

Hello, my name is Wendy Lewis and I am a Senior Regional Director at Girl Scouts Dakota Horizons. I am here today to express support for House Bill 1356 and encourage your vote for this legislation.

At Girl Scouts, girls choose how they participate and what experiences they wish to have. With a variety of badges, events and learning curriculum, girls find a place to practice skills, explore their potential, take on leadership positions—and even feel allowed to fail, dust themselves off, get up, and try again.

Girl Scouts has always been committed to developing girls' curiosity and academic success. The opportunities provided through the Girl Scout Leadership Experience focus on STEM, Life Skills, Entrepreneurship and the Outdoors - complimenting what girls are already learning in school.

A 2012 Girl Scout Research Institute Study, *Linking Leadership to Academic Success: The Girl Scout Difference*, proves Girl Scouting to be positively linked with academic achievement and school engagement.

When surveyed:

- 73% of Girl Scouts said they are good at their schoolwork.
- 75% reported receiving an average of “Mostly As or Bs” or “All As” in the three school subjects measured.
- 82% “agree a lot” that it’s important to them to really understand their class work.
- 83% said they “always” finish their homework even if it’s boring.

The study outcomes affirm that when girls plan and lead projects, whether related to community service, outdoor expeditions, cookie sales, robotics or any number of Girl Scout programs, they gain skills and confidence that also help them do well in school.

Today, girls need Girl Scouts to help them stay connected to their friends and communities and continue to pursue their passions – and I want more girls in North Dakota to have this opportunity.

Having school access in other states to speak to girls while at school has proven to be a great opportunity for us, as well as the girls. We work cooperatively with each school system to schedule a time that the administration feels is best for the students and respect the length of time we are given.

We have presented to students class by class, spending just a few minutes in each room, or in an assembly-style setting. During this time we share what Girl Scouts is about and invite them to attend an information night with their caregiver to learn more.

In conclusion, I urge you to vote in support of House Bill 1356 so that organizations like Girl Scouts can provide students a choice in their after-school activities. A vote yes will allow us to impact more girls through the state of North Dakota as we build girls of courage, confidence and character who make the world a better place.

I thank you for your time today. Before I leave I have some additional material I would like to hand out to you for consideration.





## Linking Leadership to Academics: The Girl Scout Difference<sup>1</sup>

The mission of Girl Scouting is to develop girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. An exciting new study shows that Girl Scouting also contributes to academic success. This national study by the Girl Scout Research Institute (GSRI) found that the leadership skills and experiences girls gain through Girl Scouting also help them succeed in school.

“Without Girl Scouts I would not be where I am today. I think I would not get good grades, I don't think I would do well in school, and I don't think I would get along with others as well as I do.”

- 12 year old Girl Scout

### Key Findings

The study of nearly 3,000 geographically-diverse fourth through eighth grade Girl Scouts found that:

1. Girl Scout participation has a positive impact on girls' leadership.
  - ✓ On a 1-10 scale, one-third of girls rated the impact of Girl Scouting on their leadership a 10 (highest score possible).
  - ✓ Eighty percent rated it a 7 or higher.
2. Girl Scouting influences academic success as much as or more than positive relationships with teachers and weekly participation in out-of-school-time (OST) activities— non-Girl Scout factors that are known to boost success in school.
3. Lower socioeconomic status (SES) girls, those whose moms have less than a college education, report greater benefits from Girl Scouting.
  - ✓ They report greater leadership impact.
  - ✓ Those who have gained problem solving skills indicate much higher scholastic competence.

