

# **The Service Unit Guidebook:**

## Capturing the Big Picture



# **Living the Girl Scout Law**

## **Honest & Fair**

Service unit team members lead by example by always being truthful and fair. They take the time to get to know the volunteers they work with by learning to see the good in each person and giving everyone a fair chance.

## **Considerate & Caring**

As leaders in their communities, service unit team members put themselves in other's shoes. They anticipate the needs of others and address these needs with kindness.

## **Friendly & Helpful**

Three words that can describe service unit team members are genuine, authentic, and encouraging. They listen closely to others and guide volunteers to become leaders.

## **Dedicated to Making the World a Better Place**

Each year, service units host activities, projects, and programs that help teach others how to make positive contributions in the community. Service unit team members are leaders in gently guiding volunteers and girls in creating impactful events.

## **Experts in Using Resources Wisely**

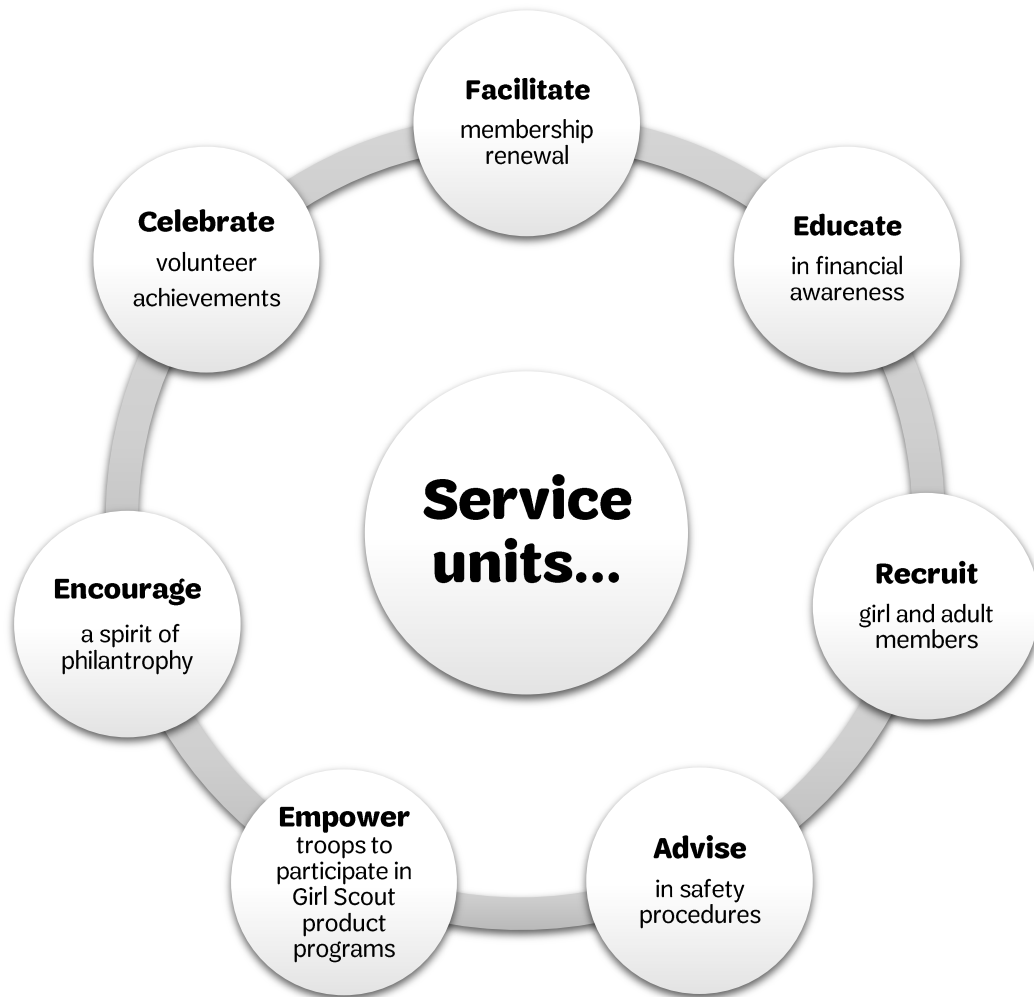
Service unit teams empower others to create a positive footprint by using resources wisely. They work with their service units to create sustainable strategies that will help the community become successful.

Section 1: Service Unit Foundation .....	1
Welcome .....	1
What's a Service Unit? .....	1
The Service Unit Team .....	3
Who Supports the Service Unit? .....	6
Start by Assessing Health and Sustainability .....	7
Finding Success in Succession .....	8
The Girl Scout Movement.....	9
Our Mission and Vision .....	9
Your Role in the Girl Scout Movement .....	10
The Health of Your Service Unit .....	11
Service Unit Goals.....	12
Administrative Leadership .....	12
Membership.....	13
Girl Programming .....	13
Adult Learning Programs .....	14
Service Unit Awards.....	14
Volunteer Support .....	15
Mentorship.....	15
Recognition .....	17
Meetings .....	18
What Do Meetings Look Like?.....	18
Meeting Roles .....	20
Group Norms.....	20
What Do I Do if the Group does not Practice the Norms?.....	22
Meeting Guide.....	23
Meeting Notes.....	24
Next Steps .....	25
Action/Reflection.....	25
Action/Reflection in the Real World of Service Units.....	27
Community Building .....	27
Fun!.....	29
Girl Programming.....	30

Go-Getter, Innovator, Risk Taker, Leader .....	30
The Girl Scout Leadership Experience .....	31
The Four Pillars of Girl Scouting .....	33
Girl Scout Progression.....	34
Preparing Girls for Higher Awards!.....	35
Recognizing Achievement.....	36
Planning for Change.....	37
Plan for change:.....	38
Planning for transition: .....	39
When Things Don't go as Planned .....	40
Conflict Management .....	40
Words of Thanks .....	45







### Train and educate!

The service unit team leads in all of the above activities and more! One of the service unit's biggest roles is to train and educate volunteers in Girl Scout procedures. When a volunteer needs a helping hand, they look to the service unit

## The Service Unit Team

Each service unit is run by a team of volunteers. Each volunteer on the team plays an important role. You can familiarize yourself with service unit roles by reading the descriptions below:

---

### Service Unit Managers

see the big picture

Annual trainings:

- Roundtable
- regular check-ins with the service unit support specialist
- year-round meet-ups and staff updates

Roles:

- build and maintain effective working relationships
- coordinate team and leader meetings
- provide comprehensive agendas
- work with others on projects that ensure growth of membership
- act as a mentor
- work with the Girl Scouts San Diego Council to create a healthy and sustainable service unit community

---

### Service Unit Registrars

facilitate

Annual trainings:

- Roundtable

Core activities:

- spring membership campaign
- on-time and lapsed registration campaigns

Roles:

- educate team members on registration procedures to ensure record accuracy
  - communicate regularly with volunteers in their community, the service unit manager, and council staff
  - encourage troops to join the Opportunity Catalog and to accept additional girls into their troop
  - encourage troops to update the meeting info and troop details in the Opportunity Catalog
  - promote Girl Scout membership renewal campaigns and year-round recruitment efforts
-

---

## Service Unit Treasurers

### educate

#### Annual trainings:

- Roundtable

#### Core activities:

- facilitate annual troop and service unit financial report submissions

#### Roles:

- educate volunteers about financial procedures and managing Girl Scout funds
- prepare and present monthly service unit financial reports to the service unit manager and team
- oversee the service unit event budgets, check requests, and reimbursements
- oversee money-earning projects at the troop and service unit level
- advise troops on the use of funds and completing and submitting the Troop Annual Financial Report (AFR)

---

## Lead Membership Recruiters

### recruit

#### Annual trainings:

- Recruitment Summit
- quarterly recruitment workshops

#### Core activities:

- coordinate fall and spring recruitment activities

#### Roles:

- collaborate with the regional recruitment specialists and membership placement specialists to develop a year-round recruitment plan
- plan two recruitment events during the membership year (informational meetings, activities, and/or events)
- promote Girl Scout opportunities at community events
- attend monthly service unit team and leader meetings to report on new girl membership throughout the year
- partner with the service unit registrar to ensure that girls who want to join Girl Scouts are connected to open troops

---

## Activity Consultants

### advise

#### Annual trainings:

- Fall Roundtable
- Spring Roundtable

#### Core activities:

- year-round support in troop and service unit outdoor activities, events, and encampments

