

Girl Scout Myth Busters

Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts are, and always have been, two very different organizations. Since Boy Scouts of America started recruiting girls to their program, there has been confusion and misinformation. Here are common myths and the facts.

MYTH

FACTS ABOUT GIRL SCOUTS

“All ‘scouting’ programs are basically the same.”



Not even close. At Girl Scouts, everything we do is designed with and for girls. Most of a girl’s life is co-ed, so there are plenty of opportunities to interact in that environment.

- The all-girl, girl-led, single-gender space is where girls safely thrive. Our programs are tailored to maximize impact by teaching girls in ways they learn best.
- The single-gender environment offered by Girl Scouts creates an inclusive, safe space in which girls are free to explore their potential and take the lead without the distractions or pressures that can be found in a co-ed environment.
- In single-gender spaces, girls are more apt to take healthy risks, try new things, and take on leadership roles.

“Girl Scouts isn’t about getting outdoors.”



Girl Scouts build outdoor skills, go camping, and appreciate nature.

- Girl Scouts earn badges in outdoor adventure and high adventure.
- Girl Scout troop camping starts in kindergarten.
- For many girls, Girl Scouts is their introduction to the outdoors. 80% of girls said camping was their most memorable experience.*
- Girl Scouts Spirit of Nebraska owns and operates six camp and outdoor facilities in Nebraska and has nearly 465 acres of camp properties and outdoor space.

“Girl Scouts is less convenient for family life since it’s not co-ed.”



Girls are not an add-on or an inconvenience.

- Girls deserve the best possible opportunities, and Girl Scouts provides them. Our over 100 years of research and experience in putting girls at the center of everything we do is the proof.

Family participation is encouraged.

- Parents and other adults play a critical role to delivering the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, both as volunteers and as supporters. Parents who are also co-leaders and other troop volunteers get the opportunity to bond with their daughters as they move through the Girl Scout program.

MYTH

FACTS ABOUT GIRL SCOUTS

“Girl Scouts doesn’t have programs for adventure.”



No way! Girl Scouts have all kinds of opportunities for adventure!

- Girls choose from age-appropriate activities including: archery, mountain biking, backpacking, rock climbing, kayaking, zip lining, horse-back riding, winter survival, surfing, and so much more.
- Every year, Girl Scouts Spirit of Nebraska offer adventure trips where girls can hone their expertise in outdoor and survival skills like fire-building, knot-tying, and orienteering.
- Not only do girls go on adventures, they raise the money and plan the trip, leading the experience and ensuring they are girl-centered.

“Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts offer the same science program.”



Have you seen our science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programs?

- The STEM interest—and confidence—gaps between girls and boys starts at age 6 and can be closed with programs that are designed for girls. Girls can earn badges in engineering, robotics, environmental science, cyber security, and space science.
- Our STEM content is timeless, helping girls develop a lifelong interest in how things work and teaching girls how to think like scientists, programmers, and engineers. Even as those fields develop, Girl Scouts will understand the fundamentals of thinking like an innovator.
- Girl Scout STEM curriculum and badge work is hands-on, problem-focused, and girl-led learning, not memorization.

“Crafts are the only hands-on activity.”



Girl Scouts are makers.

- If girls want to use a sewing machine, weld, make jewelry, change a tire, or re-build a marine diesel engine, they can!
- This year, Girl Scouts Spirit of Nebraska girls are building two tiny homes, filming and editing videos, advocating for issues they care about, designing and coding websites, building their own rafts, working with NASA experts to lead astronomy clubs, and more!

“The cookie sale is just about making money.”



Girl Scouts do a great job at creating revenue, but the cookie program is so much more!

- As the world’s largest girl-run business, the Cookie Program gives girls an opportunity to develop expertise and confidence in goal setting, decision making, money management, people skills, business ethics, and more.
- During Girl Scouts Spirit of Nebraska's Cookie Program, troops on average earn over \$1 million to fuel adventures, awards, and community service projects.

MYTH

FACTS ABOUT GIRL SCOUTS

“Earning the Girl Scout Gold Award is less impressive than the Eagle Scout Award.”



The Gold Award requires completion of a rigorous project that prepares girls for a lifetime of possibility, thinking, and doing.

- Gold Award Girl Scouts identify an issue in their community, develop a plan, lead teams to develop a sustainable solution to the issue, and practice skills in advanced planning, organization, and team building.
- The Gold Award is impressive to colleges and universities, and to the military, which advances Gold Award Girl Scouts a full rank, the same as for Eagle Scouts.

“Troops are all the same.”



Girls help choose and plan troop activities, which makes every troop unique.

- Activities vary depending on the interests of girls and troop leaders. Most troops explore STEM, outdoors, life skills, and community service, and attend staff-led programs where they can explore their interest in sports, arts, STEM, entrepreneurship, outdoor adventure, camp, and more!

“The rest of the world embraces ‘co-ed’ scouting.”



Girl-only scouting organizations are going strong. The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS.org) represents 10 million girls in 150 countries.

- The two largest scouting organizations are the World Organization of the Scout Movement, and the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. It is not true that co-ed scouting has replaced Girl Guides (or Girl Scouts)—it has not. They are merely different programs.
- Some co-ed scout programs are sectarian or require that members recognize an obligation to a specific faith. Girl Scouts is a non-partisan, non-sectarian group, with a strong policy of inclusion for all girls.

“Girl Scouts is harder for volunteers.”



Girl Scouts embrace challenge! (But it all depends on what you mean by “harder.”)

- Girl Scouts is flexible, girl-led, and has a wide variety of activities—and we sure wouldn’t change that! There are many planning resources and support available such as the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK), activity plans, and new leader mentors.

* Source: 2014 Girl Scout Research Institute study. Thanks to Girl Scouts of Northern California for creating the original “Myths About Girl Scouts.”