Community service should be built into all phases of the Girl Scout leadership experience as you plan the year with the girls in your troop.

Plan a Community Service Project

- Girls brainstorm ideas
- Keep interest and skills of your girls in mind
- Review *Safety Wise*, program standards and guidelines and GSSA Policies and Procedures
- Encourage girls to keep a record of their participation in community service projects. Information regarding community service hours is requested on scholarship and college applications, and some awards are given based on community service hours.

A Few Ideas

- Make meal tray decorations for a veterans hospital, nursing home, children’s hospital or rehabilitation facility
- Collect and donate food to local food bank
- Make bird feeders, place them in a park or at a nursing home and keep them filled
- Visit a veterans’ hospital, nursing home, children’s hospital, or rehabilitation facility and sing, play games, and talk with the residents. Do it on a regular basis.
- Make and care for a garden at a school, church, park, or your meeting place
- Help with clean-up day at camp
- Send a care package to military overseas
- Collect and donate books

Girl Awards

Gold Award

The Girl Scout Gold Award, the highest award a girl can earn in Girl Scouting, recognizes the leadership, effort, and impact girls in the 9–12 grades have had on their communities. Only about 5 percent of eligible girls take the rigorous path toward earning this prestigious award, but those who complete the journey change the lives of others and their own in amazing and significant ways. The Girl Scout Gold Award is a national award with national standards; it represents girls' time, leadership, creativity and effort contributed to making their community better. A girl does not need to have earned the Girl Scout Silver Award or any other award to pursue her Girl Scout Gold Award. A young woman who has earned the Girl Scout Gold Award has become a community leader. Her accomplishments reflect leadership and citizenship skills that set her apart.

An increasing number of colleges and universities have recognized the leadership achievements of Girl Scout Gold Award recipients by establishing scholarship programs for them. Although GSUSA does not award scholarships to Girl Scout Gold Award recipients, GSUSA does publish the *Scholarships for Girl Scouts Directory*, which lists schools and organizations that offer scholarships. This information is available upon request from your nearest service center.

Silver Award

The Girl Scout Silver Award, the highest award a Girl Scout in the 6–8 grade can earn, is symbolic of accomplishments in Girl Scouting and community activities as a girl becomes her best self and impacts the world around her. The Girl Scout Silver Award project benefits a girl's community which can include her school, Girl Scout Council, city or town, or even a more global community. The Girl Scout Silver Award can be earned individually or as part of a group.

Girls are recognized as a future community leader if they have earned the Girl Scout Silver Award. Although girls don't have to earn the Silver Award before going for the Girl Scout Gold Award, earning the Silver Award will help girls build strong foundational skills that will encourage them to stretch for the Girl Scout Gold Award. Girls will find support in many ways from the community and others while on their quest for leadership.

Bronze Award

The Girl Scout Bronze Award is the highest award that a Girl Scout in the 4–5 grade can earn. It has no prerequisites. The Girl Scout Bronze Award project should show her commitment to helping others, improving her community and world and becoming her best self.

Approval Process

There is a Council approval process for Girl Scout Gold and Silver Award Projects. The Girl Scout Bronze Award does not require council approval, but the leader should ensure that the girls' projects show that they understand and live by the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Girls seeking to earn any awards should check with the council for submission deadlines. Information about the Girl Scout Awards can be obtained by participating in one of the Award Trainings offered by the Council. Girl Scout Award Planners can be downloaded from the council Web site or picked up at your nearest service center.

Getting Started, Step by Step

1. Schedule New Leader Orientation
2. Meet with your other leader/assistant leader/advisor
3. Plan and Hold Parents Informational Meeting
4. Contact your Service Area Team Members
5. Register your troop's girls and adults
6. Open Bank Account within one month of appointment
7. Take Orientation and Leadership Essentials courses within the first three months of appointment
8. Start Meeting with Your Troop

Step 1: Schedule your New Leader Orientation

Contact your Volunteer Services Department to arrange a day and time for orientation. It lasts about one hour and can be done at your convenience. This is the only course you must have in order to start meeting with your troop. At this class you will receive all of the paperwork you need to get started.