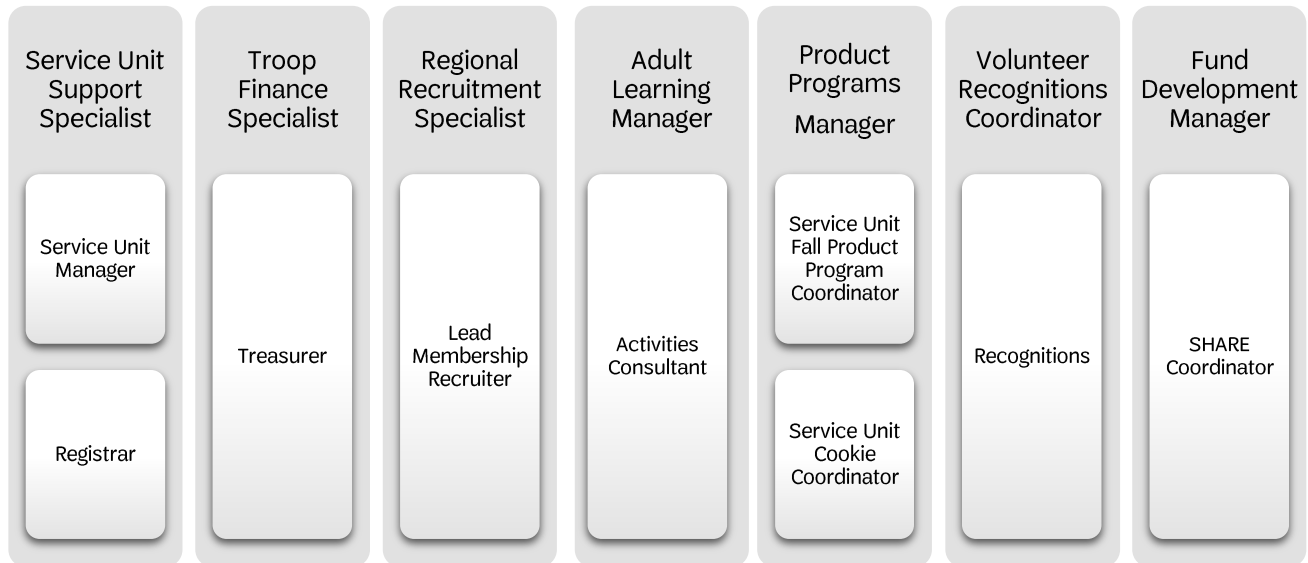
#### Roles:

- advise the service unit team and troops in safety management for regional activities as outlined in council guidelines, Volunteer Essentials, and Safety Activity Checkpoints
- maintain digital records of troop activities including activity approvals, training, and troop trip/travel and event planning
- act as the service unit point person for securing council encampment sites and submitting reports/paperwork to council

<p>Service Unit Fall Product Program Coordinators</p> <p>empower</p> <p>Annual trainings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fall Product Program Coordinator Training</li> </ul> <p>Core activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lead the service unit fall product program</li> </ul>	<p>Roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>facilitate training related to the fall product program</li> <li>collect signed troop product program manager agreements</li> <li>monitor troop financial activities</li> <li>assist troops with accurate distribution, receipting, and reporting</li> <li>lead the service unit in organizing product delivery and distribution</li> </ul>
<p>Service Unit Cookie Coordinators</p> <p>empower</p> <p>Annual trainings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cookie Coordinator Training</li> <li>Roundtable</li> </ul> <p>Core activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lead the service unit cookie program</li> </ul>	<p>Roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>facilitate the troop cookie manager training that covers sale logistics and inventory management</li> <li>maintain close communication with the regional manager and the council product program team regarding excessive troop inventory</li> <li>work with volunteers to confirm bank account information for each troop and prepare for booth sales</li> </ul>
<p>SHARE Coordinators</p> <p>encourage</p> <p>Annual trainings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SHARE Training</li> </ul> <p>Core activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>promote the year-round service unit SHARE campaign</li> </ul>	<p>Roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lead the service unit team's philanthropic efforts for the <i>Share Her Annual Real Expense</i> campaign</li> </ul>
<p>Service Unit Recognitions</p> <p>celebrate</p> <p>Annual trainings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roundtable</li> </ul> <p>Core activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>facilitate annual awards of distinction and volunteer appreciation event</li> <li>promote recognitions year-round</li> </ul>	<p>Roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>coordinate efforts to appreciate adult volunteers</li> <li>work with the service unit team to promote Girl Scout recognition year-round</li> <li>promote Girl Scouts San Diego council events and awards including the annual Volunteer Celebration and Volunteer Conference.</li> </ul>

## Who Supports the Service Unit?

By now, you know that service units support girls, troops, volunteers, and troop families. But you may be wondering: “Who supports the service unit?” The answer is that council staff support service unit roles. Check out the chart below to learn which staff position supports each of the service unit roles.

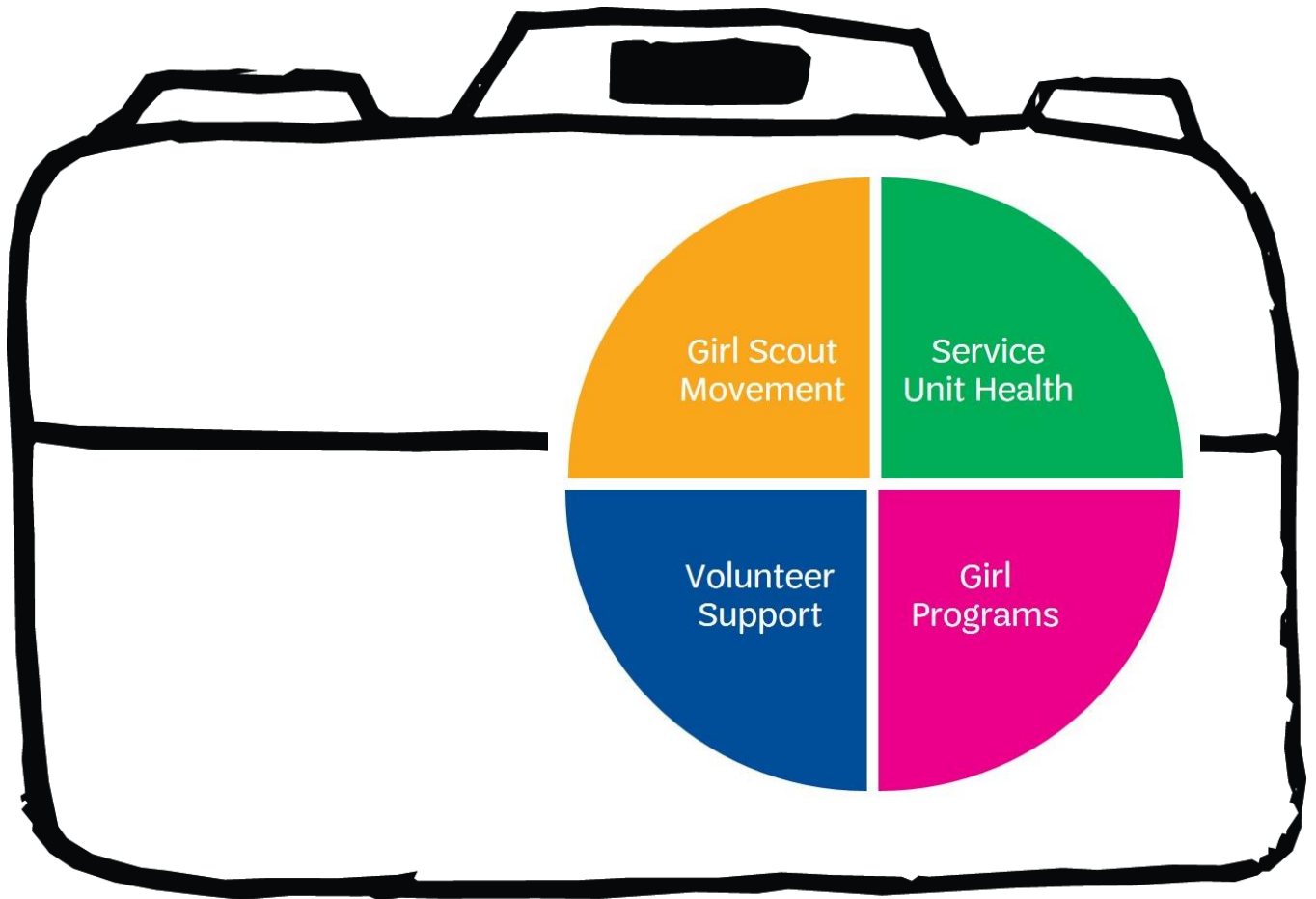


### Don't forget to delegate!

Successful service unit teams delegate tasks often. Your team and other volunteers are there to help. Lean on the team! It's always a good idea to let others take the lead as long as they are moving in the direction of the goal. There are lots of ways to complete a task. Give volunteers the space to experience Girl Scouts their own way. Embrace their ideas, insights, and unique vision.

## Start by Assessing Health and Sustainability

With the health and sustainability of the Girl Scout community in mind, take a birds-eye view of the service unit, focusing on four key areas. We'll take a look at each of these areas in the remainder of this Guidebook to give you the information you need to succeed.



## **Finding Success in Succession**

Succession planning helps ensure that you can fill future openings in service unit team positions. When you plan for succession, you identify and develop volunteers so they are prepared to assume open team roles. Service unit teams thrive when candidates for open positions are committed and when the pool of candidates is diverse.

### **Tips and tricks to succeed:**

- Look beyond current troop leaders; consider former troop leaders, lifetime members, parents, and community members.
- Speak with enthusiasm about volunteering with the service unit. Potential volunteers are always listening.
- Always be on the look-out to identify the strengths of the adults in your community. Ask them to join a position that is a natural extension of their skills.
- Prioritize the development of new service unit leadership over service unit traditions. It can be hard to let a new volunteer take on a role or plan an event that has traditionally been carried out in a specific way. Keep in mind that your role is to coach volunteers when they take on new opportunities. Allow them to develop their own style and to try new things.

