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Our Voices

Girl Scouts, Community Reaching Out To OKC High School

"Creativity" seems to be the watchword at Emerson Alternative High School in Oklahoma City. Through two grants, Girl Scouts has been able to offer two unique and creative opportunities for Girl Scouts at the school.

"A \$20,000 grant from Dell YouthConnect is making it possible for our Girl Scouts at Emerson to use technology in new ways," said Julie Bohannon, director of resource development for Girl Scouts. "Utilizing computers provided by Dell, girls are addressing common issues arising from technology, such as social media etiquette, access to higher education, and positive social change. Their projects will be presented at the BIG Weekend for teen girls event in August."

While the Dell project is helping girls utilize technology in new ways inside the building, another project helped girls beautify the outside of the school. With the help of a \$25,000 Department of Justice grant and Girl Scouts from the Spirit of Nebraska Council, girls spent a Saturday in March getting their hands in the dirt to plant flowers and getting a little paint on their aprons as they painted outside doors leading into classrooms.

"This project was a coordinated effort between outreach staff at our council and the Nebraska Girl Scouts," said Cyndi Munson, troop leadership specialist. "It demonstrated what the sisterhood of Girl Scouts is all about."

To be part of our outreach efforts or to support the many outreach opportunities provided by Girl Scouts-Western Oklahoma, call 800-698-0022 or 405-528-GIRL.



Ardmore Supports Girl Scouts At Local Historical Museum

As Girl Scouts nationally look forward to the 100th anniversary in 2012, the Greater Southwest Historical Museum in Ardmore is helping the early celebration with a very special exhibit on the history of local Girl Scouts. Among the items in the exhibit are numerous photos, a display of various famous Girl Scouts, a variety of Girl Scout uniforms donated by the GSWest alumnae and volunteers, and even displays of a camp site and a cookie booth. The exhibits were put together by local volunteers under the leadership of troop leader Deanna Shaw and museum officials.

Museum curator Christine Smith said that since the exhibit has been installed, daily attendance has dramatically increased and many people are coming in specifically to see the Girl Scout exhibit.

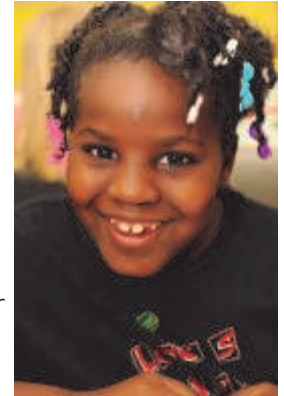
The museum is located at 35 Sunset Drive in Ardmore. For more information on the museum, visit www.gshm.org or call 580-226-3857.



Positive Tomorrows Gives Girls A Stable Experience

Each Wednesday, a group of girls step into a small classroom in an Oklahoma City church and begin Girl Scouts by reciting the Girl Scout Promise. They are part of the Girl Scout group at Positive Tomorrows, a place where families in transition send their daughters so that they can experience something that millions of girls their age across the country experience—a sisterhood that they can depend on.

Volunteer Renee Larmore said each girl in the group comes from a family facing some of life's most serious challenges, including homelessness. But being a Girl Scout provides something stable in their lives, and they are learning important lessons by being a Girl Scout, and even get to keep their Girl Scout pins and other materials in their own special supplies box.



"I have seen it in action," she said. "These girls are learning self-esteem and an awareness of each other. They are learning how to respond when put in challenging situations, including fighting."

Larmore said she has seen girls get angry and start to fight, but has noticed that those in Girl Scouts are starting to back out rather than physically fight.

"Girl Scouts is showing me what it means to be honorable, and that's what I want to be," said 9-year-old Bryanna. "It's fun!"

Jessika Davis, director of volunteer relations for Girl Scouts-Western Oklahoma, said volunteers are essential in creating and sustaining programs like the one at Positive Tomorrows.

To be a Girl Scout volunteer at Positive Tomorrows or other outreach sites where Girl Scouts is offered, or to support opportunities like this, call 800-698-0022.

Teaching Teens How To Better Navigate Their Lives



Life is a maze of opportunities and decisions. Making a bad choice has its repercussions, just as making positive choices result in positive outcomes, depending on which turn in the maze is taken. This was the lesson discussed recently at Central Oklahoma Juvenile Center where Girl Scouts offers a leadership program to teen girls who are incarcerated.

"We used the 'It's Your World-Change It!' Journey called *Amaze* to help the girls explore just how life really is like a maze," said Julie Bohannon, director of resource development at Girl Scouts and one of the staff who volunteers to work with girls at COJC. "Journeys is an amazing resource to help girls discover important skills, such as navigating friendships so that they know how to approach challenges like bullying, cliques, jealousy, and even physical violence."