Step 2: Meet with your Assistant Leader/Advisor

Hopefully when you received your list of girls, a parent checked that she/he would like to help. If that is the case you will want to contact her/him immediately and take the required courses together, after approval. If there were no other volunteers on your list, ask your parents for an assistant leader/advisor at your parents meeting. Your Troop Organizer can also help by assigning an assistant leader/advisor from a waiting list if one is available. You and your assistant leader/advisor will need to discuss a general plan and outline for your troop. Examples of what you might discuss are:

- Where and when you will meet. If you will meet in a public building, make the necessary arrangements with the building supervisor.
 - Schools, churches and community buildings are excellent locations for troop meetings. A private location or home should be your last choice. When holding troop meetings or events in a home, please remember that the volunteer application process also applies to all adults who live in the home where troop meetings or other Girl Scout events are taking place. Additionally, all family members who live in a home where troop meetings or other Girl Scout events are taking place, even if they are under 19 years of age, must complete and return the Authorization to Release Information Form. Furthermore, meetings or events can not take place in a home where a convicted sexual offender resides.
- When will you have your parents meeting?
- Will you collect dues or a one time fee?
- When will you hold your investiture ceremony (pinning and dedication ceremony)?
- What kapers (the Girl Scout term for chores) will your troop have?
- Will there be behavior incentives? What about discipline?
- Do your girls want to wear a sash, vest, or other Girl Scout uniform pieces? If your troop decides to design their own t-shirt, remember that the use of the Girl Scout symbols is restricted to licensed vendors.

Step 3: Plan and Hold a Parent Informational Meeting

Arrange your meeting location i.e. school, local church, community building, set day and time for the meeting. If you decide you want flyers to be distributed at local schools advertising your parent meeting, contact your Volunteer Services Department with the information you would like on the flyers. If you would like your Troop Leader Coach to attend your Parent Meeting let them know the time, date and location. This meeting will have several purposes. To inform the parents about...

1. Girl Scouting
2. The benefits of Girl Scouting for their daughter
3. What is expected of the girls and adults
4. How they can participate in their daughter's Girl Scouting experience

You may want to type up an agenda for your meeting so everyone can follow along, as you are discussing items. You will want to have on hand the following forms:

- Adult Volunteer Applications, Driving Record Request Forms and Authorization to Release Information Forms
- GSUSA Membership Registration Forms for Girls & Adults
- Health History forms, Girls & Adults (used for trips)
- Ways I can support our troop! (form in this notebook)
- Information on uniforms and handbooks (available for purchase in the Girl Scout Shop)

Please see the Parents Meeting Outline Example. [Page # XXX](#)

Step 4: Contact your Service Area Team Members

One of the most valuable resources to you as a new leader is your Service Area Team. Your Troop Leader Coach and/or SAM can help you plan a meeting, let you observe a meeting, answer most of your questions, and assign a "buddy" to you if you'd like. She can be a sounding board for ideas, or help you come up with some. Your SA Registrar and SA Treasurer can help you with completing registration forms and assist in opening your troop bank account. Please use this resource.

Step 5: Open a Troop Bank Account check policy-

Now that you have had your Parent Meeting and collected registration fees (and any start up fees that you requested) you need to open a troop checking account and deposit all the funds. A bank account must be opened within one month of the troop being established. Note: the signature of either a SAM or Service Area Team Member who is appointed by the SAM must be on your troop account. Each account must be set up with at least three signatures, and each check requires two signatures. Turn in this information to the SA Treasurer and your Volunteer Services Department. [See section on "Money", Page #XX](#)

Step 6: Register Your Troop

Every participant (girl or adult) in Girl Scouting must register and become a member of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA). GSUSA membership dues are valid for one year (October 1-September 30). Membership dues are sent by the council to GSUSA; no portion of the dues stays with the council. Membership dues may not be transferred to another member and are not refundable. GSUSA provides these services to its members:

- Accident insurance for all members
- Membership cards
- Development of the Girl Scout leadership experience, handouts, and materials
- Staff and facilities to support the girl leadership experience
- *Girl Scout Leader* magazine for adults
- Courses/conferences for Older Girl Scouts and adult volunteers

Once a member is registered with GSUSA, she/he also becomes a member of Girl Scouts of Southern Alabama, Inc. Registration enables the member to receive council mailings.