### **Habits to avoid:**

- Avoid negative talk about Girl Scouts or the service unit. Volunteers are always listening.
- Avoid waiting to ask a volunteer to take on more responsibilities until the last minute.
- Avoid using into a narrow vision of what leadership or events look like in your service unit. Encourage a spirit of risk-taking and innovation when asking new volunteers to tackle service unit projects.

### **Strategies for Succession:**

- Send a survey to leaders asking them to nominate a fellow volunteer for a role.
- Work with your service unit support specialist to identify potential team members.
- Partner with the volunteer stepping down to coach a fellow volunteer toward stepping into the role.
- Encourage volunteers to accept small service unit roles and then coach them toward positions of higher responsibility.
- Have fun! Volunteers will be drawn to a team that is lighthearted.





“I’ve got something for the girls of Savannah, and all of America, and all the world, and we are going to start it tonight!” --Juliette Gordon Low

## **The Girl Scout Movement**

On March 12, 1912, founder Juliette “Daisy” Gordon Low brought together 18 young women for the first Girl Scout meeting. Her vision was to bring girls out in the open air and in to community service. Those first Girl Scouts hiked, camped, had fun, and learned skills. They grew into leaders by discovering the world around them and taking action in their community.

Today, Girl Scouts is the world’s largest leadership development organization for girls. We are urban, rural, and suburban. We are in schools, churches, temples, mosques, public housing, foster homes, and detention centers. We are in virtually every zip code and in 92 countries around the world:

- 2.6 million Girl Scouts (1.8 million girls and 800,000 adults)
- 50 million alums
- 

## **Our Mission and Vision**

Girl Scouts builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

Girl Scouts strives to be the premier leadership organization for girls and experts on girl growth and development. We keep our eye on the pulse of the girl experience in order to be in touch with the changing needs of girls in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We use what we learn to develop strategies that ensure that the Girl Scout Movement is positioned to bring the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) to every girl.

You can learn more about our yearly objectives in our [GSUSA Annual Report](#). You may also find the [studies](#) conducted by the Girl Scout Research Institute interesting and helpful to you in your role as a service unit manager.

## Your Role in the Girl Scout Movement

As a service unit team member, you will lead in delivering the Girl Scout mission and experience within your community. But you won't be going it alone. You'll collaborate with Girl Scouts USA and Girl Scouts San Diego to bring the latest programs, activities, and organizational changes to the girls and volunteers in your service unit.

The Girl Scout Movement  
(mission delivery)



\*Based on 2017 data provided by Girl Scouts San Diego

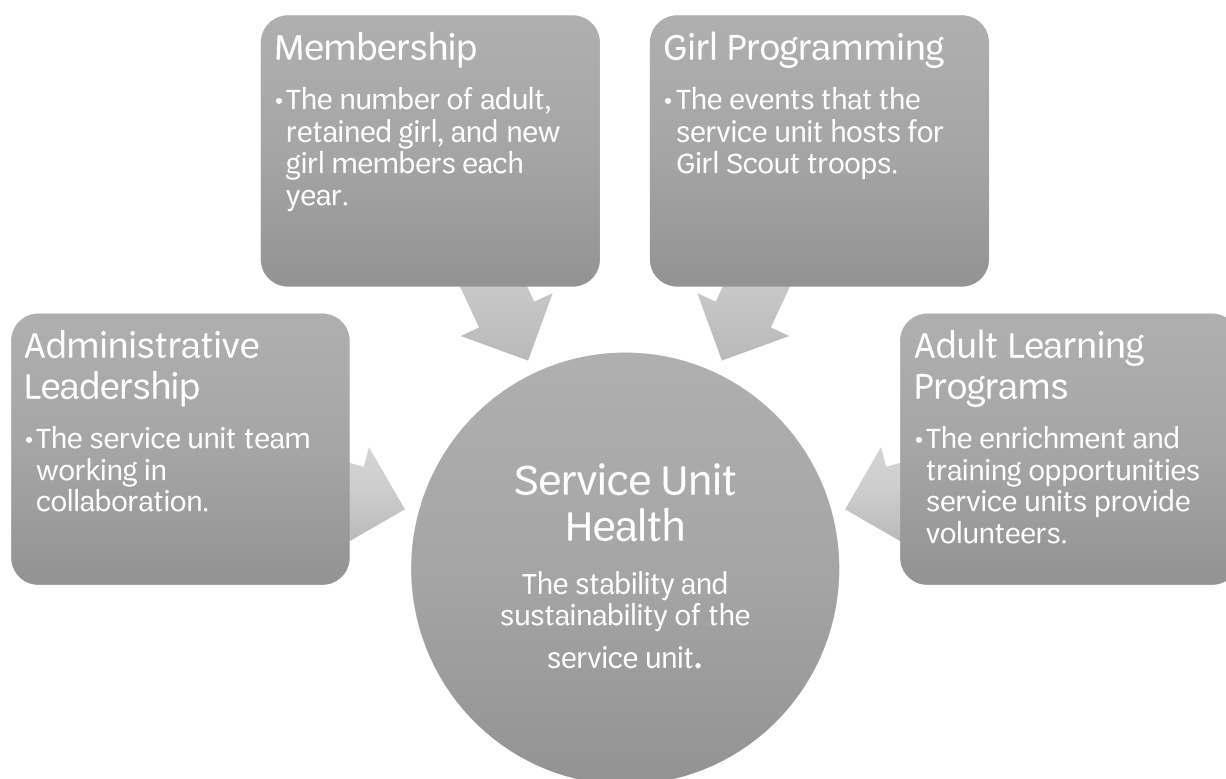


“Girl Scouting rises within you and inspires you to put forth your best.” – Juliette Gordon Low

## The Health of Your Service Unit

You’ll work with your council service unit support specialist and your service unit team to assess the health of your service unit. Your service unit support specialist will provide you with resources each year to help you pinpoint areas to work on and develop plans to keep your service unit healthy and moving in a positive direction.

The health of a service unit is determined by its strength in four areas: administrative leadership, membership, girl programming, and adult learning programs.



We’ll take a closer look at each of these on the next few pages. You might be interested to know that service units who excel in these areas are eligible for the President’s Award—the highest distinction a service unit can achieve.

## **Service Unit Goals**

Girl Scouts USA and the Girl Scout San Diego Board of Directors work together each year to develop goals that align with our organization's strategic plan. One goal of that plan is to grow Girl Scouts by reaching more girls!

Each service unit receives membership goals at the start of the membership year. Goals are developed for:

- new girl membership
- retained girl membership
- overall girl membership

Girl Scouts USA and Girl Scouts San Diego consider several factors when planning service unit membership goals, including:

- the total number of girls in your community who are within the age range of the Girl Scout program levels
- the number of girls who attend local schools
- the number of girls who need to join your service unit each year in order for the service unit to be sustainable and/or reach more girls
- the historical membership trends for your community

Your service unit support specialist will work with your service unit team to develop strategies to meet your membership goals. Each service unit holds an important role in building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place!

## **Administrative Leadership**

Each member of the service unit team ensures that Girl Scout troops within the service unit are fully supported. One component is service unit health is developing administrative processes that equip the service unit to collect and share information in ways that are simple and efficient. These processes include:

- developing effective communication strategies
- participating in council-wide planning events
- facilitating the service unit in philanthropic and financial processes and procedures

## Membership

Healthy membership is a significant indicator of the health and sustainability of the service unit. When you think of Girl Scout membership, you may think of just girls. But membership includes both adults and girls. Girl membership can be further refined as retained and new girl members. Here's how we define each type of membership:

- Adult membership is the number of adults in your service unit community who have taken an active role in creating the Girl Scout experience.
- Retained girl membership is the number of Girl Scouts in your service unit who have chosen to continue their Girl Scout journey for another year.
- New girl membership is the number of girls in your service unit who have been welcomed into the Girl Scout experience for the first time each year. These girls are the future of the service unit. The service unit is sustainable when new girl membership grows each year.



Something to remember about membership: A current membership ensures that a girl or volunteer is covered by Girl Scout insurance during meetings and Girl Scout-approved activities. Those who are not members should not participate in Girl Scout activities unless additional insurance has been secured for an event.

## Girl Programming

Programs for girls come from different sources. Some programs, like STEM workshops, outdoor opportunities, and entrepreneurial programs are offered by Girl Scouts USA and Girl Scouts San Diego. Service units provide girl programming too. It's a collaboration!

One thing all Girl Scout programs have in common is that they are designed to unleash the **G.I.R.L. (Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader)™** in our members by being designed with the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) in mind.

Service unit programs allow girls to show their community how proud they are to be Girl Scouts! They also provide an opportunity to pass down Girl Scout traditions to each new generation. You can show service unit pride and Girl Scout traditions by creating programs like encampments, Thinking Day, girl recognitions, bridging ceremonies, and more.

When your service unit develops girl programs, you can add a unique twist that reflects the distinct culture of the service unit community. No two service units are alike, and that unique twist is what makes each service unit so special.

