



Volume 3  
Issue 4  
October 2010



# Our Voices

## In-School Girl Scouts Relies On Dedicated Volunteers

Parmelee Elementary in Oklahoma City is one of many schools this year that offer a Girl Scouting experience at the school during the school day. For many girls, it is their only opportunity to be a Girl Scout, and they love it.

**"I have been in Girl Scouts for three years," said Tabytha. "I went to camp, I learned how to ride a horse, and to make the world a better place."**

**"I am proud when I am here," said Makayla.**

**"I like Girl Scouts because I learn how to be a good friend and how to be a leader in my community," said one young girl.**

Girl Scouts is in 18 metro Oklahoma Schools with more schools on a waiting list. In order to increase the number of schools we reach, we need more volunteers.

**"I recently attended a recruitment event at Taft Middle School in Oklahoma City," said Cathy Stackpole, CEO. "Taft has more than 800 students, many with special needs, situated in the inner city. That morning, the principal made a brief announcement that if any girl was interested in Girl Scouts to go to the cafeteria. Soon, girls started streaming in, surrounding the staff of Girl Scouts there to talk about Scouting. Within 10 minutes, more than 100 girls lined the**

**tables eagerly awaiting the information that staff had to share. It was clear to me that all girls want to be part of Girl Scouts—for the opportunity to belong and to connect with other girls."**



For many parents at Taft, and many schools, transportation is the main barrier in getting a girl to an after-school meeting or event. **That's why it is so important that Girl Scouts of Western Oklahoma continues to offer these In-School scouting opportunities. To do that, we need dedicated adults to step in and volunteer at one of our schools for an early morning or after school Girl Scout experience." At Taft alone, we need about 20 adults to meet the needs of the 100 girls who are interested.**

To be a volunteer at an In-School location like Taft and Parmelee, call (405) 528-3535 or email [info@gswestok.org](mailto:info@gswestok.org).

## Girl Scouts Partners with Metro Tech Career Academy



Students at Metro Tech in Oklahoma City review some of the activities they will get in the new Girl Scouting program with staff member Peju Faboro.

An educated woman has educated children. That simple fact is critical in a state where high school drop-out rates are among the highest in the nation. The Metro Tech Career Academy finds those who have left school and gets them back on track to earn a diploma and begin earning credits for a variety of career opportunities.

Girl Scouts is now playing a role in this effort by offering a leadership experience to those at the Career Academy beginning this fall. Each week, staff and volunteers meet with the students to offer leadership building skills, life skills and preparation for their next step in life. Using the Journeys book and the Dove Uniquely ME! program, the students learn what they need to set goals and meet challenges.

In addition, Girl Scouts is partnering with Marcus Garvey Charter School where students at the Career Academy mentor a 2nd or 3rd grader to help them develop early leadership skills using the Girl Scout curriculum.

**"This is an exciting partnership that will help not just the older students who made a bad choice to leave school, but also the elementary students to ensure better choices," said Peju Faboro, leadership specialist. To volunteer, call 405-528-3535.**

## Girls At The Northside Y

Girl Scouts is known for going where the girls are. This year, Girl Scouts has reached out to partner with other youth agencies to bring the leadership experience of Girl Scouts to girls who take part in an after-school program.

Among those partnerships was serving girls at the Northside YMCA in Oklahoma City. Through Girl Scouting, girls there were able to take part in activities that build confidence, creativity and leadership.

Opportunities like this one is another way in which volunteers can reach out to girls where they live.

*To volunteer for Girl Scouts, call (405) 528-3535.*



## The Value of Volunteering

Sharing a portion of a letter written by Nina Schlesinger, former volunteer for Girl Scouts of Western Oklahoma who recently moved to California. *Thank you, Nina!*

**"Thank you again for the opportunity to be a part of Girl Scouts of Western Oklahoma.**

**Through my interactions with GSWEST, I was able to make new friends, expand my skill set, and feel that I was a positive influence in the lives of a number of girls.**

**Also, our daughter benefited from her involvement in Girl Scouts of Western Oklahoma in ways that will help guide her for the rest of her life."**