Early registration for the upcoming membership year occurs in the spring; troops are encouraged to register early to avoid the "fall rush." Early registration helps ensure there will be no interruption in receipt of forms and publications that are mailed to each registered member, helps the troop and the Service Area to plan events for the early fall, and assists the Service Area registrar in balancing the re-registration workload.

Lifetime membership dues are available at a greatly reduced rate. A lifetime member must be at least 18 years old or be 17 and have graduated from high school, and subscribe to the beliefs and principles of the Girl Scout Movement.

Once members have been registered, any changes in member information should be given to the Service Area registrar on the Change of Information form available from the Service Area registrar. This ensures all concerned have accurate information on each member of the troop.

Step 7: Take Orientation and Leadership Essentials courses

To take these Courses, you can visit the Web site, www.girlscoutssa.org, contact your Service Area manager or the Volunteer Services Department to check out a CD-Rom or Home-study versions, or attend classroom courses. We ask that you finish these courses within three months of becoming a leader.

Step 8: Start Meeting with your Troop!

Don't forget your Volunteer Services Department is here to help you at all times. No question is too small or unimportant. Please feel free to contact the Council office and/our Learning and Volunteer Services Liaison anytime you need help.

Make sure your parents know:

Your troop number; leader and assistant leader contact information; service area number; council contact information; troop meeting place and time.

Girl/Adult Health Histories

Troop leader keeps these available during troop meetings and troop trips in the Trip Emergency Packet.

Girl Records

A record for each girl should be kept to track her achievements, including badges earned and community service hours. As girls earn badges or other recognitions, the leader should record it for future reference for special awards (Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards).

Record keeping can be time consuming, but it needs to be done to help you remember things over a long time. Write it down and organize it. Filling out reports won't take so long to do!

Activity Notification/Approval Guidelines

Review the activity list below to determine what form(s) you need and who to send the form to for your troop's activity. All forms are on our website www.girlscoutssa.org or are available at the council service centers.

Activity	Complete Form	Notification and/or Form Submission Due	Additional Insurance Required?	Submit Form for Notification/Approval
Rent/Charter Automobile, Van, or Bus (no 15-passenger vans)	Vehicle Rental/Lease/Charter Application	4 weeks	Depends on Company Used	Council Approval Required
Activities that require persons with specialized training or certifications (See <i>Safety-Wise</i>)	No Form	2 weeks	No	Notify SA Manager
Day Trip	No Form	None	No	Notify SA Manager
Overnight Trip/Camping on non-Council Property (2 nights or less, not including a federal holiday)	Overnight Trip/Camping Application	2 weeks	No	Council Approval Required
Overnight Trip/Camping on non-Council Property (more than 2 nights not including a federal holiday)	Overnight Trip/Camping Application	4 weeks	Yes (Plan 3E or 3P)*	Council Approval Required
International Trip	Council Service Center has forms	1 year	Yes (Plan 3I)*	Council Approval Required
Money-Earning	Money-Earning Activity Application	2 months	No	Council Approval Required

*These are insurance plans provided by Mutual of Omaha specifically for Girl Scout Troops. Insurance plan information is available from the GSSA Service Centers.

General Camping Information

The intent of troop camping is to allow the girls the experience of planning and carrying out a trip. While it is fun for adults to participate in troop camping, if the number of adults attending exceeds the recommended ratios the girls will not have ownership of the experience. The girls should be active in planning menus, activities, kapers and the evaluation of the campout with guidance from the troop leaders.

Reservations

Girl Scouts of Southern Alabama, Inc. has four campsites and a volunteer center available for troop/group use. To reserve a facility, submit a reservation form with attachments and total fees to the appropriate service center at least three weeks prior to first requested date. Reservation forms are available at www.girlscoutssa.org or from your local service center. Reservations are received on a first-come, first-served basis and are not approved until site availability and training confirmations have been made. Upon receipt of payment, you will receive a Confirmation Packet which will include property information and a Kaper Form. You will be notified as soon as possible if dates requested are not available.