## Adult Learning Programs

Successful service units ensure that the volunteers in their community have the training they need to do their tasks well. They recognize that training helps volunteers feel fulfilled, enjoy their experiences, and grow as leaders. They also know that training and enrichment opportunities help retain the volunteers needed to sustain the service unit. Therefore, ensuring that volunteers receive training ultimately makes the service unit teams' jobs easier.

Here are a few things to know about training:

- Training for service unit roles—you can contact your service unit support specialist for information on scheduling training for a new service unit team member.
- Training for troop leaders and assistant leaders—required training for these primary volunteers is outlined in [Volunteer Essentials](#), the Girl Scout San Diego Volunteer handbook. New troop leaders and assistant leaders are automatically enrolled in online training and are directed to required, in-person training in their first month as a volunteer. *Service units play an important role by encouraging new leaders and assistant leaders to complete their required training.*
- Training by request—you can request a training in your neighborhood for your service unit. See the [Service Unit Staff Request](#) for available courses and more information.
- Short and Snappy training—add [short and snappy](#) learning opportunities to your service unit meetings or share them with troop leaders. Anyone can lead one and they're quick: most can be completed in 10 to 15 minutes!

## Service Unit Awards

Service units who excel in all four areas of service unit health can apply for the President's Award—the highest distinction that a service unit can achieve. Visit [sdgirlscouts.org/adult-recognition](https://sdgirlscouts.org/adult-recognition) for more information.



Awards aren't the only reason to nurture the health of the service unit. When you have a healthy service unit, you help volunteers and troops thrive. You also help the Girl Scout Movement grow, so that others can have their own Girl Scout journey. Now that's rewarding!

“The work of today is the history of tomorrow and we are its makers.” – Juliette Gordon Low

## Volunteer Support

At Girl Scouts, our focus is first and foremost on girls. But fostering our volunteers to make sure that they have quality experiences and opportunities for personal growth are a close second. Volunteers who feel supported and fulfilled in their role are essential to the Girl Scout Movement and the growth of girl leadership.



Though the volunteer relationship often begins in troops or when members sign up with council, much of the long-term support, guidance, and even comradery comes from within the service unit. Thus, the service unit plays a significant role in volunteer satisfaction.

As a service unit team member, you can keep your service unit strong and serve the volunteers of your community by ensuring that all volunteers are supported in timely and positive ways.

Let's take a look at how you can support volunteers through mentorship, recognition, and meeting facilitation.

## Mentorship

As a service unit team member, you are a mentor to the volunteers in your service unit community. A mentor is a trusted advisor who offers a helping hand to those who need to know more.

There are lots of ways to be a mentor. Mentorship can be formal or informal. You can mentor in-person, by phone call, or by email. You can role model, collaborate with others, or share what you know through social media posts. You can be a mentor just about anyhow and anywhere—even by meeting volunteers at your favorite coffee hangout.

## When you mentor volunteers, you'll:

## Examples:

- 
- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• connect them with others</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A troop leader wants to take her girls outdoors. You let her know about outdoor training and connect her with the adult learning team.</li><li>• An assistant troop leader steps down to move to another city. You talk with the troop leader about ways to find a replacement.</li><li>• A troop treasurer has questions about troop banking. You connect the leader to the service unit treasurer for help.</li></ul> |
|--|---|
- 
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• help them find resources</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A troop leader wants to take girls geocaching. You direct the leader to the resources catalog on the Girl Scout San Diego web site.</li><li>• The leader of a Daisy troop wants to know what activities are safe for her girls. You direct her to the Safety Activity Checkpoints at <a href="http://sdgirlscouts.org">sdgirlscouts.org</a>.</li><li>• A new troop leader indicates she is having trouble planning meetings. You encourage her to use the Volunteer Toolkit.</li></ul> |
|--|--|
- 
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• share information and opportunities</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Girl Scouts USA has released a new set of badges. You plan for your service unit team to share this information with your Girl Scout community at a monthly meeting.</li><li>• Girl Scouts San Diego has added additional First Aid/CPR/AED courses to their lineup. Ask who at the service unit meeting might need this training and share how to register.</li></ul> |
|---|--|
- 
- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• help them grow</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage troop leaders who have been in their role for a while to grow by taking advantage of Girl Scout <a href="#">enrichment training</a>.</li><li>• Encourage volunteers to attend the Volunteer Conference.</li></ul> |
|--|---|
- 16



## Recognition

Everyone likes to be appreciated for the work they do. Showing appreciation goes a long way toward keeping the service unit community healthy and sustainable. People are willing to volunteer and continue to give their time when they feel that they are appreciated and that their work matters.



Don't assume that volunteers feel appreciated. When volunteers begin to feel that their work is unnoticed, they may let the quality of their work decline, or begin to feel detached from the group. Recognizing volunteers' hard work with thoughtful appreciation gives them the positive reinforcement they need to be dedicated and energized.

Make it a priority to recognize volunteers. In some cases, a simple thank you to a volunteer for a job well done will do. But at other times, more formal recognition is best. Work with the service unit recognitions chair and regularly reserve time in service unit meetings to discuss award nominations, end-of-year volunteer appreciation events, and other efforts. Set goals in your service unit to make sure that your outstanding volunteers are given the formal recognition they deserve.

Check out Girl Scouts San Diego Council awards for volunteers and service units who shine. Visit [sdgirlscouts.org/adult-recognition](https://sdgirlscouts.org/adult-recognition) for nominations and endorsement forms.



### The Power of Volunteer Recognition

If you notice volunteers posting frequently on social media about a troop's activities, take a moment to thank them for sharing their experience. Compliment them on their communication skills and let them know that their infectious enthusiasm makes them an excellent leadership candidate. This small act of may encourage them to develop their natural social skills by taking training offered by council. As a result, they may consider accepting a service unit team position.

If you notice volunteers posting frequently on social media about a troop's activities, take a moment to thank them for sharing their experience. Compliment them on their communication skills and let them know that their infectious enthusiasm makes them an excellent leadership candidate. This small act of may encourage them to develop their natural social skills by taking training offered by council. As a result, they may consider accepting a service unit team position.

## Meetings

You may be beginning to see that the service unit oversees many areas of growth. Each member of the team is a leader, educator, and advisor. As a member of the team, you lead in keeping volunteers informed. You'll be encouraging them on their journey as they assume different leadership roles. You'll support them through challenges. And you'll invite them to be a part of service unit activities. In the service unit, there are always things to teach and learn! The service unit meeting is the magical place where learning happens.

Service units often host two meetings a month: the service unit team leadership meeting and the service unit meeting. Let's take a look at these:

Leadership Team Meeting	Service Unit Meeting
The service unit team comes together to share updates and ask for support.	All volunteers in the service unit are invited to attend this one-hour meeting.
The agenda for the service unit meeting is also developed at this time.	Service units can ask troops to present, facilitate activities for Girl Scouts, or invite older Girl Scouts to step into leadership roles in the community.

## What Do Meetings Look Like?

Service unit meetings are unique and vary depending on the history of the service unit as well as the culture and needs of the community. When needs in the community shift, what the meetings look like and how they run may shift too. So, what worked last year, might not work this year. That's okay. When beginning to plan a meeting, ask your team "What does the community need now?"

We encourage all service units to include these elements in their meetings so that getting together is productive and fun:



There are also three secrets to success that can give your service unit the extra boost to be at its best:



## Meeting Roles

Your service unit meetings will run smoothly and be more productive if you request that volunteers in your service unit fill these important roles and carry out their designated task at each meeting.

Role	Task
Facilitator	The facilitator is the person directing the meeting. This person does not need to lead the meeting by speaking, but this person ensures the meeting moves forward in a time-effective and collaborative manner.
Time Keeper	The time keeper has their eye on the clock and gently nudges the group or the facilitator when it is time to transition to the next topic or activity.
Note Taker	The note taker keeps written record of what is discussed and decided at each meeting.
Task Manager	The task manager keeps record of the tasks that are assigned throughout the meeting. Tasks should be documented on a group and individual basis. All tasks should be recorded and posted with the notes for transparency and accountability.
Encourager	The encourager ensures that the meeting is positive and solution-oriented. If the group begins to vent, the Encourager will intervene with a positive statement to redirect the discussion.

## Group Norms

Have your service unit create a set of group norms. A group norm is an agreement that defines how a group will interact in meetings and during activities. Having norms in place is important for several reasons.

- Norms help your service unit team members carry out their tasks.
- Norms set expectations about how people will be treated and how they may treat others.
- Norms keeps confusion and conflict to a minimum when they are shared with a group and enforced.

Once you have your service unit team in place and meeting roles defined, discuss and adopt norms.

