

# **THE GIRL SCOUT COOKIE<sup>®</sup> PROGRAM**

## **America's Leading Business And Economic Literacy Program for Girls**

Launched in 1917 in Muskogee, Oklahoma, the Girl Scout Cookie Program has grown into a leading business and economic literacy activity run by and for girls. By giving girls the opportunity to discover their own skills, connect through teamwork, and take action, the Girl Scout Cookie Program has helped make Girl Scouting the premier leadership development experience for girls.

### **BUILDING LEADERSHIP SKILLS**

Girls participate in carefully developed age-appropriate cookie activities that help develop skills they can apply throughout their lives. Even the youngest Girl Scouts gain self-confidence and poise by learning how to greet customers and offer cookies for purchase. As girls grow, emphasis is placed on getting to know their product – ingredients, calories, how the money will be used – to design innovative and creative marketing strategies and tools.

#### *Girls Discover 21<sup>st</sup> Century Business and Economic Skills*

- ❖ Girls design business cards, presentations, newsletters, press kits, charts and posters to support their cookie program goals. In the Boston area, girls use software designed for corporate work groups to track sales in real time.
- ❖ Girls deliver business presentations. Many supplement traditional sales methods with formal presentations to close cookie sales with local businesses, such as banks and local retailers. A CEO-in-Training program for teens shows girls how to create a prospect list of local businesses; schedule sales calls to offer cookies by the case as employee perks, thank you gifts for clients or sales program incentives; make presentations and follow-up. In 2005, CEO-in-Training participant Tiondra Flynn of Carpinteria, California made a single sale of 120 cases, or 1,440 boxes, to the Pacifica Hotel Company.
- ❖ Girls find new ways to increase their customer base. For example, in the Seattle area, Sky Valley Troop 3037 has increased its cookie sales by creating customized gift baskets that can be decorated with the specific colors or logos of local businesses.
- ❖ Girls learn and apply business leadership skills. Some receive mentoring from local women business leaders such as Cathy Coughlin, President and CEO of AT&T Midwest Services in Chicago. Coughlin brought together a panel of teenage Girl Scouts and members of her senior management team for a discussion about the business skills the girls use during the cookie program. "Since these girls have been hard at work selling Girl Scout cookies, I thought it would be fun to have them share their plans to increase sales – and get some feedback from some of AT&T's sales and marketing professionals," said Coughlin. "I was hoping they would walk away with some new ideas to incorporate into their next year's plans. But, as you might expect, we learned more from them than they did from us. In fact, I am going to write

a new book: 'All I Really Need to Know about Business I Learned from the Girl Scouts'!"

- ❖ Girls learn fiscal responsibility: From making change to tracking revenues, girls practice the basics of money management and learn how to earn what they spend and stay on budget.
- ❖ Girls earn badges and other awards such as the Cookies Count Try-It for Brownie Girl Scouts, the Cookie Biz Badge for Junior Girl Scouts, and the Cookies and Dough Interest Project Award for Girl Scouts ages 11-17.

#### *Girls Connect Through Teamwork*

- ❖ Younger girls work in teams to create flyers and posters, schedule work times and sales locations, track inventory and revenues, review safety rules and schedule deliveries.
- ❖ Teen and tween girls set group goals and develop a list of positions related to cookie activities such as accounting manager, event planner, public relations specialist and graphic designer.

#### *Girls Take Action*

- ❖ Through the Cookie Program, girls learn skills like mapping neighborhood businesses and resources that help them consider the community service and action projects they might want to do after the cookie activity ends. Nationwide most troops reinvest a portion of their cookie proceeds in service projects that address specific community needs.
- ❖ In 2007, as part of the Girl Scout Leadership Development Program, girls are using the cookie program as an opportunity to talk to customers about potential ways to improve their communities and will build local "idea banks" base on their findings.

### **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT THROUGH GIRL SCOUTING**

The Girl Scout cookie program has helped make Girl Scouting America's premier leadership development experience for girls.

- ❖ 66% of Women of Professional Achievement were Girl Scouts at some point in their youth, compared with 41% of American Women (Defining Success: American Women, Achievement, the Girl Scouts – GSRI/Louis Harris, 1999)
- ❖ 71.4% of women in the U. S. Senate and 67.1% of the women in the House of Representatives today are Girl Scout alumnae (*Congressional Research Service, August 2005*)
- ❖ 82% of high-achieving Girl Scout alumnae believe that membership in Girl Scouting and other youth organizations influenced their success (*Louis Harris, 1999*)
- ❖ Alumnae credit Girl Scouting with helping them build leadership skills, moral values and self-confidence (*Louis Harris, 1999 pending confirmation*).

### **FAST FACTS ABOUT THE GIRL SCOUT COOKIE PROGRAM**

- ❖ The Girl Scout Cookie Program is one of the few youth-oriented programs in the country providing its participants the ability to decide how to direct the proceeds generated through their business activity.

- ❖ The Girl Scout Cookie Program generates annual proceeds of about \$700 million per year, based on total sales of about 200 million boxes per year since 1999 at an estimated average price of \$3.50 per box. Prices are determined by the individual Girl Scout council and vary across the country.
- ❖ All proceeds from the sale of Girl Scout cookies benefit girls in the community in which the cookies are sold. Local Girl Scout councils choose their baker, set their prices, set dates for the cookie program and coordinate all local cookie program activities **to promote a fun learning experience for girls.**
- ❖ Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) licenses two cookie bakers: ABC/Interbake and Little Brownie Bakers to supply cookies for sale by local Girl Scout councils.
- ❖ GSUSA creates and develops the cookie program activity for girls. GSUSA also sources and licenses the two bakers from which councils can choose. Local Girl Scout councils deliver the cookie program activity to girls. They choose their baker, set their price, set dates for the cookie program and coordinate all local cookie program activities.