## 2010 Leadership Summit Rallies Support For Change

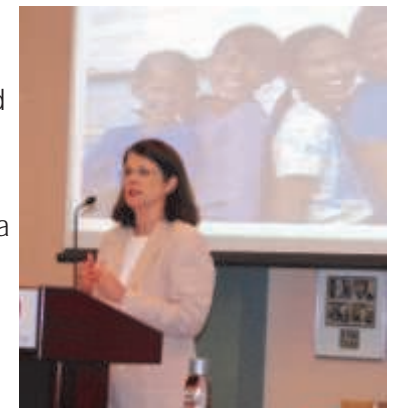
Girl Scouts of Western Oklahoma hosted its first Leadership Summit this year, bringing volunteers and community leaders together to talk about ways Girl Scouts can make Oklahoma a better place for girls and women.

Nearly 200 attendees heard the statistics for Oklahoma- #1 in incarcerating women, #5 in births to teens, top 10 in obesity, and among the highest poverty and drop-out rates in the nation- and then talked about what they could do in their own communities to combat these numbers.

**"The result of the Summit was that many dedicated volunteers are stepping up and recognizing that Oklahoma could be a better place for girls and that they want to do something,"** said Cathy Stackpole, CEO. **"It was inspiring to see volunteers huddle together after sessions and during breaks to come up with plans for their own communities. I believe we will see a change and Girl Scouts will be part of that change for Oklahoma."**



The 2011 Leadership Summit is scheduled for April in Norman. To help Girl Scouts address some of these issues and be a part of that change, call (405) 528-3535 or email [info@gswestok.org](mailto:info@gswestok.org).



# Reaching Out To Homeless Girls



Finding something "normal" in a place where families come and go can be difficult.

"The girls here are different from other girls," said Girl Scout volunteer Tara Cameron. "They are happy to be having fun, to have a place to be girls together and do something for themselves away from all the other things going on in their lives."

Cameron began volunteering at the Oklahoma City Rescue Mission this year providing lessons on leadership, self-esteem and bullying to about 10 girls at a time. While they aren't always the same faces, she sees about the same number of girls during each visit.

"My daughter was in Girl Scouts before," said Michelle, mom of 4-year-old Miley. "I wanted her to be part of such a positive organization, so I am very happy to see Girl Scouts coming here."

Eight-year-old Tiana said she likes coming to Girl Scout meetings and especially reciting the Girl Scout Law. "I think it means to be nice to each other, to always be sisters," she said.

At this meeting, "Miss Tara" as she is called asked each girl to tell her what they think the Girl Scout Law means, line by line. When it came to the part of "making the world a better place," Tiana had a very specific image in mind.

"I think to make the world a better place would be to build a candy store somewhere," she said.

Miss Tara also talked about what it means to be a bully.

Cierra, 5, said, "It means to keep hitting and hurting. To not listen to them. They tell you to stop and you don't. You just follow through and hit every time."

Dan Formidoni, assistant manager of family ministries at the mission, said "having something consistent like Girl Scouts in the lives of these girls is important."

"People, kids especially, live lives that are so transient it is nice to have something like Girl Scouts that gives them structure with a positive purpose," he said. "I know our parents enjoy it. Girl Scouts provides a sense of inclusion and hopefully the girls here will be able to connect to Girl Scouts wherever they go."

*To help Girl Scouts of Western Oklahoma continue to provide leadership opportunities to girls at locations like the Oklahoma City Rescue Mission, call (405) 528-3535 or email [info@gswestok.org](mailto:info@gswestok.org).*

## Girl Scouts Gets Grant To Bring Leadership Experience To Girls Fighting Substance Abuse

Girl Scouts of Western Oklahoma has received a \$25,000 Department of Justice grant to bring a leadership/self-esteem program to girls residing at the Four Winds Ranch in Guthrie—a rehabilitation facility to help those fighting substance abuse.

This summer, 15 girls took part in a workshop using the Dove Uniquely ME! program. This nationally-recognized program encourages girls to find their own inner strengths to set new goals, believe in what they can accomplish and celebrate all the successes along the way. The staff sat in on workshop as residents learned about Girl Scouts and the Uniquely ME! program.