Certification

- Volunteers currently certified in First Aid and CPR must be present at any camping event during the entire stay.
- A volunteer troop camper qualified in Basic Camping Skills, Camping Adventures or other equivalent Girl Scout troop camping course is required for any overnight camping trip.
- For day trips or council-sponsored events on council camp properties where the troop will not be cooking or building camp fires, Venturing Out and Preparing for Troop Camping self-study courses are required.

These volunteers may be a member of the Troop Committee, a member of the troop leadership team, or a (registered and approved) parent who enjoys the outdoors and who is available to attend training and the troop meetings prior to the event or campout. It will be her/his responsibility to assist the girls in planning the campout, as well as the person responsible for the condition of the camp once the troop is ready to check out of camp.

Certain activities required additional specialized certification. If your camping trip includes boating, swimming, archery, challenge courses or horseback riding, you are responsible to ensure that certifications are current and meet *Safety Wise* (current edition) standards. If you are camping you will be required to provide proof of that certification upon reservation. Check *Connections* for dates and times of courses and refer to *Safety Wise* (current edition) for additional information about necessary certification required.

Facilities

Our camps have multiple units that make up the camp as a whole. Each individual unit is made up of cabins, tents, or hutlets. There is also an area for primitive camping available at all sites.

Camp Sid

This camp is on 186 acres with a 35 acre lake and has units that stay open year round. Facilities at Camp Sid include a winterized building with a full kitchen, hutlets and an area for tent camping. Two of the units are equipped with heating and air conditioning. Camp Sid is located in Bay Minette and has a capacity of 88 overnight campers.

Humming Hills

Located on 267 acres with 2 ponds near Elba, Camp Humming Hills has a capacity of 80 overnight campers or 150 day visitors. Humming Hills is open from March through mid-November and is available during the winter with special approval from the Ranger. Facilities include platform tents, cabins and 2 bath houses; unit houses with fireplaces, kitchens, air-conditioning, and ice machines are located on site.

Kamp Kiwanis

Located on 110 acres in Eclectic on Lake Martin, Kamp Kiwanis has a capacity of 154 overnight campers. Facilities include platform tents and cabins, a dining hall, arts and crafts building, health lodge, recreation center, covered pavilion and staff house. Unit houses with fireplaces, kitchens, and air conditioning as well as handicapped accessible bathhouses are located in Pioneer and Ranger Units; Mariner Unit has an open unit house with small kitchen and handicapped accessible bathhouse. Available for troop/group use March - May and August - November, the camp serves as resident camp during June and July and is closed Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends.

Scoutshire Woods

This camp is on 68 acres surrounding a 12 acre lake. The camp is closed December through February for the winter season. Facilities at Scoutshire include platform tents, cabins, dining hall, recreation hall, infirmary, arts & crafts hut, and an area for primitive camping. Scoutshire Woods is located in Citronelle and has a capacity of 173 overnight campers. It is also serves as resident camp during June and July.

Earline Locke Volunteer Center

The Earline Locke Volunteer Center at the Mobile Service Center is available for overnight or weekend use and is accessible to the handicapped. Your troop can plan day trips to local places of interest. There is a full kitchen and shower available. A television and VCR are available for use during your stay. However, no beds are provided. Visitors should be prepared to bring sleeping bags and air mattresses for their stay.

Male Campers

Men are to be accommodated at all camps whenever possible. They must be both registered Girl Scout members and approved as a volunteer to spend the night at any Girl Scout event. Men must sleep in separate facilities from the girls and female adults. The person planning the event should designate a specific area for male sleeping facilities at the camp. Tents may be set up at any camp, but some camps have restricted areas where they can be placed. Separate restrooms and showers must also be made available for male campers. If the property does not have separate facilities available, special facility access for male campers must be established and posted.

If male and female campers are staying in separate cabins/tents but those cabins/tents are all located in same unit, the troop leaders who have the man/men attending should contact the other troop leader to make arrangements for facility access times as well as to alert her to the fact that there will be a man/men in the unit. Males are still required to stay in separate facilities. The adult male should never be alone with the girls.

Adult Female Campers

Female adults are discouraged from sleeping in a cabin/tent with girls. When at camp, there should always be at least two adults per unit and present unless the girls/adult ratios outlined in *Safety-Wise* (current edition) differ. Girls need an opportunity for some privacy and independence. Additionally, a girl alone with an adult female should always be in view of another adult.

