

# Toward the New Girl Scout Leadership Experience

## Transition Planning, 2007-2010










The Girl Scout community is hard at work addressing our Core Business Strategy's call for a major transformation centered on ***building the world's best leadership experience that ties activities to outcomes, provides differentiation for girls from kindergarten through high school, and offers flexible pathways for today's diverse and busy girls and volunteers.***

With input from girls, the Girl Scout community, and youth development experts, a team of national and council staff spent 2005 determining key elements and outcomes for the New Girl Scout Leadership Experience. This model was finalized in 2006 and then slated, by the National Board of Directors, for first-stage implementation in fall 2008.

### The Multiyear Transition Period

The transition has been set up as a multiyear process so that councils can balance national action plans with local needs, making choices as needed to reach the Movement's goal of providing girls with a unified Girl Scout experience by fall 2010.

Girl Scouts of the USA wants to reassure councils and members that the transition period extends through 2010. Fall 2008 marks the *beginning* of the transition to the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. GSUSA is providing guidance on managing membership and program over the next several years with specific attention to:

-  New Membership Grade Levels
-  Changes to Registration Forms
-  New Program Resources and Awards
-  Existing Resources and Awards
-  Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards
-  National Outcome Strategies
-  Preparing Adults for Change
-  Girl Scout Pathways
-  Uniforms

The concluding **Challenges and Suggestions** list offers solutions for specific challenges related to transitioning to the new grade levels and managing a variety of membership needs, including multigrade and multilevel troops, homeschooled girls and individually registered girls.

## **The Model, Pathways, and Journeys**

### **Understanding the New Lingo on the Road to Leadership**

#### **The Leadership Model**

The leadership model provides the design for what girls do in Girl Scouting. It illustrates how adult support strengthens girls' experiences and drives and displays all the elements that must be in place to create a positive impact on girls' lives.

#### **Girl Scout Pathways**

A pathway is the way girls and volunteers join Girl Scouting. They can choose from several pathways, including an ongoing troop, *destinations*, a short-term opportunity, a day or resident camp, a special-interest topic or event, or a virtual (online) connection. (See [Girl Scout Pathways](#).)

#### **Leadership Journeys**

Journeys represent the experiences Girl Scouts engage in to achieve leadership outcomes. For each Girl Scout grade level, GSUSA is creating a series of leadership journeys accompanied by new resources and new awards. (See [Leadership Journeys: The New Direction for Program Resources and Awards](#).)

## **The New Membership Grade Levels**

Girls say it is important to be with other girls their age and, currently, they get bored by too much repetition. As one 13-year-old Girl Scout wrote, "It makes us more comfortable to be with the same age group as ourselves." Girls identify with social groups based on grades.

Research also found that girls learn best and have the most fun when they are with the right developmental/social grouping.

The new grade levels, approved by the National Board, address the charge of intentionally creating differentiated Girl Scout experiences that mirror girls' developmental needs:

Girl Scout Daisy, Grades K-1 Girl  
Scout Brownie, Grades 2-3 Girl Scout  
Junior, Grades 4-5 Girl Scout Cadette,  
Grades 6-8 Girl Scout Senior, Grades  
9-10 Girl Scout Ambassador, Grades  
11-12

The grade-level groups provide "leadership levels" for girls as they progressively "step forward" through the New Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

## **Leadership Journeys: The New Direction for Program Resources and Awards**

A series of leadership journeys, accompanied by new resources and new awards, is being created for each Girl Scout grade level. Each journey engages girls in exploring a theme through a series of linked experiences that, together, form a whole greater than any one journey activity. Each journey is tied to national "Discover, Connect and Take Action" leadership outcomes.

The journey concept grew out of an approach many councils already use informally as they weave activities and events around existing Girl Scout resources and awards to better suit their members' needs and interests. The concept also builds on the rich tradition of linked Girl Scouting efforts like "program trails."

While engaged in the new Girl Scout journeys, girls and volunteers are encouraged to add on outings, celebrations, in-depth explorations or anything else that meets their interests, time, and resources.