"After that session, we received great response from the staff and the residents on how much they liked it," said Peju Faboro, leadership specialist/outreach for Girl Scouts. "The staff really bought into it and what it could do for the residents. We are now training the staff in the curriculum so that they can help us monitor the outcomes and address any issues."

Once the ranch staff is fully trained, Girl Scout staff will begin offering regular sessions at the facility with the residents.

"This is another example of how Girl Scouts of Western Oklahoma is actively addressing some of the issues facing our state," Faboro said. "We know substance abuse is a problem, and that Girl Scouts has a program to help reverse it."

# Girl Scouts Taking On The Environment



## Three troops, two projects, two recognitions!

Girl Scout Troop 108 of El Reno and Troop 100 of Calumet made front page news recently for their Girl Scouts Forever Green grant project. The girls, along with the USDA Grazinglands Research Lab at Fort Reno, built a butterfly garden on the grounds of Fort Reno. Girl Scouts purchased tools and supplies for the garden, as well as tended it. The butterfly garden is one of many community gardens across the nation. While girls

learned about the science of butterflies and their importance in the environment, they also established a supportive partnership with the local agency. Interested in visiting the butterfly garden? It is located along the west and south sides of the Grazinglands main building at Fort Reno in El Reno.

Troop 135 of Edmond has taken on a Girl Scout Forever Green project and earned statewide recognition in the process. The troop will be recognized this year by the Keep Oklahoma Beautiful organization. Their project was a finalist in the Youth Category for the 2010 Environmental Excellence Competition.

The troop renovated the old, abandoned butterfly garden located at Will Rogers Elementary where the girls attend school. They also added an additional garden area around the butterfly garden sign, planted, weeded, installed pavers, etc. The project was called "Girl Scouts Grown Green-Monarch Waystation." Funds from the Girl Scouts of Western Oklahoma Forever Green Community Action Project and gifts from Home Depot and troop funds covered project costs.

For their work, which included monitoring the stages of a caterpillar turning into a butterfly, the troop's project is now a registered Monarch Watch site through the University of Kansas. You can view online at [www.monarchwatch.org/waystations](http://www.monarchwatch.org/waystations). Their registry number is 3912.

"The troop has made a huge impact on not only the environment, but at the school where the garden area had just sat growing weeds," said Angie Dean, troop leader. "Now, as the garden flourishes and the butterflies stop by, the students, teachers and parents are able to enjoy the beauty in our great state. The teachers also now have an area for an outdoor classroom to teach science or even to go outdoors to read."

Both projects are examples of how girls in our communities are making a difference in the environment and making our world a better place.



## Girl Scouts Getting Active!



Oklahoma ranks among the most obese in the nation, and national health experts predict that if something doesn't change our state will be the most obese by 2018. Girl Scouts accepts that challenge!

During the summer months, girls were out and about all over our state taking part in sports programs, high adventure activities, rowing, caving, rock climbing, parasailing and more.

Girl Scouts in the Pauls Valley area recently took part in a Fit's Inn designed by GSUSA. The program is designed to be a healthy getaway full of daily activities that inspire and challenge them to take physical action on their own. Girls learn how to make healthy life choices of food and activity.

"Girl Scouts have picked up the challenge to get our state healthy," said Cathy Stackpole, CEO. "Through continued support from our communities, we will change that statistic before 2018."



## Mom Excited To See Daughter Find Her Own Voice In Girl Scouts

At a recent product sale training event, a young girl excitedly raised her hand to ask questions and be part of a discussion among adults about the upcoming sale. Normally, Amanda's disability makes it difficult for her to come out of her shell and find ways to fit in.

"Watching her ask questions and not be afraid to raise her hand in a room full of adults and leaders was wonderful," said Amanda's mom, Kristi. "Showing her that she is important made her feel like a part of the group. It's really nice for me to be able to see her so excited about Girl Scouting and it helped me take her leadership experience and excitement to the next level."

Kristi said on the way home after the meeting, Amanda couldn't stop talking or showing her excitement. "She looked at me and said 'thank you for taking me along mom. I had a really fun time!'. From the land of teenagers, that's amazing."

Every day, girls are finding their inner-strength to raise their hands, ask questions, and get involved. That's what we mean when we say Girl Scouts helps a girl find her voice. We may not hear about most of the moments like the one Kristi witnessed with her daughter. But we know it happens every time a Girl Scout tries out for the school play, speaks at a city council meeting, organizes a community project, and even asks neighbors if they would like to buy a box of cookies.