Where do we get the equipment?

Most troops provide their own equipment for program needs. However, council service centers also have equipment available for check out for Girl Scout activities and/or ceremonies. Some flags are available through the service areas.

Girl Scout uniform items, handbooks, Facilitators' Guides, and other Girl Scout equipment are available at the Council Shops.

Many leaders request that the girls purchase a sash or vest. Buying a uniform is an optional purchase. Only leaders may purchase Try-Its, Badges, Interest Project Patches, and other earned recognitions. Orders may be mailed to the shop, brought in person, faxed or e-mailed. The Shop Order Form is available at www.girlscoutssa.org or from your local service center. Please plan your orders well ahead of the time you will need them! Demand on some items may be especially high and any items out of stock may take several weeks to come in. Visa, MasterCard and Discover cards are accepted as well as troop or personal checks. Do not send cash in the mail.

Suggested List of Equipment for Troops

The equipment needed may depend on your activities. A large carry-all container in which you can store/carry your equipment is very helpful. The following items are suggested for your troop's equipment kit:

- *Safety-Wise*
- Small First-Aid kit
- Pencils, pens, plain and construction paper
- Paper supplies: Kleenex, paper towels, cups, sanitary supplies for older girls
- Markers, crayons, zip-lock baggies, scissors, scotch tape
- Sit-upons (a simple seating cushion) - girls can make these during a troop meeting
- Old shower curtain or other plastic covering for tables during arts and crafts
- Receipt book

*Add items as needed

Suggested List of Equipment for Girls

- Small lightweight backpack
- Refillable water bottle or a cup on a string
- Hat
- Bandana
- Whistle
- Bugspray
- Sunscreen
- Notepad and pencil/pen

Money

You are required to open a bank account within one month of establishing the troop. The account title is *Girl Scouts of Southern Alabama, Inc. Troop #_____*. Council policies must be followed when establishing an account. See *Volunteer Policies and Procedures* available at www.girlscoutssa.org or in the Leader Notebook. Parents pay dues for their Daisy Girl Scout directly to the leader. Other grade levels can determine their own system for dues including how much and how often to collect dues.

When necessary, troops (except for Daisy troops) with proper approval may participate in other money earning projects provided that the *Safety-wise* guidelines and Volunteer Policies and procedures are followed.

Each year by June 15, a troop financial report is completed by the leader or troop record keeper and is submitted to the Volunteer Services Department along with a copy of the troops May bank account statement. Always keep a copy for your troop records. You or your troop record keeper should keep accurate records of money received (income) and money spent (expenses). Troop accounts are subject to random audits. In order to expedite the audit, accurate record keeping is important.

1. Income includes troop dues as well as fall product and cookie sale proceeds, membership dues, sponsorship support, etc.
2. Expense covers everything spent on the troop for program and/or activities.
3. Receipts should be kept to help balance the books on a regular basis and at the end of the year when a troop Financial Statement is sent to the Council office.
4. Record keeping includes: checking account balances, deposit slips and cancelled checks; petty cash income notes and receipts for money spent; receipt books for money collected at meetings or other money given to the troop; store or other receipts for all money spent; product sale final reports and deposit slips.

Forms

These forms are needed to open a troop bank account:

- Bank Account Authorization
- W-9
- Articles of incorporation

Who pays for what?

Girls Pay For:

Journey
Registration
Troop dues
Uniform and insignia
*Earned recognitions (try-its, badges)
*Camp fees

Leaders/Adults Pay For:

Registration
Uniform and insignia
Personal equipment
*courses if a fee is required

Troop Pays For:

Facilitators Guide
Troop equipment
Program supplies
*Troop camp out costs
*Special troop council events
Recognitions (try-its, badges, pins, charms)

Council Pays For:

Camps and camp maintenance
Maintaining council facilities and shop
Support services
Public relations materials
Trained professional staff
National affiliation and charter

*Can be paid by the troop, individual girls or adults

Troop Sponsorship

“Partner with us to help build girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place” is the invitation GSSA is sending to the communities within its boundaries. Strengthening our connections with the community opens the door to information and resources. The introduction of new Girl Scout leadership experience resources provides us many opportunities to increase our participation and interaction with the community.