### **Coming in Fall 2008: Leadership Launch Journeys**

The first journeys planned for fall 2008 are referred to as Leadership Launch Journeys because they kick-off the New Girl Scout Leadership Experience and serve as a "launch pad" for future experiences in Girl Scouting.

Each launch journey presents a central theme that ties to the three keys of leadership—Discover, Connect, and Take Action—and places special emphasis on choosing and implementing related "Take Action" projects. These journeys deepen girls' understanding of what it means to be a leader at each progressive level of Girl Scouts.

The launch journeys are made up of 5-8 sessions (total sessions vary by level) and are intended for local customization. Journeys can be done in a variety of Girl Scout Pathways, including stand-alone, short-term experiences.

A print resource for each level will bring the journey to life for girls and incorporate important elements of Girl Scout history and tradition. Girls will earn official awards to display on their vests or sashes during each journey. GSUSA is mindful of the need to be cost-conscious with all new product offerings.

Councils will preview the launch journeys in spring 2008 and can begin using them in Fall 2008.

### **Existing Resources & Awards**

Throughout the multiyear transition period, no girls will lose out on experiences, projects, or awards they have already started. Girls at every level can continue to use all available existing materials as new resources are developed and phased in. Adults are invited to use their best judgment to assist girls in choosing projects that are appropriate for their grade level. Existing program resources will continue to serve as supplements to the new materials through 2010.

## **Local Efforts Wanted for National Journeys**

GSUSA recognizes that some girls, volunteers, and councils may want to continue their practice of creating their own Girl Scout leadership experiences based on the new national leadership outcomes and the girl-led, cooperative, and learning by doing processes. Once national Girl Scout Pathways are defined, councils may also want to create leadership experiences to fit those pathways.

As the Leadership Launch Journeys begin in 2008, the Girl Scout community will be welcome to suggest high-quality local projects for consideration as future national journeys. GSUSA has a special interest in replicating excellent leadership experience efforts that further integrate important topics such as healthy living, science, math, technology, the outdoors, and the environment.

### **Beyond 2008**

Additional leadership journeys for each grade level, slated for release in 2009 and beyond, will continue to tie experiences to leadership outcomes while incorporating a variety of topics, especially science, math, technology, healthy living, the outdoors and the environment. Suggestions for future thematic journeys are welcome; e-mail [programideas@girlscouts.org](mailto:programideas@girlscouts.org).

## **Preparing Adults**

### **Facilitator Guides**

Girl Scout volunteers have long asked for more concrete and specific guidance on "what to do" with girls. Recognizing that busy adults need "ready-to-go" materials, Girl Scouts of the USA is creating detailed facilitator guides to accompany each Leadership Launch Journey.

These resources will guide volunteers through the journey with girls, and will make girl-led, cooperative, and hands-on learning techniques easier than ever before to implement. Additionally, the facilitator guides will show volunteers how journey experiences are tied to achieving the national leadership outcomes. Together, the new materials for girls and adults will bring the Girl Scout Leadership Experience to life.

## **Highest Awards in Girl Scouts**

The Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards remain the culminating leadership awards, and are an opportunity for girls to put the "Discover, Connect, Take Action" leadership philosophy in motion.

Based on the resolution adopted by the National Council in 1990, GSUSA recognizes "in perpetuity the designation Girl Scout Gold Award as the highest award to be earned as a girl member." GSUSA suggests that girls are eligible to complete their Girl Scout Gold Award any time between 10th and 12th grade, as Girl Scout Seniors or Ambassadors.

GSUSA will update the requirements for the Girl Scout Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards for release in 2009, and will provide a transition period for girls to meet the updated requirements.

GSUSA is now seeking input on both the grade-level standards and requirements for these highest awards. The ultimate goal is to lift up these awards as pinnacles of the New Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Working together with councils, we will increase the prestige of these awards and honor as never before the girls who demonstrate their leadership while earning them. E-mail suggestions to [programideas@girlscouts.org](mailto:programideas@girlscouts.org).

