

# Parent Guide to Girl Scouts of New Mexico Trails

Welcome to Girl Scouts of New Mexico Trails! We are so happy that your daughter has joined Girl Scouts and we know she will have a wonderful year with us. This Parent Guide will answer some of the basic questions you might have about Girl Scouts and your daughter's Girl Scout experience.

## What is my daughter's Girl Scout Level?

Girl Scouts is about sharing the fun, friendship, and power of girls and adults together. Any girl – from kindergarten (or 5 years old) through 12th grade – can join Girl Scouts.

After girls join, they are placed in the following Girl Scout Levels based on grade:

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

## What is a Troop?

A troop is a group of 12 or more girls with a minimum of two troop leaders that gather weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly to work on badges, take-action projects, community service projects, and attend Girl Scout events. Troop meetings are the traditional way most girls participate in Girl Scouts.

## What is expected of me as a Girl Scout Parent?

In order to help your daughter have a successful Girl Scout experience, the following are some helpful tips when attending Girl Scout activities, events, or meetings.

- ◆ Provide permission for your daughter to participate in Girl Scouting, as well as provide additional consent for activities that take place outside the scheduled meeting place, involve overnight travel, involve the use of special equipment, and/or cover sensitive issues.
- ◆ Make provisions for your daughter to get to and from meeting places or other designated sites in a safe and timely manner. Inform troop leaders if someone other than the parent or guardian will drop off or pick up your daughter. This includes walking them into and from meetings and activities.
- ◆ Provide your daughter with appropriate clothing and equipment for activities, or ask troop leaders for assistance before the activity to find sources of the necessary clothing and equipment.
- ◆ Ask troop leaders how you can assist in planning and carrying out activities.
- ◆ Participate in parent/guardian meetings.
- ◆ Encourage your daughter to live by the Girl Scout Promise and Law as she interacts with her sister Girl Scouts, Troop Leaders, and the community. We expect parents/guardians to live by the Girl Scout Promise and Law.
- ◆ If your daughter has special needs or abilities, please communicate her needs to the Troop Leader and assist the Troop Leader when appropriate.
- ◆ If at any time, you have any concerns, please speak to the membership staff person who oversees membership in your community.

## **How can I volunteer with Girl Scouts?**

There are a number of ways you can volunteer for your daughter's Troop and the Council. In the troop, you can be the Troop Treasurer, the Cookie Parent, or a Troop Helper (another adult for meetings, activities, and trips). Talk to your Troop Leader if you are interested in any of these volunteer positions.

Ways you can volunteer with the Council include sharing your expertise and knowledge with girls outside of your daughter's troop, volunteer for events/activities, or be a Board Member -- just to name a few.

In order to be a Volunteer, you must be a current registered Girl Scout member and have a Background Check on file. For more information, please go to our website at <http://www.nmgirlscouts.org/en/for-volunteers/why-volunteer.html>.

## **How does our troop raise money?**

Girls can participate in two council-sponsored product program activities each year:

- ◆ MagNut Program – which runs from September through November where girls sell magazines, candy, and nuts.
- ◆ Cookie Program – which runs from February through March and girls sell our Girl Scout Cookies®.

All Girl Scouts, including Daisies, are eligible to participate in council-sponsored product-program activities, with volunteer supervision. Please remember: adults don't sell cookies and other products—girls do.

Girls can earn individual rewards based on total sales for the MagNut and Cookies Programs.

## **How is the troop's money spent?**

Troop funds can be used to pay for events, activities, meeting supplies, badges/patches, trips, service projects, membership for the next Girl Scout year, and any other appropriate purchases as long as the girls voted and approved the purchase. Girls can learn to keep track of the troop finances and will make decisions on how money should be spent. Leaders can use troop money to pay for their required trainings, such as First Aid/CPR or Outdoor Core course fees.

All money or equipment/supplies/materials earned in the name of the troop is the property of the troop as a Girl Scout entity and NOT of the individuals within the troop. At any time, parents/guardians may ask to see the troop finances, and have the right to do so. Troops should have their balance and ledger available if requested in a timely manner.