Troops are encouraged to recruit sponsors by making new contacts, forming relationships with individuals, and collaborating with a variety of organizations. As a result of these outreach efforts, partnering with the community will become an alliance of support for girl and adult members.

Each troop that has a sponsor needs to complete the Troop Sponsorship Agreement. The agreement allows the troop and the sponsor to mutually develop a partnership. After the signed sponsorship agreement has been submitted to the Council, the Council will mail a certificate for the sponsor to the troop. Troops are encouraged to frame the certificate and present it to their sponsor.

Service Area Managers and the Volunteer Services Department can assist troop leaders in learning more about troop sponsorship.

Monetary sponsors should make checks payable to “GSSA” for tax purposes. The check should then be brought to the Council Service Centers for deposit. A check will then be mailed to the troop within two weeks of deposit.

Please refer to the Sponsorship Policy in the Volunteer Policies and Procedures for more information.

What's next, Coach?

Now that you're organized, you have a meeting place, and a troop of eager girls, what's next? First, your Troop leader coach or SAM will help you outline your first few meetings, or you can refer to the last pages of this booklet for some ideas.

But success in troop meetings largely depends on two things: your interest and girl planning. Sure, it might seem better at first to do everything yourself - quicker, easier, and always less messy!

Remember, girl planning is the very heart and soul of Girl Scouting. Regardless of age, girls have different levels of ability, and as a leader you can utilize all those various levels in helping girls learn to plan. It's their troop, their activities. Use their ideas! Talk with your girls. Find out what they want to do and how they want to do it. Then if it's absolutely safe and relatively sane - FULL SPEED AHEAD! The worst thing you could ever do in Girl Scouting is to do it all yourself. Forget about being a mother-hen to your girls. You are their adult friend now, and there really is a big difference. Helping girls to make choices is at the heart of the girl/adult partnership. They will grow and learn when you give them that chance.

End-of-Year Review and Recognitions

Complete end-of-year review form either online or by hand and return to service area manager to be forwarded to the council service center. An end-of-the-year recognitions process for volunteers is also in place; look for information in the spring of each year at www.girlscoutssa.org.

Reappointment, Reassignment or Release from Volunteer Position

Prior to the completion of her/his term of appointment, each volunteer who is to be reappointed shall receive confirmation of such reappointment. Reappointment is based on past performance, adherence to council and GSUSA policies and standards, support of the Girl Scout purpose, values, and Council goals, as well as positive relationships with the community, parents, other volunteers and council staff. There will be mutual acceptance of position accountabilities, expectations, and time commitments.

Either the Council or the volunteer may initiate a release from a position. A volunteer is requested to give as much notice as possible when resigning. A minimum of two weeks is preferred. Situations may arise that make it necessary to release an individual from a position; see Volunteer Policies and Procedures (Release of Operational Volunteer Policy)

Web Site Safety and Guidelines

When utilizing the Internet for troop activities, a leader should:

- Instruct troop members about the benefits and dangers of the Internet and teach how to safeguard themselves in any potentially dangerous situation.
- Be aware of the sites you intend to visit and pre-screen to the extent possible.
- Have each troop member sign an "Online Safety Pledge" (available at www.girlscouts.org)
- Do not give any personally identifiable information to any person or organization. This includes last names, e-mail addresses, street addresses, and phone numbers.
- Advise troop members to follow the following basic rules when online:
 - Be polite.
 - Be considerate.
 - Be aware.

Council Web Site Guidelines

Service Area and Troop Web sites should be attractive, informative and kept current.

- Navigating your site should be kept easy and consistent for users.
- Large files should be avoided. They take too long to load and distract from the flow of the message.
- All GSUSA symbols are protected by trademarks and must be used in accordance with GSUSA guidelines. All drawings, photographs, or other graphics should be checked to see if they are copyrighted. If so, you must obtain written permission before incorporating these into a Web site.
- You must have a legal photo release for troop members and/or other people appearing in photos on the Web site.
- No last names of girls should be posted on the site. The last names of adults should only be used if the adults give their permission.
- No telephone numbers should be listed. Directions or locations where girls and adults meet should not be identified.
- Your site should not request names, addresses, e-mail addresses, or other information from people visiting nor should it automatically post messages that have not been carefully screened by a responsible adult.
- All pages relating to GSSA Service Areas and troops must be reported to the CEO's or PR/Marketing staff at the council. Pages may be linked to the GSSA Web site after review by the appropriate staff person.