Here are some common group norms that you may want to consider:

<b>Norm</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Girl Scout Law</b>
Honor the facilitator.	Look to the facilitator's lead in directing the meeting.	friendly and helpful
One mic.	Only one person speaks at any given time.	considerate and caring
Make space, take space.	Share your ideas and ensure that others have their opportunity to share as well. Ensure there is space for everyone to have the chance to speak.	honest and fair
Stay solution-oriented.	Work together to be collaborative problem-solvers. Stay solution-oriented by offering ideas that move the conversation closer to resolution. Avoid venting or complaining.	friendly and helpful
Speak with intent.	Often, you'll need to accomplish a lot in a meeting with limited time. "Speak with intent" asks participants to make mindful contributions. Some things to ask yourself before speaking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is your comment about the topic at hand?</li> <li>• Does your comment express a new idea?</li> <li>• Will your comment honor the facilitator?</li> <li>• Does your comment move toward a solution?</li> <li>• Is your comment a valuable use of time?</li> </ul>	responsible for what I say and do, respect myself and others
Assume best intent.	To assume best intent simply means that you give people the benefit of the doubt, even when it appears that their ideas are in conflict to your own. Often a problem or issue can be addressed in more than one way. Respond with kindness.	make the world a better place
Eye on the mission.	Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place! Remember, all meeting participants are working toward the same goal.	courageous and strong

## What Do I Do if the Group does not Practice the Norms?

If a group member doesn't follow norms, it's usually because the expected behaviors aren't everyday behaviors for that member. As a member of the service unit team you can take action by asking these questions:

Does a new norm need to be established?

Here's an example of when you might need to establish a new norm. Let's say a person is taking over meeting time by expressing a grievance. Perhaps the service unit needs to create a norm and/or a process for expressing grievances. Listen with patience, recognize that the person has a concern to express, and acknowledge that there is no structure for how to do so. Address the person's concern in a way that feels best at the moment. Then propose the creation of a new norm at the next meeting.

Does the person know the group norms?

Your service unit team selects and creates your initial group norms. Share the norms with the entire community. Be mindful, too, that the service unit community is always changing. Members will enter and leave the group. It's a good idea to post group norms at each meeting and to remind attendees about group norms before the meeting.

Is the person intentionally trying to disrupt or control the meeting?

**If the answer is NO:** Do not address the behavior during the meeting. Wait until after the meeting and then privately discuss the norms together. Remind the person that group norms ensure that meetings are effective and welcoming spaces. Ask the person if the norms are not meeting his or her needs. Consider if the norms need to be revised.

**If the answer is YES:** When a person intentionally disrupts a meeting, it can be stressful for all in the service unit. Take a moment to acknowledge your emotional state. You may feel hurt, frustrated, or angry. However, it's important to set your feelings aside and focus on re-establishing norms. You can pause the meeting and bring up the norms. Ask what norm is not being followed. Talk about why the norm was established.

**If you're able to re-establish norms,** continue the meeting and follow up with the disruptive person in private afterward.

**If the group can't re-establish norms,** end the meeting. Explain that without group norms, the meeting cannot be effective and that continuing is not a good use of volunteers' time. After the meeting, privately discuss the norms with the disruptive person. Remind the person that group norms ensure that meetings are effective and welcoming spaces. Ask the person if the norms are not meeting his or her needs. Consider if norms need to be revised.

\*Remember, you can always contact your service unit support specialist for assistance!

## Meeting Guide

Ensure that a meeting guide is available for each service unit meeting. The meeting guide should include a list of meeting participants and topics. Indicate the time allotted for each topic to help keep the meeting on track.

Post the meeting guide online or send it in an email prior to the meeting. Having access to the meeting guide early helps attendees know what to expect and prepare. You can also bring extra meeting guides to the meeting for those who may need them.

Below you'll find a sample meeting guide that you can use or change to meet your service unit's needs. [See your Service Unit Playbook for a customizable copy.](#)<sup>[GA1]</sup>

### Service Unit Meeting Guide

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Group roles	Group norms
Facilitator: _____	⇒ Honor the facilitator
Time keeper: _____	⇒ One mic
Note taker: _____	⇒ Make space, take space
Task manager: _____	⇒ Stay solution-oriented
Encourager: _____	⇒ Speak with intent
	⇒ Assume best intent
	⇒ Eye on the mission

Agenda		My next steps
Time	Topic	
6:30-6:45	Community building activity	1.
6:45-7:00	Small group break-outs (encampment planning)	2.
7:00-7:15	Service unit team updates	3.
7:15-7:30	Training: What is required for the required Troop Annual Financial Report Submission?	4.
		5.
Meeting notes		

## Meeting Notes

Detailed meeting notes are critical because they help you coordinate the activities of your service unit community. Service units are busy! Remembering all the tasks and deadlines would be difficult without notes. Meeting notes serve as a reminder to you *and* your volunteers about agreed upon tasks and goals.

Meeting notes also offer a reference for clarification. They are the official record of the discussion and agreements made at each meeting.



Make it a practice to offer the notes to the group for approval. Then post them so they are available to the service unit community. This helps ensure transparency and accountability.

### Service Unit Meeting Guide

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Group roles	Group norms
Facilitator: _____	⇒ Honor the facilitator
Time keeper: _____	⇒ One mic
Note taker: _____	⇒ Make space, take space
Task manager: _____	⇒ Stay solution-oriented
Encourager: _____	⇒ Speak with intent
	⇒ Assume best intent
	⇒ Eye on the mission

Agenda		My next steps
Time	Topic	
6:30-6:45	Community building activity	1.
6:45-7:00	Small group break-outs (encampment planning)	2.
7:00-7:15	Service unit team updates	3.
7:15-7:30	Training: What is required for the required Troop Annual Financial Report Submission?	4.
		5.

Meeting notes
Community building activity: troop leaders shared their favorite activities to do with their troop for the end of the year.
Encampment planning: Troop leaders separated by program level to brainstorm ice breakers games to do with girls after flag-up.
Service unit team updates: Girl Scout membership renewal is available in MYGS. Renew ASAP to receive the early bird patch.
Annual Financial Report training: AFRs must be submitted before the end of the month. Visit <a href="https://sdgirlscouts.org/events">sdgirlscouts.org/events</a> to sign up for a "troop finances" webinar.

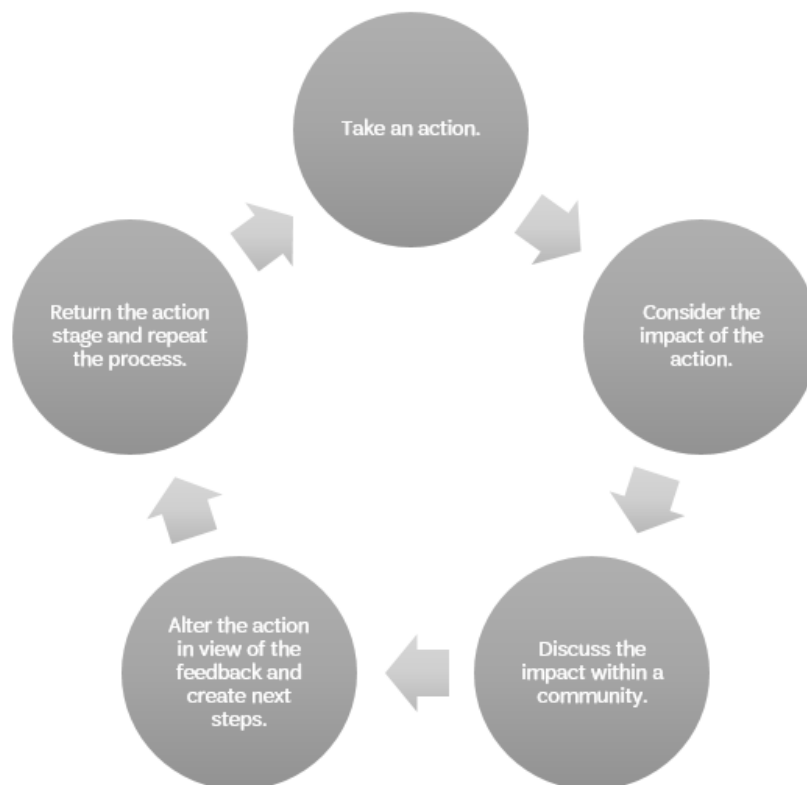


## Next Steps

At each service unit meeting, ensure that your team has considered “next steps.” These are the actions that are most immediate, the ones that need to be completed either before the next meeting or before further action can be taken on a specific project. A section for recording next steps is provided on the meeting guide template.

## Action/Reflection

Reserve time at each service unit meeting for action/reflection. Action/Reflection is an important process because it ensures that the service unit considers its ever-changing community and responds to those changes. It is a key activity in keeping the service unit healthy and sustainable. Check out this image to get an idea of what action/reflection looks like:



The action/reflection activity does not need to be complex. You can simply provide leaders with an opportunity to discuss a topic. Then, ensure that the insights they share are considered in any action the service unit takes.

Topics discussed can be service unit processes (such as registering for encampment) or service unit events and activities.

You'll find some ideas in the table below. But you don't need to limit your action/reflection activities to these. You can be creative. Just remember to:

1. Identify an action.
2. Welcome positive and negative feedback.
3. Consider the feedback as you take future action to benefit your service unit community.

<b>Action/Reflection Activity</b>	<b>Description of the Activity</b>
whole group discussion	The facilitator poses questions to the group and participants respond without a formal structure. The best seating arrangement for open discussion is a circle. In this arrangement, all participants can make eye contact and see each other's body language.
troop level discussions (Daisy leaders, Brownie leaders, etc.)	Meeting participants break into small groups by troop level. Provide each group with a set of pre-determined questions for discussion. Ensure that there is a note taker in each group to capture the participant feedback.
small group discussions	Meeting participants break into small groups. Each group is given a set of pre-determined questions for discussion. Ensure that there is a note taker in each group to capture the participant feedback.
written feedback	Meeting participants take a survey to capture their written feedback about a process, activity, or event.
poster sessions	Meeting participants write feedback on a series of posters placed around the room. Each poster has questions about an activity, event, or process listed at the top.