When girls leave one active troop to join another, the money in each of those troops remains the property of the troop. However, before girls leave an active troop, the troop may hold a vote to determine whether to send their departing troop member with her equal share of the troop finances – divided equally by the number of girls. The girls are the only members of a troop who hold a vote. Adult input is discouraged. Money transferring from troop to troop has no relation to amount of product sold, amount of money earning done by an individual girl, or the participation of an individual girl in any troop activities.

## **What if my daughter needs assistance to pay for her uniform, books, membership fee, or activities?**

The Girl Scouts of New Mexico Trails is proud to offer the Opportunity Fund and accepts applications to support individual dues, books, uniforms, and activities, as well as financial support for Troop and Service Unit activities.

For more information on the Opportunity Fund, please see our website at <http://www.nmgirlscouts.org/en/for-volunteers/volunteer-resources/forms---documents.html>.

## **What are things other than troop meetings that my daughter can participate in?**

Throughout the year there are events and activities that are sponsored by the Council or your daughter's Service Unit – this is the geographic area in which your daughter's troop belongs. You will receive information about these events in a number of ways:

- ◆ Monthly Girl Scouts Of New Mexico Trails Newsletter via email
- ◆ Council Website [www.nmgirlscouts.org](http://www.nmgirlscouts.org)
- ◆ Emails from Council Staff or Service Unit Team Members
- ◆ Information from Troop Leaders
- ◆ Facebook pages of either the Council or the Service Unit

Please ensure that your email address is current with the Council and your Troop Leader. If your Troop does not want to participate in an event that your daughter does, she can still attend without the Troop.

Camp is also a special place of self-discovery, laughter, fun and personal growth. Girl Scout camps transport girls to an environment where they have fun trying new activities, make new friends, and learn about themselves. Girl Scouts of New Mexico Trails is proud to offer two resident camps with a wide variety of programming and camping options: Camp Elliott Barker in Angel Fire, NM and Rancho del Chaparral near Cuba, NM. We have family camp, troop camp, and resident camp for all ages. For more information, please go to our website at <http://www.nmgirlscouts.org/en/camp/go-to-camp.html>.

## **Where can we go to get uniforms, books, and other Girl Scout products?**

Girl Scouts is a uniformed organization, although uniforms are not required for participation. The Council shop, La Tienda, sells official uniforms, badges, patches, and pins for all levels. Leader and girl program books, other Girl Scout publications, certificates, fun gifts, camping supplies, and other Girl Scout merchandise can be found in the shop, as well. Please note that purchases made through GSUSA's website <http://www.girlscoutshop.com/NEW-MEXICO-TRAILS-COUNCIL> directly benefit our council.

A complete list and description of all uniform and uniform components can be found in the Girl Scout Catalog online or by visiting <http://www.girlscoutshop.com/NEW-MEXICO-TRAILS-COUNCIL>. The catalog serves as a handy resource for checking on how to correctly wear emblems and participation patches. This catalog also carries a wide variety of Girl Scout products and equipment, as well as council-specific clothing and gifts. Items found in the GSUSA catalog can be purchased through La Tienda by emailing [shop@nmgirlscouts.org](mailto:shop@nmgirlscouts.org).

La Tienda is located inside the Albuquerque Service Center (4000 Jefferson Plaza NE)

- Open Monday-Thursday 10am-5pm; Friday 9am-Noon
- Email: [shop@nmgirlscouts.org](mailto:shop@nmgirlscouts.org)
- Web: <http://www.nmgirlscouts.org/en/about-girl-scouts/our-council/shop.html>
- Tel: 505-923-2522; Fax: 505-338-2360

### **What kind of awards can my daughter earn as she grows in Girl Scouts?**

The Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards are Girl Scouting's highest awards. These awards offer girls relevant, grade-level-appropriate challenges related to teamwork, goal-setting, and community networking and leadership. They also engage girls in building networks that not only support them in their award projects, but in new educational and career opportunities.