Links to other sites

- Links to other sites should be added very carefully. Sites should contain only material that is safe and suitable for children and appropriate for Girl Scouts using the web.
- The site should not contain inappropriate advertising.
- Links should be reviewed frequently to be sure they are functional and the material continues to be appropriate for girls.

Log on to the council's official Web site at www.girlscoutssa.org

Sample Parent Meeting Outline

All parents *must* attend the meeting or set up another time with you to register their daughter. A girl cannot attend a troop meeting or activity unless all forms have been signed and she is a registered Girl Scout.

1. Welcome the parents and introduce your co-leaders and assistant leaders. You might consider a parent/daughter meeting. Play a name game or start the meeting with a welcoming ceremony.

2. Explain the purpose of the Girl Scout Leadership experience, the benefits their daughter will derive from Girl Scouting, the Girl Scout Promise and Law, Investiture and Rededication, and the program framework for the grade level. Provide names and phone numbers of your SAM, Troop Leader Coach and GSSA for the parents to contact if they have questions or concerns about the Girl Scout Leadership experience.

3. Provide facts about your troop, such as:

- Troop and Service Area number
- the number of girls
- the meeting place and time
- the structure of a routine meeting, Kaper charts and troop government
- dues to be collected and the availability and confidentiality of financial aid (see Volunteer Policies and Procedures, Financial Aid policy)
- whether or not snacks will be served and how they will be provided
- the role and availability of the Girl Scout Uniform
- how funds will be raised for troop events, field trips, etc., and why product sales are important

4. Describe the general troop goals for the year:

Review Journeys, Try Its, Badges, Patches, charms or other patches to be earned (and how you'll handle "make ups" for missed meetings, or independent work), Service Area and Council Events that may be attended.

5. Discuss methods of communication with parents (telephone tree, emails, informal notes, and newsletter).

6. Discuss the necessity of returning completed permission slips (explain the health and safety standards we observe - see *Safety Wise*, pages 11-12). Emphasize you *MUST* live within the guidelines of *Safety Wise*!

7. Recruit troop committee members. The most successful troops have strong parent support. It may help to have a poster-sized sign up sheet in a visible place available for parents to use. You may want to make copies of the suggested troop committee sign-up on [page XXX](#). Make sure that parents understand that you and your assistant leader/advisors are volunteers and that their help is essential to make the troop work well. Every troop is what the parents make it and it's important for all of them to be involved.

8. Explain council-sponsored fund raising activities (Cookies, Fall Product).

9. Other miscellaneous information you need to share.

10. Allow a Question and Answer period.

11. Pass out the forms to be completed. Collect the registration fee and any start-up dues.

Basic Investiture / Rededication Ceremony

This is by no means the "be all, end all" ceremony, but it is a basic ceremony that you can adapt to give your girls their pin and "invest" them into Girl Scouting. These ceremonies usually occur during one of the first few meetings of the year. Check with the experienced leaders in the Service Area for ceremony ideas and variations. You can also purchase the new *Let's Celebrate!* book in the Girl Scout Shop.

Investiture

An investiture is a ceremony to officially welcome a NEW girl or adult into Girl Scouting. The new member recites the Girl Scout Promise and receives her Girl Scout pin. Daisies receive their Daisy pin, Brownies receive their Brownie pin, and Juniors, Cadettes, Seniors, Ambassadors, and Adults receive the Girl Scout Trefoil pin.

Rededication

Rededication is done each year by all members of the Girl Scouts. At this ceremony, everyone reaffirms their commitment to Girl Scouting. The investiture and rededication ceremonies may be done separately or together. Usually, when a new girl is invested into a troop, everyone is present for the ceremony. This is, therefore, a good time for the entire troop to rededicate themselves.