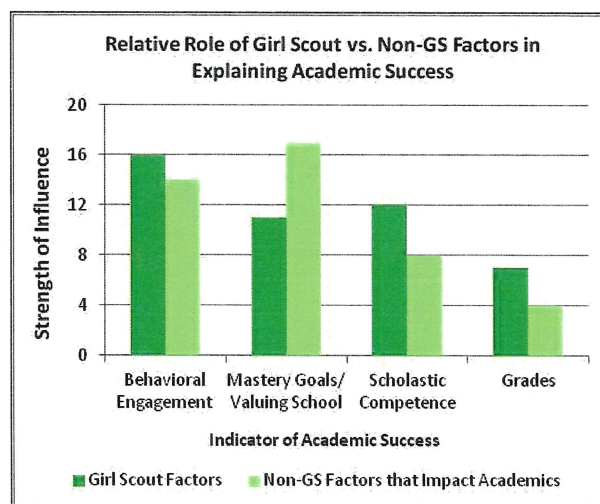
### What Makes Girl Scouting Different

Girl Scout experiences are characterized by three processes: Cooperative Learning, Learning by Doing, and Girl-Led activities. The Cooperative Learning aspect of Girl Scouting (in which girls work with, learn from and teach each other) is particularly important in supporting girls to take on challenges and solve personal, interpersonal and community problems. When girls learn to seek challenges and solve problems



in Girl Scouting, it helps them do the same in school, thereby supporting their academic growth.

Additionally, Girl Scouting offers a variety of different experiences, in which girls get to try new things, develop their skills, and take on leadership roles. When girls plan and lead projects, whether related to community service, outdoor expeditions, cookie sales, robotics or any number of other Girl Scout themes, they gain skills and confidence that also help them do well in school.



### Directions for Future Research & Programming

Additional research is recommended to compare Girl Scouts and non-Girl Scouts on both leadership and academic outcomes and to explore how leadership development experiences impact academics for lower-SES girls. Programming to help adult volunteers better facilitate the three Girl Scout Processes may also yield very positive results for girls' leadership and academics.

“I get to face my fears and try new things. Girl Scouts teaches lots of important life lessons.”

- 10 year old Girl Scout

<sup>1</sup> This document is an overview of *Linking Leadership to Academic Success: The Girl Scout Difference*, by Kallen Tsikalas and Sabrica Barnett (Girl Scout Research Institute, 2012). Full report available online at [www.girlscouts.org/research/publications/gscoutcomes/](http://www.girlscouts.org/research/publications/gscoutcomes/)



## Girl Scout Alums by the Numbers

### At-a-Glance

- There are currently more than 50 million Girl Scout alums.
- Roughly 5 percent of Girl Scout alums have received the highest award in Girl Scouting—the Girl Scout Gold Award.
- Gold Award Girl Scouts represent our most successful, engaged, and happiest Girl Scout alums. These alums display more positive life outcomes compared with women who didn't participate in Girl Scouts in regard to sense of self, life satisfaction, leadership, life success, community service, and civic engagement.
- Girl Scout alums also display positive life outcomes to a greater degree than other women on several indicators of success, including sense of self, volunteerism and community work, civic engagement, education, and income/socioeconomic status.

Sources: The Girl Scout Research Institute, *Girl Scouting Works: The Alumnae Impact Study* (2012) and *Girl Scout Network Exploratory Research* (2017)

### Elected Officials

- Sixty percent of women in the 116th Congress are Girl Scout alums.
- Sixty-nine percent of current female senators are Girl Scout alums.
- Fifty-seven percent of women currently in the House of Representatives are Girl Scout alums.
- Five of the nine current female governors are Girl Scout alums.
- Every female secretary of state in U.S. history is a former Girl Scout: Madeleine Albright, Condoleezza Rice, and Hillary Clinton.

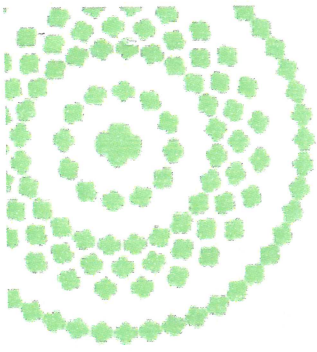
Source: Girl Scouts of the USA's Public Policy & Advocacy Office, Washington, DC (2020)

### Businesswomen

- More than half (53 percent) of female entrepreneurs and business owners are Girl Scout alums.
- Girl Scout alums are more likely than other women to have a business degree.
- Older women in business are more likely to have been Girl Scouts as girls; 61 percent of businesswomen age 65 and older are Girl Scout alums, as are 56 percent between the ages of 45 and 64.