## **Spring 2008 Conferences**

GSUSA will hold six sessions for teams of council staff and volunteers in spring 2008. These sessions, called "The New Girl Scout Leadership Experience: A Bold Journey into the Future," will engage participants in understanding the Girl Scout leadership philosophy "from the inside out" and then prepare them for local implementation. An emphasis for these sessions will be on preparing and coaching volunteers to use the girl-led, cooperative learning, and learning by doing processes to ensure high-quality experiences.

## **Online Learning**

Online learning opportunities throughout 2008 will enable the Girl Scout community to further understand and prepare to implement the New Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Again, adults will explore not just "what to do" with girls, but the processes of "how" to achieve the desired impact on girls—leadership!

## **Registration Form Changes**

Currently, the dues summary registration form asks for "one grade level that represents the majority of the girls that are registering now" and displays the current grade levels. These categories will be changed to reflect the new levels. Changes will be made for all forms distributed winter/spring 2008.

Since the girl registration form only asks what grade a girl is in school, that question will remain.

## **Toward National Outcomes**

Building on the charge to tie activities to outcomes within the New Girl Scout Leadership Experience, GSUSA will this fall release a new publication, *Transforming Leadership: Outcomes of the New Girl Scout Leadership Experience*. This document will detail the meaning of each outcome by grade level within the Discover, Connect, Take Action framework. *Transforming Leadership* will help focus efforts around those outcomes (e.g., program activity selection, fund development, communications) and pave the way for future outcomes measurement.

Through fall 2007 and spring 2008, the Girl Scout Research Institute (GSRI) will pilot measures of the New Girl Scout Leadership Experience outcomes and program processes (girl-led, cooperative learning, and learning by doing). A national pilot baseline study will be conducted in spring 2008 with 6-10 councils. The results will provide a baseline for future comparisons and outcomes measurements, and will be ready in time for the 2008 National Council Session. The GSRI is working with councils on the Outcomes Advisory Group to develop a five-year plan for an integrated local/national outcomes measurement system. Closely aligned with this work, the GSRI will release a research review, *Exploring Girls' Leadership* (fall 2007), and an original study on girls' leadership (spring 2008) that further illuminate what leadership means for girls, which factors encourage them to aspire to leadership, and how Girl Scouting can make a difference.

## Girl Scout Pathways

GSUSA envisions councils using the new leadership journeys to fuel girl and volunteer participation in a variety of consistent long- and short-term Girl Scout Pathways. For example, a journey can be spread over a series of troop gatherings, provide the basis for a week of day or resident camp, or be the primary content of a virtual pathway.

The Girl Scout community is helping shape pathway standards to provide nationally consistent approaches to membership. This summer GSUSA hosted nine conversations with 215 staff from 147 councils in 42 states to talk about Girl Scout Pathways. Councils shared their own innovative approaches for reaching girls and adults that could easily fit into a national pathways framework. The information gathered in these conversations will help develop national criteria for Girl Scout Pathways.

For a copy of the most recent Girl Scout Pathways draft document and supporting materials, contact [pathways@girlscouts.org](mailto:pathways@girlscouts.org).


## Symbols of Belonging: Uniforms and Awards


Girl Scout uniforms and awards unite Girl Scouts around the world as a sisterhood of leaders. In the tradition of updating these important symbols of belonging periodically, the National Board of Directors approved a new policy, provided below, for implementation, beginning in fall 2008.


Based on this policy, girls at each level will have one official uniform item (e.g. tunic, vest, sash) so that they can proudly display the pins and badges they earn. Girls will wear their vests and sashes with their own white shirts and khaki pants, making it easier for more girls than ever before to show their pride as Girl Scouts!

### Uniform Policy Adopted by National Board of Directors, August 2006

#### Required Elements:




 *Girl Scouts at each level will have one official uniform item (e.g., tunic, vest, sash) for the display of official pins and awards. This uniform item will be required when girls participate in ceremonies or officially represent the Girl Scout Movement.*

 *The official dress code will unite girls as Girl Scouts. Girl Scout Juniors and older program age groups will wear solid white shirts and khaki pants or skirts with their official uniform item, which will be required when they participate in ceremonies or officially represent the Girl Scout Movement. Brownies and Daisies may still wear full uniform ensembles.*

 *The adult uniforms will be a scarf worn with the membership pins for women and a tie for men. The scarf/tie and membership pins will be worn with navy blue business attire.*

## Uniform Policy (continued)



### Available elements:

-  Girl Scouts at the Daisy and Brownie levels will continue to have a full uniform ensemble available.
-  Girl Scouts in high school will also have a scarf, uniting them in the WAGGGS tradition.
-  Girl Scouts of the USA will continue to develop and offer a range of appealing casual wear for girls and adults.