Supporting Girl Scouts is making all of the leadership experiences available through troop, camping, event, travel, series and virtual pathways available to girls today. Thanks, Kristi, for sharing one of these stories!

## Juliette Low Leadership Society Speakers Inspire Success



Oklahoma ranks 5th in the nation in births to teens—up another notch from last year's ranking. This is a statistic that Girl Scouts of Western Oklahoma wants to address by showing teen moms that they can achieve all their goals, and encourage their children to do the same. The 2011

speaker for the Metro OKC Juliette Low Leadership Society Luncheon is one of those former teen moms.

Lucille O'Neal will share her public battle and personal struggles as a young, single mother of NBA legend Shaquille O'Neal. As Lucille candidly describes in her new book, *Walk Like You Have Somewhere To Go*, she shares the pain of being an outcast and the stigma of becoming an unwed teenage mother. She married, had three more children and, later in life, went to college and earned a master's degree.



She is now a motivational speaker, encouraging girls in particular to overcome obstacles in life to find success.

The luncheon will be Feb. 17, 2011, at the Oklahoma City Golf and Country Club. Tickets for the luncheon will go on sale in January.

## Championing Childhood Drug Prevention

The Enid JLLS Luncheon will be held March 3, 2011, at the Cherokee Strip Conference Center in Enid. The speaker for this event will be Kaci Hundley (Fisher). Tickets will go on sale next year.

Kaci was born in Enid and graduated from Enid High School. She won Miss Oklahoma State Fair in 2000 and received the pageant scholarship. She also held the title of Miss Oklahoma City University.



In 2001, she was named Miss Oklahoma and represented our state in the Miss America pageant in Atlantic City that year. Her talent was vocal and she was one of the top finalists. Kaci's platform issue was early childhood drug prevention.

"We are very excited to have such dynamic speakers come to both JLLS luncheon events in 2011," said Cathy Stackpole, CEO of Girl Scouts of Western Oklahoma. "JLLS members understand the value that scouting brings to girls, whether in an urban or rural setting. They are the voice for girls and their support of the leadership program that Girl Scouts offers is tremendous. We are all looking forward to two great luncheons and to hear from these outstanding women who, through their work and their voice, have made the world a better place."

**To join either Juliette Low Leadership Society, call (405) 528-3535 or email [info@gswestok.org](mailto:info@gswestok.org).**



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121 NE 50th  
Oklahoma City, OK  
73105-1809

**Our Voices**  
Periodical Postage  
Paid at  
Oklahoma City, OK

Voices (USPS 486-120) is published six times a year. Periodicals postage paid at Oklahoma City, OK. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Our Voices, 121 NE 50th St., Oklahoma City, OK, 73105-1809

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

## Getting Ready For Our 100th!



Believe it or not, Girl Scouts nationally will be celebrating 100 years of providing a leadership opportunity to girls in 2012. We are getting ready for that flagship year now!

A committee has been formed to prepare a special traveling exhibit that will go throughout our 39-county area. To help us do that, the committee is asking for assistance from everyone.

"Where did Scouting take you?" asks volunteer Nancy Benedict. "We are looking for Girl Scout stories and memorabilia from everyone. We would like to reconnect with

Mariner or Wing Scouts, anyone who received the Golden Eaglet, Curved Bar, First Class or Gold Award. Did you go on a Wider Opportunity? Everyone has a story to share and we look forward to yours."

To help Nancy and other committee members, we need to gather the following items:

Historical photos—you as a Girl Scout or others doing Scouting activities.

Stories of how your Girl Scout experience made an impact in your life.

Connections of generational Scouting: was your grandmother, mother, you and your daughter a Girl Scout? Tell us how you celebrate this family tradition.

We need your materials by Jan. 1, 2011 in order to submit for a 100th grant application.

For details on how you can help, please call (405) 528-3535 or email [info@gswestok.org](mailto:info@gswestok.org).

*"The work of today is the history of tomorrow, and we are its makers." - Juliette Gordon Low, founder of Girl Scouts USA.*

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