At this visit, the girls at COJC were asked to design their own maze that includes what they need to do to reach their own goals in life. The girls then got into groups and looked at the short-term goal of successfully completing their stay at COJC. The groups presented their maze posters showing that to reach the goal of "going home," they need to think positively, become a leader and be aware of the challenges around them.

"It was very moving to watch them understand how one thing leads to another," Bohannon said. "It was a visual representation of what they already knew about themselves, but may have never expressed."

To help with the Girl Scout program at COJC, call 800-698-0022.



Building The Next 100 Years of Girl Scouting in Oklahoma

Be part of the Girl Scouts-Western Oklahoma's initiative to build capacity and to plan the 100th Anniversary of Girl Scouts in 2012. Plan now to be part of our **2011 Leadership Summit on Aug. 12-13** at the NCED/Marriott Hotel and Conference Center in Norman. When you attend Leadership Summit, you will:

- Meet other key *leaders* from around the state.
- Join us as we *create* a brighter future for Oklahoma's girls by reversing some of the negative statistics of Oklahoma.
- Begin the *dialog* that will truly make a change for girls and women in our state.
- Help *plan* for the Girl Scouts 100th celebrations in communities throughout our council next year!



Discussions will include how to build resources in your community, discuss events of influence, understanding Herstory, the next 100 years of leadership, and renewing the promise of Girl Scouts in the new century.

"This is an opportunity to identify leaders from each community served in our 39 counties and invite them to be part of this unique time in our history," said Cathy Stackpole, CEO for Girl Scouts-Western Oklahoma. **"We want to connect to business leaders, educators, community organizers, civic groups, and others to join us."**

Participants will leave with a packet of information and new ideas on bringing even greater attention to Girl Scouts in their communities; including tools of advocacy information, Girl Scout Leadership Experience materials and more, all designed to help build awareness, chart new territory and advocate on behalf of girls.

Online registration is now up at www.gswestok.org. The deadline to register is Aug. 2. The cost to attend is \$100 which includes the conference, all materials, room and meals. To attend Saturday only, the cost is \$50. Childcare also will be available. For more information, call 405-528-GIRL.

Local Girl Scout Troop Wins Top Honors In State Cookie Vote

The 2011 Girl Scout Cookie Sale officially ended with a big celebration at the State Capitol with State Treasurer Ken Miller. For the third year, Girl Scouts in Oklahoma participated in the "Vote for Your Favorite Cookie" contest through the Oklahoma College Savings Plan program. In addition to Oklahomans voting for their favorite cookie, they also voted for their favorite troop.

Winning top troop honors was Troop 42 of Oklahoma City. The troop, with leader Michelle Boykin, received \$529 from Treasurer Miller for winning this vote.

Also recognized was Sara Kozak of Norman who placed second in the state, and first in western Oklahoma in selling the most Girl Scout Cookies this year. Sara sold 2,712 boxes of cookies this year and said she plans to try again next year and win the top honor. Sara said she will be able to drive next year, so she plans on driving herself to booth locations and to sell

cookies directly to customers. **This year's top seller was Kamryn Good of Girl Scouts of Eastern Oklahoma who sold 3,302 boxes of cookies. For her efforts, she was awarded a \$1,529 college scholarship savings plan from OCSP.**

As for which cookie won the vote for favorite Girl Scout Cookie in Oklahoma?

There was a tie between long-time favorite Thin Mints and rival Samoas. A coin toss was held at the Capitol ceremony, and the winner was: Samoa!

Coincidentally, the Samoa cookie also celebrated its 35th anniversary as a Girl Scout Cookie this year.





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Lunch & Learn With Girl Scouts

Girl Scouts-Western Oklahoma now hosts a series of monthly luncheons to explore ways to support Girl Scouts as we embark on a new and exciting chapter, including the 100th anniversary of Girl Scouting.

The **next Lunch & Learn events will be April 20, May 25 and June 22 from noon-1 p.m.** at the Girl Scouts-Western Oklahoma headquarters, 6100 N. Robinson, OKC. Lunch & Learn events will be held on the fourth Wednesday of each month throughout 2011.

Please RSVP if you'd like to attend at least 24 hours before the lunch. Call Debbie Davis at 405-528-4475 or 800-698-0022. This will be a great way to **connect** community leaders with staff and volunteers. Please mark your calendar to attend.

Next GSU Set For June 10-11 in OKC



Girl Scout University provides volunteers with the resources and information they need to provide a leadership experience for girls. It's a great way to connect with other volunteers and to get the latest tools from the council. If you

are a volunteer or would like to become a volunteer, make plans to attend Girl Scout University in June. Keep watching the council website at www.gswestok.org/calendar for details on location and sessions. Please invite others you know who want to be a volunteer to attend GSU.

For more information, call 405-528-GIRL.

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*Girl Scouting builds girls of
courage, confidence, and
character who make the world a
better place!*