## Challenges and Suggestions

**Girl Scout Daisies:** Currently not enough program content is available to manage the Daisy Girl Scout experience as a two-year experience. What about girls who use the existing Daisy materials in 2007-2008 as kindergarteners—what would they do as first-grade Daisies in 2008-2009?

**SUGGESTION:** Girl Scouts of the USA encourages the following approach to the Girl Scout Daisy level:

-  Girls who are in kindergarten in 2007-2008 are Girl Scout Daisies, using the existing program resources as they learn the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Councils continue to supplement this with local programming.
-  When these girls enter first grade in 2008-2009, register them as first-grade Daisies, enabling them to participate in the Daisy launch journey which lays the foundation for their next leadership steps as Girl Scout Brownies.

Councils choosing to register these first-graders as Brownies in 2008-2009 should consider that the Girl Scout Brownie launch journey is being created especially for second- and third-graders.

**Girl Scout Cadettes:** Given that sixth-graders may fall into either elementary or middle school depending on their school district's grade structure, troops and service units might want to continue registering sixth graders as Girl Scout Juniors.

**SUGGESTION:** Girl Scouts of the USA recommends that girls entering sixth grade in 2008-2009 register as Cadettes so they can enjoy the new Leadership Journey for this level.

Early adolescence can be a challenging time in girls' lives. The new grade grouping and leadership journey is designed especially to address girls' progression through the early stages of adolescence, ultimately preparing them for the next phase of life and the next phase of leadership in Girl Scouting.

Depending on school districts and other local issues, councils may need to use 2008-2009 to work with troops and service units on adjusting membership practices. The multiyear transition allows for the option of taking some extra time as necessary to move membership to the new levels.

## Challenges and Suggestions

**High School Membership:** Ambassadors (11th-12th grades) are a brand-new level for young women in Girl Scouts. How will it be different than the experience of Senior Girl Scouts (9th-10th grades)?

**SUGGESTION:** Girl Scouts of the USA recommends that girls entering ninth or 10th grade in 2008-2009 register as Girl Scout Seniors. These girls will develop their vision of the world as they try out the new Senior Leadership Launch Journey, supplementing it with the array of existing resources.

Girls in 11th and 12th grade are future-driven and can apply their leadership to setting a new, and possibly global, course—as Girl Scout Ambassadors.

Girl Scouts of the USA invites girls entering the 11th and 12th grades to become the first "Girl Scout Ambassadors" in the 2008-2009 year. In addition to completing—or even beginning—their Girl Scout Gold Award, they will try the new Ambassador Leadership Journey. Ambassadors may also choose from the array of existing offerings for teen Girl Scouts, while they partner with GSUSA to shape their special Ambassador roles in Girl Scouting.

**Multilevel Groups:** In some places around the country, multilevel groups are working really well—serving girls from kindergarten through high school. What happens to them in the new level groupings?

**SUGGESTION:** Keep going! Diverse girls benefit greatly through opportunities to "give and get" from each other at different levels. All of the girls can be engaged in exploring what it means to be leaders based on the Girl Scout philosophy: Discover, Connect, Take Action.

Just ensure that plans do not always rely on engaging "older" girls as "helpers" of younger girls. Teens need opportunities to network in their own peer group and participate in challenges especially for their level.

**Multigrade Groups:** Within one Girl Scout level, there could be two to three grades of girls represented. How are troops or groups best set up—single grade or multigrade?

**SUGGESTION:** When volunteers and logistical considerations (transportation!) make it possible, it's great for girls who are "slightly" older/younger to benefit from each other. There are several ways to manage this experience.

For example, Girl Scout Juniors are fourth- and fifth-graders. The fifth-graders could assist their younger peers on the "Leadership Launch Journey" while having some "break out time" to plan their Bronze Award project.