#### Things to keep in mind:

Action/Reflection can be challenging. That's because the process is open to both positive and negative feedback. It's a good idea to guide the discussion and have the facilitator remind participants that the group norms still apply.

The feedback must be considered in all future actions. As your group decides on what action to take, time may pass and the action may evolve. Keep the action/reflection feedback in mind throughout this process. Don't lose sight of it! Share the feedback with the service unit community and note how the feedback will be used to improve an action in the future.

## Action/Reflection in the Real World of Service Units

1. Take an action: The service unit hosted their first Cookie Kick-Off at a local outdoor park.
2. Consider the impact of the action: Girls and adults who attended the Cookie Kick-Off submitted a brief survey at the conclusion of the event.
3. Discuss the impact within a community: The service unit team read the surveys at their team meeting and looked for themes in the feedback. Girls reported that they wanted more time to complete activities. Adults reported that the location did not provide enough parking.
4. Alter the action in view of community feedback: The service unit team presented the feedback and the next service unit meeting and said that next year the Cookie Kick-Off can be extended and the team would like suggestions in finding a new location.
5. Return to the action stage and repeat the process: In the weeks before the next Cookie Kick-Off, the service unit team sent a survey to all leaders in the service unit asking for help in finding a new location. The Cookie Kick-Off was also extended from two hours to three hours.

## Community Building

Juliette Gordon Low envisioned Girl Scouts as a welcoming space where all girls could find friendship and earn leadership. As a result, Girl Scouts has become an empowering organization for girls all around the world.

Of course, volunteers are the amazing people who make Girl Scouts possible. Service units play a special role in volunteer success. Service units plan community building activities that allow volunteers to share, learn about each other, and bond.

Ideally, service units create the same supportive community for volunteers that leaders create in their troops. This way, volunteers have opportunities to become the **G.I.R.L. (Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader)™** that girls themselves become when they join and participate in the Girl Scout movement.

The community building activities your service unit plans can be short and fun. Choose activities that encourage engagement and laughter—these are essential to creating a strong and healthy service unit.

Try some of these ideas to start:

<b>Community Building Activities</b>	
community building games	<p>Community building games are short fun activities that create space for all members of a group to get to know each other. These games are designed to inject fun and increase engagement in a meeting.</p> <p>Do a quick internet search to find fun ideas for community building!</p>
group share	<p>The group share is a time when meeting participants share a personal experience or insight with the group. Volunteers have great insights. They know tips and tricks to Girl Scouting. They've encountered many of the same challenges and can assist each other in resolving issues.</p> <p>Here's how group share works: The facilitator will pose a question to the group and then each member will be provided the opportunity to share.</p> <p>Tips for group share:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Present group norms to provide guidelines in how to share in the group.</li><li>2. Members of the group may "pass" if they would like.</li><li>3. Provide participants with a limit in the time they can share. Say "I would like to ask us all to share one word that describes..." or "I would like us all to share for one minute about..."</li><li>4. Model first. The facilitator should explain the activity to the group and then start the group share. This can sound like "I'll begin the activity by saying...."</li></ol>
small steps	<p>Community building is any activity that strengthens the relationships of the group. It can be as simple as welcoming new leaders, greeting volunteers with a smile, or sending a thank you card.</p>

### **Check in: Evaluate your community building activity ideas**

- ☐ Did volunteers feel seen? Did they get to say their names or were they addressed by name?
- ☐ Did volunteers feel welcomed and/or appreciated?
- ☐ Were volunteers recognized as making a valuable contribution to the community?
- ☐ Was the activity carried out with a genuine intent to unite volunteers in the circle of friendship?

### **Fun!**

Save some meeting time for smiles. Incorporate fun, silly, and warm habits into your meetings. Fun can be as simple as a smile, a welcome, or greeting someone by name. Or fun can be as silly as having a costume contest at the service unit meeting closest to Halloween.

When you're in meeting planning mode, consider what makes you laugh and smile?

How do you like to be welcomed into a space? Where were you the last time you really laughed out loud? Were you outside? Sitting around a campfire? Sharing stories in a casual atmosphere? Or were you sitting around a table with friends having a chat over a bowl of popcorn? A service unit meeting can have any of these things and so much more! It's up to you and your service unit team to bring it on!





“Girl Scouting can be the magic thread which links the girls of the world together.” –Juliette Gordon Low

## Girl Programming

Whether your service unit is planning an activity for troops or mentoring troop leaders, it’s important to keep girl programming front and center. There’s no doubt, fun and games are an important part of Girl Scouts for both girls and volunteers. But keep the elements of the Girl Scout girl programming in the mix so that the girls in your service unit can grow as leaders. That’s what the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) is all about! On the next few pages, we’ll share the cornerstones of girl programming. Become comfortable with these concepts, consider them in your planning, and pass them on!

### Go-Getter, Innovator, Risk Taker, Leader

At Girl Scouts, girls unleash their inner **G.I.R.L. (Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader)™**! Girl Scouts are big thinkers, groundbreakers, and role models. They design robots, start garage bands, and improve their communities—and yes, they sell the best cookies on the planet. Girl Scouts learn by doing!

**G.**

Go-Getter

She’s bold, honest, and determined to succeed. In her mind failure is no reason not to get back up and try again, and again, and again.

**I.**

Innovator

Thinking outside the box is her specialty, so she’s always looking for a creative ways to take action.

**R.**

Risk-Taker

Courageous and strong, she’s keen to try new things and embrace the unfamiliar.

**L.**

Leader

She’s confident, responsible, and committed to changing the world.

These traits define girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. This is the Girl Scout DNA.

## The Girl Scout Leadership Experience

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) is a one-of-a kind leadership development program for girls. It is based on time-tested methods and research-backed programming that help girls take the lead—in their own lives and in the world.

The GSLE is a collection of engaging, challenging, and fun activities like earning badges, going on awesome trips, selling cookies, exploring science, getting outdoors, and doing community service projects. The GSLE is completed in 3 stages: what girls do, how they do it, and why. Let's take a look at each of these.

### What Girls Do: Discover, Connect, Take Action

To bring the GSLE to life, activities are led by girls themselves, feature cooperative learning, and highlight learning by doing. Girls come up with their own ideas, build teams, and experience the joy of making a positive impact. Girl Scouts:



#### Discover

Find out who she is, what she cares about, and what her talents are.



#### Connect

Collaborate with other people, both locally and globally, to learn from others and expand her horizons.



#### Take Action

Do something to make the world a better place.

### How They Do It: Girl-Led, Learning by Doing, Collaborative

Girl-led is just what it sounds like—girls play an active part in figuring out the what, where, when, how and why of their activities. So encourage them to lead the planning, decision-making, learning, and fun as much as possible. This ensures that girls are engaged in their learning and experience leadership opportunities as they prepare to become active participants in their communities.

Learning by doing is a hands-on experience that engages girls in continuous cycles of action and reflection that result in deeper understanding of concepts and mastery of practical skills. As girls do meaningful activities and reflect on the outcome, girls get to explore their own questions, discover answers, gain new skills, and share ideas with others. It's important for girls to connect their experiences to their lives.

Collaborative learning gives girls opportunities to work together toward shared goals in an atmosphere of respect and collaboration that encourages the sharing of skills, knowledge, and learning. Working together in all-girl environments encourages girls to feel powerful and emotionally and physically safe. It allows them to experience a sense of belonging.

## Why?

Girl Scouts is the organization best positioned to help girls develop the important leadership skills they need to become successful adults. Girl Scouts helps girls thrive in five key ways.



### Strong sense of self

Girls have confidence in themselves and their abilities, and form positive identities.



### Positive values

Girls act ethically, honestly, and responsibly, and show concern for others.



### Challenge seeking

Girls take appropriate risks, try things even if they might fail, and learn from mistakes.



### Healthy relationships

Girls develop and maintain healthy relationships by communicating their feelings directly and resolving conflicts constructively.



### Community problem solving

Girls desire to contribute to the world in purposeful and meaningful ways, learn how to identify problems in the community, and create “action plans” to solve them.



## The Four Pillars of Girl Scouting

Service units offer opportunities for girls and volunteers to engage in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience through four pillars:



### Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)

Girls who participate in STEM:

- become better problem-solvers, critical thinkers, and inspirational leaders
- get better grades, earn scholarships, and follow more lucrative career paths
- see STEM as the foundation for a meaningful and successful future

Examples of possible service unit events: Box car derby, community clean-up, astronomy and star gazing, wildlife adventures, and explorations of technology



### Outdoors

Girls who venture outdoors:

- discover they can better solve problems and overcome challenges
- develop leadership skills, build social bonds, and are happier overall
- become team players and care more about protecting our environment

Examples of possible service unit events: Encampments and nature hikes



### Life Skills

Civic engagement, healthy living, global citizenship, communication skills

- create a team to solve a problem
- become active and informed members of their community
- treat others in considerate, kind, and caring ways
- develop a deeper understanding of financial literacy

Examples of possible service unit events: Civic engagement (events in support of Girl Awards), community service (planting a garden, painting a mural), developing healthy relationships (with friends, family, and community), and financial literacy (budgeting, philanthropy, and making buying decisions)



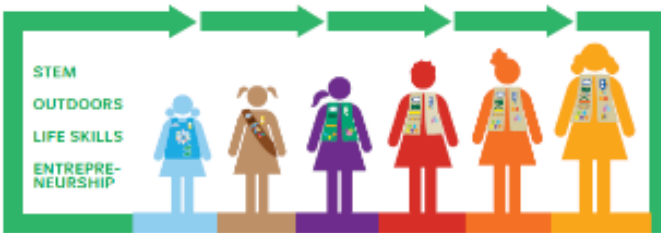
### Entrepreneurship

The Girl Scout Cookie Program is the largest girl-led business in the world! Girls who participate in the cookie program develop skills in:

- goal setting
- decision making
- money management
- people skills
- business ethnics

Examples of service unit events: The fall product program and cookie program as well as money-earning projects

## Girl Scout Progression



Progression means choosing and planning activities so that each new experience builds on the last. Progression helps girls feel confident, safe, and successful.

