



**For Immediate Release**

January 1, 2009

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Imagine if...we could change the world. As Americans, we most certainly have the ability. So what would the first three waves of your wand change? And please, think long term.

This month, we'll inspire tens of thousands of girls with this same query. It's the theme of this year's Girl Scout Cookie Sale Program, and the first step in changing the world, literally.

You've probably heard the saying by cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." That being the case, imagine how a group of 24,000 thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world...with your support.

Now, take a minute to contemplate how you've made a difference. Have you shown concern for a neighborhood child, or become the one adult they can talk to? Have you stopped to help a stranded motorist? Assist an elderly stranger on ice, pick up a hammer to help a neighbor, or say yes to a bright-eyed young girl on your doorstep, hoping you'll take her personal Girl Scout Cookie goal as your own?

This is the reality of one of the most effectual and multi-faceted youth programs in the world...the Girl Scout Cookie Program. It is far more than a box of treats. Your nod to the bright-eyed girl is, in fact, an investment in her future and our community. It is acknowledgement that you, whether friend or stranger, believe in her and in our collective future.

While it may seem relatively insignificant, your small investment is pooled with others to create thousands of hours of much-needed community service and youth development. It generates countless examples of people helping people and the building of social capital. Plus, your \$7.50 or \$17.50 or \$35 investment results in at least one youth gaining a more stable foot-hold on life. I hope you can see the paramount role you play and the extent of your impact by simply indulging.

A box or two for you, one for the neighbor, and maybe one for a soldier overseas. Now, that bright-eyed girl takes your small investment back to the troop and they buy food for the pantry and material to make blankets for cancer patients. Or, if she's a little older, she adds your investment to her Gold Award fund so she can equip 2,000 youngsters in Mexico with school supplies while she learns leadership skills.

See? You just made the world a better place. You made a wise investment in social capital and... you got to enjoy an iconic American treat!

This isn't a one-shot deal or a half-time snack that's here and gone. This is life-changing. This is the stuff of young girls' dreams and of all the wisdom and experience she needs to make a really good go of the life that lies ahead – for herself, her future coworkers, the strangers she'll help along the way, her family, and you...her neighbor.

So go ahead, indulge, and enjoy your long-term investment.

Ann Saris is VP of Brand and Marketing for Girl Scouts of the Northwestern Great Lakes, Inc., serving 24,000 girls and 6,600 volunteers in 58 counties across Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

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