Basic Ceremony Example

Before and/or after the investiture/rededication portion of the ceremony a troop may choose to have a flag ceremony, sing a song, etc. However, the investiture/rededication should be the main part of the ceremony.

Props: 14 candles (3 for Promise, 10 for Law, and 1 to light all other candles from). The troop stands in horseshoe formation around a table with ceremonial candles. The open end of the horseshoe should face the audience. The leader, or one of the girls, begins the ceremony by explaining the meaning of "investiture" and/or rededication and the symbolism of the three candles for the Promise and the ten candles for the Law. The participating girls and/or adults begin to light the candles. One candle is lit for each part of the Girl Scout Promise and the ten parts of the Girl Scout Law. The number of participants will determine how many candles each girl lights. If you need more "parts", consider having one girl speak, and one girl light the candle.

- Part 1 - The Girl Scout Promise: On my honor, I will try
(this is the candle used to light all others)
- Part 2 - To serve God and my country
- Part 3 - To help people at all times
- Part 4 - And to live by the Girl Scout Law.
- Part 5 - The Girl Scout Law: I will do my best to (no candle lit)
- Part 6 - be honest and fair
- Part 7 - be friendly and helpful
- Part 8 - be considerate and caring
- Part 9 - be courageous and strong, and
- Part 10 - be responsible for what I say and do. And to
- Part 11 - respect myself and others
- Part 12 - respect authority
- Part 13 - use resources wisely
- Part 14 - make the world a better place
- Part 15 - be a sister to every Girl Scout.

Leader: "At this time the girls of Troop # _____ will rededicate themselves to the service of Girl Scouting."

All returning members are called forward. They repeat the Girl Scout Promise and are welcomed back to the troop by an adult member with the Girl Scout handshake. They then return to the horseshoe.

Leader: "Now our new members will be invested into Girl Scouting."

Leader, or one of the rededicated girls, calls each new girl and adult forward. Each new member then repeats the Girl Scout Promise, individually, or as a group. The new members are welcomed into Girl Scouting, they receive the appropriate Girl Scout pin, give the Girl Scout handshake, and return to the horseshoe formation.

There are many variations of this Candlelight Ceremony. If your girls are too young to light candles, or if candles are not allowed where you meet, small flashlights can be substituted.

New Leader/Advisor Checklist

Use this checklist to get the troop started.

- Had New Leader Orientation training and have a volunteer development record card
- Received Leader Notebook and understand how to use the contents
- Received troop records/supplies from past years if a re-registering troop
 - *Connections*
 - Leader Notebook
 - *Safety-Wise*
 - Bank Account Information
- Meeting place, day and time arranged/confirmed (*Safety-Wise p.45*)
- Have a troop sponsor (limit of \$500.00 per membership year)
 - Have troop sponsorship agreement signed
- Troop account opened
 - Account Title is: Girl Scouts of Southern Alabama, Inc.,
Troop # _____ SA# _____
 - Filled out and signed signature cards
 - All troop accounts must have three signers on the account
 - Completed Bank Account Form; sent to Service Center
- Held a Parent Meeting using the agenda outline in this notebook
- Troop Committee recruited and registered to include:
 - Troop Cookie Chair; Fall Product Chair
 - First Aider (or person to become a First-Aider) for field trips and camping trips
 - Have a troop First-Aid Kit (include Insurance Claim Form, Emergency Numbers, and Health History Forms)
- Registered for or completed required courses (Basic and Grade level). Basic Camping Skills and Camping Adventures are offered for more advanced outdoor program activities.
- Troop is registered
 - Have a Registration and Health History Form for each girl
 - Have a registration form for each adult registering
 - Collected \$10.00 membership fee for each girl and adult who is registering
 - Filled out registration forms (girl and adult forms and dues summary, if you need help, call your Troop Leader Coach or Service Area Manager)
 - Have check, money order or cash (no cash in mail) for total number of registering girls and adults
 - Return the following items to the Service Center within one month:
 - Registration forms and dues summary form
 - Check, money order or cash
 - Signed Sponsorship Agreement (if applicable)
 - Troop Bank Account Form Troop Bank Account information

Remember: Have Fun!