Progression should be considered when service units plan activities for girls across all program levels.

With their troop leaders' help, girls learn how to set long and short term goals, do research, establish timelines, develop plans, and evaluate the activity. Leaders can help girls develop a system for making decisions on their own and accepting responsibility for outcomes.

The chart below shows the progression of girl planning. As you can see, as girls get older, girl planning increases and adult planning decreases.

Daisy Girl Scouts (Grades K-1)	Brownie Girl Scouts (Grades 2-3)	Junior Girl Scouts (Grades 4-5)	Cadette Girl Scouts (Grades 6-8)	Senior Girl Scouts (Grades 9-10)	Ambassador Girl Scouts (Grades 11-12)
talk with leaders about their ideas for activities.	brainstorm ideas and Leaders help determine which are possible.	work in patrols to develop ideas they like best. Leaders help girls realize their goals.	take a larger role in planning and decision making and adults help when necessary.	decide what they want to do and how to do it. Leaders are advisors who help as needed.	rotate leadership tasks and plan activities, budgets, and goals. Advisors guide as needed.

## Preparing Girls for Higher Awards!

Bronze. Silver. Gold. These represent the highest honors a Girl Scout can earn. All three awards give Girl Scouts opportunities to do big things while working on an issues they care about. Service units play a role in higher awards by encouraging girls in their community to work toward awards and to celebrate their successes. They also assist and support troop leaders by answering questions and suggesting trainings about higher awards.

Daisy	Brownie	Junior		Cadette			Senior/Ambassador
Do these in Kindergarten or 1 <sup>st</sup> grade or both! Journey—plan a project with your troop where they help make the world a better place!	Do these in 2 <sup>nd</sup> or 3 <sup>rd</sup> grades—or both!  Journey—practice taking action!	4 <sup>th</sup> grade Journey	5 <sup>th</sup> grade Bronze Award Project	6 <sup>th</sup> grade Adjust to middle school	7 <sup>th</sup> grade Journey (or vice versa)	8 <sup>th</sup> grade Silver Award Project	See <i>How do I know what to do and when?</i> in the <a href="#">Your Guide to Going Gold</a> , for a suggested timeline.
Daisies can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify people and places they consider helpful and valuable in their communities</li> <li>• list resources needed to complete a project (with adult help)</li> <li>• recognize when they can make something better</li> <li>• respond to requests for help with actions and words</li> </ul>	Brownies can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify 2-3 steps necessary to solve a problem</li> <li>• explain how addressing an issue can benefit their community</li> <li>• demonstrate or teach skills to other girls</li> <li>• describe ways their actions contributed to bettering something</li> <li>• reflect</li> <li>• celebrate and share what they learned</li> </ul>	Juniors can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• map community assets and identify opportunities to better their community</li> <li>• contact community partners who can help</li> <li>• make persuasive arguments for change</li> <li>• outline steps, resources and timelines and assign tasks to meet their goals</li> </ul>		Cadettes can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understand the difference between a quick fix and long-term solutions</li> <li>• identify multiple root causes for a problem and explain the differences between them</li> <li>• tailor their message to various audiences</li> <li>• identify community organizations to help on some aspect of their project</li> <li>• provide and receive feedback on community issues</li> </ul>			Seniors and Ambassadors can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use tools to identify root causes of community problems</li> <li>• adjust their plans if the first attempt fails</li> <li>• give examples of advocating for an issue in their community</li> <li>• monitor their own progress and determine criteria for success</li> <li>• describe how their advocacy efforts helped their community</li> </ul>

## Recognizing Achievement

As Girl Scouts progress from Daisy to Ambassador, the awards they earn symbolize new and higher levels of achievement—and ultimately a deeper understanding of what it means to be a leader.

Some awards are related to specific activities (the [Global Action award](#), for example), while others, like the Girl Scout [Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award](#), recognize larger projects that girls complete with their troop or on their own. Based on their achievements, Girl Scouts can qualify for [special scholarships](#), or even be selected as one of GSUSA's [National Young Women of Distinction](#).

All the steps girls take toward earning awards are built into every part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Guidebooks for parents and volunteers also suggest meaningful ways to help girls celebrate earning awards and reflect on their accomplishments.



“Ours is a circle of friendship united by ideals.” –  
Juliette Gordon Low

## Planning for Change

There is a lot for the service unit team to see when viewing the service unit through the big picture lens. Your service unit will be successful in many ways and also encounter areas for improvement. Whether your service unit is learning something new, planning an event for the first time, or welcoming new leaders to the team, change in the service unit is constant.

Change can be alarming for volunteers within the service unit because:

- Change is a step toward the unknown. Volunteers may be used to doing things a certain way that has felt successful for them.
- Volunteers can feel over-extended and worry that they might not be able to adapt to new processes and continue to support the service unit.
- Volunteers may be experiencing change fatigue and resist change if they have gone through other significant changes and felt unsupported.

*Change management* refers to the strategies and procedures developed to facilitate a change in an environment.

The service unit manager is the change manager of your service unit. This section of the Guidebook will offer strategies to use when planning for change as well as what to do when things don't go as planned.

*Change* refers to new processes and procedures that are implemented in the service unit.

*Transition* refers to the emotional processes that people move through when coming to terms with a new situation.

Both change and transition need to be considered when planning something new for your service unit.

## Plan for change:

### 1. Form a guiding team.

Change is a group effort. Never plan for change alone. Listen to different ideas and seek feedback on a small scale before implementing change on a large scale.

### 2. Create a goal.

The goal informs volunteers of the outcome the service unit is working toward. Create a goal and put it into writing.

### 3. Share the goal with the group.

The goal serves as a guiding compass as the service unit takes steps to implement the change. Share the goal and refer back to it throughout the change process.

### 4. Empower the group to join the goal.

Volunteers will be more likely to jump on board with the change if they are provided concrete steps to work toward the goal. The steps don't need to be large or complex. Ensure the steps are achievable and can begin immediately after the change is introduced. Volunteer responsibilities can increase over time as the service unit finds success in completing the small steps.

### 5. Celebrate early successes.

Change is always unfamiliar and sometimes it is uncomfortable. Be sure to recognize volunteers for their early successes.

### 6. Create systems to sustain the change.

Successfully implementing a change in your service unit is a huge accomplishment! When you've finished, look ahead and imagine how the next Service Unit Manager will be able to sustain the change. Here are some things you can do:

- Save email templates, example documents, notes from brainstorm sessions, and any other resources in an online folder to pass on.
- Include volunteers so the broader service unit can speak about why the change took place and the process used to implement the change.



- Speak openly with the new service unit manager about strengths and areas of improvement for the service unit. Share how you have celebrated strengths and strategies that have been successful when working on areas of improvement.

## Planning for transition:

When you plan for transition you are planning to support the emotional well-being of volunteers in your service unit. Some volunteers may feel angry, scared, or ambivalent about change. Others will be on board with change right away and will encourage others to do the same.

All of these responses are normal and you can plan ahead to support each volunteer.

Tips and tricks to plan for transition:

Explain why the change is needed.	Be transparent about the reason the change is taking place and the service unit goal guiding the change.
Involve the community in decision making.	Any plan for change should be made for the betterment of the community and work towards the Girl Scout Mission, promise, and law. Volunteers all share the community and mission of Girl Scouting. Include them in decision-making processes of change whenever possible. Use group norms and the action/reflection process to structure conversations that are productive.
Be transparent.	Communication is a key component of managing transition. Communication with the service unit can be challenging. There might not be clear communication processes in place or finding the time to share updates can be a challenge. Set aside special time to ensure the volunteers know about the change being made. When volunteers do not receive information about a change, they may begin to feel excluded. When this happens, conflict may arise.
Remain open to listening to concerns.	Service units should remain open to revising their changes over time. Volunteers may also need support when transitioning to something new. Remain open and listen to concerns. Volunteers might have serious concerns, or they may just want a shoulder to lean on. When you listen to volunteers, you engage in community building.
Turn change into learning opportunities.	Be sure to have a plan for how you will teach volunteers the skills they need to implement change. Volunteers will be more likely to accept change when they also see the resources and support they will be provided. Learning together is a great form of community building.