## Challenges and Suggestions

**Homeschooled Girl Scouts:** In some areas of the country, homeschooling is very popular. What Girl Scout level would homeschooled girls participate in?


**SUGGESTION:** Girl Scouts of the USA trusts councils, in partnership with families, to assist every girl to have the Girl Scout experience that is best for her. As a general practice, girls say it is important to be with their "social peers"—groups that share the same developmental characteristics.


**Individually Registered Girl Scouts:** When girls do not have time to belong in a troop or the logistics of meeting times and places get in the way, they might choose to register "individually." What changes might need to be addressed for these girls to participate in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience?

**SUGGESTION:** Individually registered girls can participate in any pathway. The vision is all girls and adults join Girl Scouts immediately upon paying their \$10 membership dues and accepting the Girl Scout Promise and Law. They then decide which pathway(s) they'd like to participate in. They can participate in any or all pathways, and regardless of which pathway they participate in they are all Girl Scouts! For a copy of the most recent Girl Scout Pathways draft document and supporting materials, contact [pathways@girlscouts.org](mailto:pathways@girlscouts.org).

**Awards:** While Girl Scouting undergoes this major transformation, girls might find themselves with "last year's" tunic/vest/sash and "this year's" new award items.

**SUGGESTION:** With so much change and transition under way, Girl Scouts of the USA invites councils to assure membership that all new awards will come with placement guidelines. Some specific examples of what uniforms and awards might look like during transition include:

 Girl Scout Daisies might earn and place petals on their tunics as kindergartners in 2007-2008 and go on to earn and add the new awards, which can have a special place on that same tunic, as first-graders in 2008-2009.

 Girls who are fifth-grade Juniors in 2007-2008 might wear their vests into sixth-grade Cadettes in 2008-2009, completing their Bronze Awards and/or choosing to try out the premier Cadette Leadership Journey.

The above are just two examples of what our transition to the new Girl Scout Leadership Experience might mean for girls. Many more "What If" situations are sure to arise. Keep moving toward having every Girl Scout engaged in the new Leadership Experience by fall 2010. By then, girls will be able to proudly and uniformly use the vests/sashes and awards designated to show that they belong to a sisterhood of leaders.

**Recommended Membership for Girl Scout Daisies-  
Brownies During Transition**

Entering Kindergarten 2007-2008	Entering First Grade 2008- 2009	Second Grade 2009-2010	Third Grade 2010-2011	Fourth Grade 2007-2008
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Register as GS Daisy</li> <li>☞ Use existing GS Daisy program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Register as GS Daisy</li> <li>☞ Use new GS Daisy Journey</li> <li>☞ Supplement with existing GSUSA and local materials and awards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Register as GS Brownie</li> <li>☞ Use new GS Brownie Journeys</li> <li>☞ Supplement with existing GSUSA Brownie Materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Register as GS Brownie</li> <li>☞ Ample new GS Brownie materials exists to choose from</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Follow new GS grade groupings and use new leadership resources through 12<sup>th</sup> grades ►</li> </ul>

**Recommended Membership for Girl Scout  
Cadettes During Transition**

Entering Sixth Grade 2007- 2008	Entering Sixth Grade 2008- 2009	Seventh Grade 2009-2010	Eighth Grade 2010-2011	Ninth Grade 2011-2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Use existing standards: option to be a GS Cadette or Junior</li> <li>☞ Option to do GS Bronze Award</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Register as GS Cadette</li> <li>☞ Use new Cadette Journey</li> <li>☞ Supplement with existing materials</li> <li>☞ Option to complete GS Bronze Award before starting any work on GS Silver Award</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Register as GS Cadette</li> <li>☞ Use new Cadette Journeys</li> <li>☞ Supplement with existing materials</li> <li>☞ Option to begin GS Silver Award</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Register as GS Cadette</li> <li>☞ Ample new leadership materials exist</li> <li>☞ Option to do GS Silver Award</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Option to do GS Silver Award</li> <li>☞ Bridging into GS Senior at end of ninth grade ►</li> </ul>

