

Super Troop Highlight

ONE SERVICE PROJECT OR TAKE ACTION PROJECT



Finding Community Service Opportunities



Make the Girl Scout Promise and the Girl Scout Law come alive for girls with community service projects or outings. When troops provide helpful service to others, they work through the three Girl Scout Processes. Service projects are girl-led when girls help decide where to go and what to do, are cooperative learning when girls work together to get the job done, and provide a learning-by-doing-something-generous experience!

Community service projects offer another way to experience a progression of skills in Girl Scouting, because girls can use their volunteer experiences to help them plan and organize their own Take Action projects when they earn future Journey leadership awards and Highest Awards.

Community service opportunities are popular with Girl Scout troops all year long, and especially during November and December when girls jump into the seasonal spirit of giving, gratitude, and the Girl Scout mission to “make the world a better place.”

Community Service in a Virtual World

Adapt service projects to be safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. Select service projects that girls can work on at home or suggest activities they do with their family instead of the troop. When gathering in-person as a troop, keep the girls and adults clustered in smaller groups, wear masks, and encourage physical distance and hand sanitizer use.

NEW! Join in National Service Projects

Looking for community service options in a virtual world? Join your sister Girl Scouts as our Movement collaborates to make a BIG impact in the nation. Check out these simple, independent, and versatile ways to join together in service to others.

National Service Projects
<https://www.girlscouts.org/serviceprojects>





How to find opportunities for girls

Start by asking local Girl Scout troops and your Service Area community about service opportunities they've done. Read local and national Facebook posts and Girl Scout websites. Look at organizations already connected to our council at

On Your Own

<https://www.gsnwgl.org/OnYourOwn>

Browse national websites like volunteermatch.org, greatnonprofits.org, dosomething.org, or unitedway.org, who maintain lists of volunteer opportunities. Filter by zip codes, activities appropriate for children, and socially distanced opportunities.

Browse local public websites like municipalities (towns, counties), libraries, or school districts, locally published family activity guides, or local Facebook groups for parents.

Explore your own network! Have friends and family volunteered somewhere that would be a perfect fit for a troop? Do you know a member of a local civic organization? Does your employer promote volunteer activity and provide a list of family-friendly options? Do you have a favorite non-profit that could use some help?

Assessing age appropriate opportunities

Troop Leaders are always the best judge of what a troop can do, matching the girls' interests and maturity levels to local volunteer opportunities, but here's some general advice.

Daisies and Brownies enjoy creating things to donate to others and then delivering them in person. Short-term time commitments are best. *Examples: making cards, decorations for assisted living residents, or toys for dogs and cats.*

Juniors and Cadettes love to get out of the troop meeting space and volunteer onsite at community service centers. A few hours work and few introductions to new people and places is energizing! *Examples: collecting items for food or hygiene drives, or helping at libraries or nature centers.*

Seniors and Ambassadors are ready to engage their whole selves, working side by side with others. Every service opportunity is a chance to spend the day with Girl Scout friends. Older girls can use these experiences to explore future careers or hobbies. *Examples: serving meals, doing yardwork for seniors, tutoring children.*

Did you know that service opportunities are one of the most requested activities by girls - and their caregivers - according to customer surveys?

Super Troops (2020) told us how they completed their service opportunities:

- Community centers – 42%
- Donations of goods – 26%
- School – 4%
- Nature – 16%
- Other – 12%

Preparing your troop for community service outings

Contact the organization ahead of time and clarify expectations for both you and them.

- Can groups of children volunteer here and do you have suggested or required adult – girl ratios?
- Do you have suggestions on things to bring or not bring, or advice about appropriate attire (for weather, dress code, or safety concerns)?
- Are there any permission forms that need to be signed by parents ahead of time?
- Do you have any advice on how to prepare my girls for this service opportunity?
- Can this activity be done while following COVID-19 safety protocols?

Make sure you have signed Girl Scout activity permission slips and health history forms with you during the project. Check the Safety Activity Checkpoints for our own volunteer-girl ratios for activity outside the troop meeting space.

Safety in Girl Scouting

<http://gsnw.gl/safety>

Remember, while Girl Scouts are encouraged to volunteer in their communities, and even donate their troop funds to help others, they are not allowed to raise funds for other organizations.



What's the difference between a service project and a Take Action project in Girl Scouts?

Community service is:

- activity-focused, usually
- girls join something already in place
- girls follow someone else's directions

Take Action projects are:

- creativity-focused, where girls assess needs and create plans
- girls create opportunities for others to serve now and in the future
- girls use leadership skills to make decisions and give directions to other volunteers

Interested to progress to Take Action projects?

Learn more with our council's

Tell Me About Take Action

gsnw.gl/takeaction

Take Action Guide

gsnw.gl/takeactionguide

Blog Post for Leaders

gsnw.gl/gsblog

Earned Awards for Community Service

Service has always been a core value in Girl Scouts. Cadette, Senior and Ambassador can proudly wear two earned awards on the front of their uniform.



Community Service Bar – marks 20 hours of service given to the community



Service to Girl Scouting Bar – marks 20 hours of service given to Girl Scouts

Troops can add a service project to almost any Girl Scout badge! Read through the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) or the printed badge pamphlets to find suggestions on how to practice and share new skills through service to others.