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





## Girls Speak Out

### Quotes from *Linking Leadership to Academic Success: The Girl Scout Difference\**

In 2011, the Girl Scout Research Institute conducted a national study with nearly 3,000 Junior & Cadette Girl Scouts (girls in grades 4-8) from more than 20 states. Here's what these girls had to say about...

#### Girl Scouting & Leadership Development

- My experience as a Girl Scout made me a better, more confident person and showed me ways how to make the world a better place. (13 year old Girl Scout, Massachusetts)
- Girl Scouting has created new opportunities for me to try new things, make new friends, and learn how to lead! It has been a great opportunity for me to help the world, one thing at a time! (12 year old Girl Scout, Ohio)
- Girl Scouting is a good practice for me because I want to be a Congresswoman or the President of the U.S.A. when I grow up. Girl Scouts teaches me about leadership, kindness, and all sorts of good traits! That is why I love Girl Scouting. (10 year old Girl Scout, Georgia)
- It is very fun to be able to make new friends other than the ones at school. I learned a lot from my Girl Scout experiences such as being a leader and I improved on my group working skills. (11 year old Girl Scout, Massachusetts)
- I enjoy being around other girls from many cultures, and learning to work together for the betterment of our schools, and community. (12 year old Girl Scout, Nebraska)

#### Girl Scouting & Academic Success or Learning

- I have been a Girl Scout since I was 5 (a Daisy), and I would like to say that I think without Girl Scouts I would not be where I am today. I think I would not get good grades, I don't think I would do well in school, and I don't think I would get along with others as well as I do. (12 year old Girl Scout, Texas)
- School is so much stress and hard for me. Girl Scouts is where I can be good at stuff. Teaching arts and crafts or leading games to younger scouts makes me feel good about myself, like I can do something good. Camping and travel with my friends and no boys is the best part of Girl Scouts. (13 year old Girl Scout, Texas)
- Girl Scouts is a wonderful community of friends and open minds. I know that at Girl Scouts I can have fun and be with my friends while still learning new skills. (12 year old Girl Scout, Massachusetts)
- I have been having trouble at school and my confidence level is at a low, so Girl Scouts makes me feel good inside. (9 year old Girl Scout, Missouri)

#### Girl Scouting & Personal Growth

- Girl Scouts is a place where I know I can be myself and speak what's on my mind. Girl Scouts has allowed me to see my real self and not be afraid to show who I really am. (12 year old Girl Scout, Massachusetts)
- Girl Scouts is helping me be a stronger person by giving me the courage to say no to my friends, and a place that I can learn new things. (11 year old Girl Scout, Illinois)
- I really like the Girl Scout cookie sales because it teaches me to get to be more social and to have good eye contact with people... (10 year old Girl Scout, Texas)
- I like making new friends and learning new things. I get to face my fears and try new things. Girl Scouts teaches lots of important life lessons. (10 year old Girl Scout, California)
- I'm really glad that I joined Girl Scouts because now I have more friends and I've met more people. Being a Girl Scout has opened me up to the world. (9 year old Girl Scout, Iowa)
- I love Girl Scouts. It helps me be a good person and it has good effects on me. (9 year old Girl Scout, California)

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\* A copy of the full report, *Linking Leadership to Academic Success: The Girl Scout Difference*, may be downloaded from <http://www.girlscouts.org/research/publications/gscoutcomes/>



We are girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place.

And that “make the world a better place” part? That’s about civic involvement, and it gets at the very heart of what it means to be a Girl Scout.

Girl Scouts prepare to lead the change in their town, state, and country through the Girl Scout Leadership Program. When they earn their Civics badges Girl Scouts:

- Gain an in-depth understanding of how local, state, and federal government works.
- Prepare to be a voter, an activist, or a political leader.
- Research laws and understand how they’re created.
- Explore how the electoral college works.
- Learn about the representation of women in government, and so much more.



From the very beginning, Girl Scout founder Juliette Gordon Low saw Girl Scouting as a movement that would inspire girls to make a difference in their world. Call it advocacy. Call it being a good citizen. Call it patriotism. Girl Scouts leave things better than they found them and work to make our communities shine.