## When Things Don't go as Planned

Inclusion is an important practice in Girl Scouts. It simply means that all girls and volunteers have a right to belong. It makes Girl Scout experiences rich by giving us opportunities to learn different ways of seeing both the bigger world and the world within our service unit community.

In addition, members come to Girl Scouts with their own expectations. They experience Girl Scouts in a way that reflects their own interests, goals, and ideas. It's natural that members have their own ways of doing things. Tasks and activities can be carried out well in many different ways. But occasionally, a problem may surface that disrupts the service unit and its ability to function. When that happens, take steps quickly to manage conflict and get back on track.

## Conflict Management

Conflict can be minimized by using group norms, action/reflection, and volunteer recognition suggestions outlined in this Guidebook. However, conflict cannot be avoided entirely. It arises when people feel that their needs, interests, or concerns are threatened.

To manage a conflict, take action! Don't wait for an issue to spiral out of control. At that point, it's harder to resolve and move forward.

- 1. Ask "could the outcome be positive?"** Believe it or not, many situations that are addressed honestly and openly end up resulting in better communication, improved relationships, and a stronger service unit community. Seeing the positive potential in a conflict can help everyone move forward.
- 2. Ask "what does the person or community need?"** This question is important because conflict is often a sign that a person isn't getting what they need. Discovering that need and helping to meet it can dissolve conflict and help the service unit move forward.



You can see the common sources of conflict in the image below:

#### Unclear Definition of Responsibility

- A person is not sure of what is expected of them.

#### Limited Resources

- Resources can include time, money, space, materials, and supplies. A person may be asked to give more than they have, or may not be receiving the resources they need.

#### Conflict of Interest

- A person may experience a difference in their personal goals and the goals of the organization. Or, two people may have different opinions on the strategies that should be used to achieve the same goal.

#### Unmet Personal Needs

- Primary needs include food, clothing, and shelter. In addition, people need to feel appreciated, in control of themselves, and good about themselves.

It's important to know that sometimes a conflict will be triggered by a person's feelings or perceptions, rather than an unmet need. In this case, the conflict is more likely to have a negative outcome. Statements like these provide clues about the source of the conflict:

#### A feeling:

- "I am mad!" or "I feel threatened!" or "I can't talk to her!"

#### A perception of events:

- "She is a liar!"
- "I tried to talk to her but she wouldn't listen."
- "I did everything the way it was supposed be done."

Conflict is more detrimental if it stays in the feeling or perception stage. The goal is to move it to a conversation of the person's needs.

- 3. Prepare to meet.** It's likely that the service unit will need occasionally intervene in a conflict. This is a task led by the service unit manager. Your service unit manager will coordinate with the team to determine who will prepare to act in the role of a facilitator, guiding those in conflict to resolution.

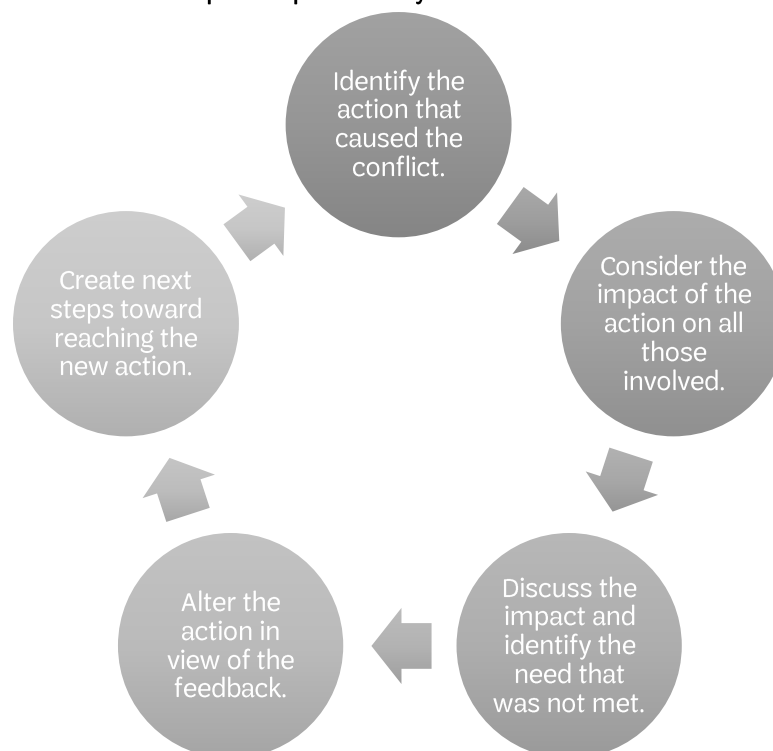
If the conflict has moved to a harmful state, you may feel fear or anger. You may feel emotional and/or physical fatigue. These feelings are normal and may be a sign that you yourself have needs that aren't being met. If this is so, take action to make sure that your personal needs are addressed before you meet.

Keep in mind, you always have the option to contact your service unit support specialist for assistance in addressing a conflict.

- 4. Contact those in conflict and plan to meet.** Contact those in conflict and ask to set-up a meeting time. Pick a place that is neutral territory. Things to consider: Is the space comfortable? Will the attendees be hungry or thirsty? Has everyone involved had time for cool off?
- 5. Present group norms to those at the meeting.** Ask if anyone would like to adjust or add to the norms. Discuss any changes and then ask attendees to agree to the norms.

During the meeting, remind the attendees of the group norms, as needed. Remember, it's okay to end the meeting if a person disrupts the meeting and the norms cannot be re-established.

- 6. Follow the conflict action/reflection model as an agenda.** The action/reflection model below has been adapted specifically to address a harmful conflict.



Action/Reflection model questions to use:

- What was the action that sparked the conflict?
- How did the action impact each of you?
- How could the action have been changed to meet the needs of all those involved?
- What can the group do differently in the future?
- What steps does the group need to take to ensure the action can be taken differently in the future?

Sample meeting guide:

## Meeting Guide

Date:

Group roles		Group norms
Facilitator: _____		⇒ Honor the facilitator
Time keeper: _____		⇒ One mic
Note taker: _____		⇒ Make space, take space
Task manager: _____		⇒ Stay solution-oriented
Encourager: _____		⇒ Speak with intent
		⇒ Assume best intent
		⇒ Eye on the mission
Agenda		Next steps
Time	Topic	1.
	What was the action that sparked the conflict?	2.
	How did the action impact each of you?	3.
	How could the action have been changed to meet the needs of all those involved?	4.
	What can the group do differently in the future?	5.
	What steps does the group need to take to ensure the action can be taken differently in the future?	
Meeting notes		Loose ends
		1.
		2.
		3.
		4.
		5.

- 7. Define next steps.** At the conclusion of the meeting, document next steps. These are the actions that the attendees agree to in order to resolve the conflict. Write the next steps down. Read the next steps out loud and ask attendees to state that they agree to these steps.
- 8. Document loose ends.** Loose ends are topics that were not addressed in the meeting. They may also be areas of concern that attendees still have. Decide together whether to schedule another meeting to address loose ends. Plan the meeting or create a next step to schedule a meeting, if necessary.
- 9. Give everyone copies of meeting info.** Give a copy of the next steps and loose ends that were decided in the meeting to the attendees. If a future conflict crops up, you can review the notes together at a new meeting and repeat the action/reflection process.



You can refer to the Girl Scout San Diego [Volunteer Relations Roadmap](#) for more information and support in guiding volunteers through conflict resolution.

## **Words of Thanks**

The Service Unit Guidebook and Playbook were developed as a collaborative effort between the volunteers and staff of Girl Scouts San Diego. Thank you to each person who offered their insight, wisdom, and passion for Girl Scouting in creating the content for these books.

More importantly, thank you to all of you as the service unit team members who inject your own insight, wisdom, and passion into all you do in your communities.

Thank you to...

### **Girl Scouts San Diego Staff**

Gwynn Alexander, Service Unit Support Specialist and project lead  
Samantha Brasted, Program Specialist (Entrepreneurship)  
Emily Chiri, Membership Administrative Assistant  
Stephanie Dawes, Program Specialist (Grades 6-12)  
Ann Epps, Service Unit Support Specialist  
Heather Fryant, Troop Support Specialist  
Robin Lemon, Troop Support Specialist  
Miriam MacPherson, Creative Services Manager, Brand & Marketing  
Jennifer “Dot” Mains, Service Unit Support Manager  
Britt Northup, eLearning Specialist  
Blanca Santos, Service Unit Support Specialist  
Claudette Steinhauer, Director of Membership  
Janine Rojas, Communications Specialist, Brand & Marketing  
Karina Vera-Agnew, Service Unit Support Specialist

### **Girl Scouts San Diego Volunteers**

Liz Amaral, Service Unit Manager, Sunny Trails  
Veronikah Beck, Service Unit Manager, University City  
Sheila Cavanaugh, Service Unit Manager, Park Hills  
Stephanie Kwiatkowski, Service Unit Manager, Mira Mesa  
Valerie Milbourne, Service Unit Manager, Lakeside  
Melinda Mulkey, Service Unit Manager, Chula Vista  
Reggi’e Webster, Service Unit Manager, Point Loma  
Julie Wunderly, Service Unit Manager, Sunny Trails  
Jaclyn Zumaya, Service Unit Cookie Coordinator, Chula Vista