### **SAFETY FIRST**

Although participation in the Girl Scout Cookie Program is voluntary, the vast majority of girls enjoy this fun-filled learning experience and participates each year. Written permission by a parent or guardian is required prior to participation. As with all Girl Scout activities, the health and safety of girls is the number one priority, so participating girls and adults follow strict safety guidelines.

### **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

Parents and guardians want to help, and GSUSA is pleased they want to support their child's Girl Scout activities. However, this is a valuable learning activity for each girl, so GSUSA encourages adults to support girls in this activity and not do the activity for them. Parents and guardians who wish to help their Girl Scout may consider:

- ❖ Advising and encouraging their daughter
- ❖ Bringing their daughter to the office so that co-workers can meet her and buy directly from her
- ❖ Helping their daughter deliver cookies personally
- ❖ Volunteering at their daughter's Girl Scout troop's booth cookie sales or helping the troop develop presentations or marketing and sales strategies

For younger girls, parental help may be more hands-on but Girl Scouting urges parents to structure their involvement to ensure a real learning experience for their daughters.

### **INGREDIENTS**

There are currently eight varieties of Girl Scout cookies produced by each of the two bakers licensed to produce Girl Scout cookies. Here are some facts about their ingredients:

- ❖ Zero Trans Fats. Beginning with the 2006-07 cookie season, all Girl Scout cookies have zero grams trans fats per serving. According to the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA), any food item with less than 0.5 gram of trans fat per serving is considered "zero trans fats."

- ❖ No preservatives are added to the cookies. Some varieties of Girl Scout cookies may contain an artificial preservative in the oil blend, to aid in protection against oxidation during storage. All the cookies freeze well to extend their shelf life.
- ❖ Kosher ingredients. All Girl Scout cookies are kosher.
- ❖ Each of our two licensed bakers lists dietary exchanges on the order form so diabetics can make informed choices.

In addition, each baker makes varieties without palm oil. Girl Scout cookie bakers advise that it is still necessary to use tropical oils for the production of compound coating. Many top bakers have tried to stop using it, but without it, their products do not meet production standards.

The ingredients and nutritional elements of all cookies are listed on the order forms and the side of the cookie box so anyone concerned about carbohydrates can make informed choices. For more information about ingredients for the 2006-07 varieties of Girl Scout cookies, check the bakers' Web sites:

- ❖ ABC/Interbake ([www.girlscoutcookiesabc.com](http://www.girlscoutcookiesabc.com))
- ❖ Little Brownie Bakers ([www.littlebrowniebakers.com](http://www.littlebrowniebakers.com))

The key point to remember is: the Girl Scout Cookie Program is about the “girls” not about the “cookies.” Whenever you buy a box of Girl Scout cookies, you are contributing to the development of girls all across your own community. And, when enjoying this guilty pleasure that is one of America’s favorite indulgences, remember Girl Scout cookies – like any other treat – are best consumed in moderation.

## **A PROUD LEGACY**

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| <b>1917</b> | The Mistletoe Troop in Muskogee, Oklahoma bakes and sells cookies in its high school cafeteria as a service project.   |
| <b>1922</b> | The July issue of <i>The American Girl</i> magazine, published by Girl Scout national headquarters, features an article by Florence E. Neil, a local director in Chicago, Illinois that includes a cookie recipe given to the council's 2,000 Girl Scouts. She estimated the approximate cost of ingredients for six- to seven-dozen cookies to be 26 to 36 cents and suggests the cookies could be sold by troops for 25 or 30 cents per dozen. Depending on market conditions, her formula yields a profit margin of anywhere from 76% to 88%. |
| <b>1934</b> | Greater Philadelphia became the first council to sell commercially baked cookies.  |
| <b>1936</b> | The national organization, Girl Scouts of the USA, begins the process to license the first commercial baker to produce cookies that would be sold by girls in Girl Scout councils. Enthusiasm for Girl Scout cookies spreads nationwide. In 1937, more than 125 Girl Scout councils report holding cookie sales.   |
| <b>1942</b> | Girl Scout cookies are sold annually by local councils around the country until World War II, when sugar, flour, and butter shortages lead Girl  |

Scouts to begin selling Girl Scout calendars to raise money for their activities.

- 1951** Girl Scout cookies come in three varieties: Sandwich, Shortbread, and Chocolate Mints. The “Chocolate Mints” – later renamed “Thin Mints” – is without a doubt the most popular Girl Scout cookie.
- 1978** GSUSA begins supplying licensed bakers with a standard cookie package layout and pictures. For the first time in history, all Girl Scout Cookie® boxes feature the same designs and depict scenes of Girl Scouts in action.
- 1990s** In the early 1990s, low-fat and sugar-free Girl Scout cookie varieties are added.
- 2005** GSUSA licensed bakers began listing trans-fats on January 1, 2005 – one full year ahead of the FDA January 1, 2006 deadline for listing trans fats.
- 2006/2007** For the 2006-07 season, all Girl Scout cookies are zero trans fats according to FDA guidelines. Attachment A is a chart detailing all 2006-07 varieties and their ingredients

From a U.S. serviceman serving overseas --

*“Ma’am – Received your letter today. I just want to express our gratitude to you and Troop 442. The men and women of 379 Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron know that we can not do our job without the support of folks back home. I had barely made it to my office today and the word of Girl Scout Cookies had run through the unit like wildfire. Girl Scout Cookies are a perfect reminder to us of why we are over here defending freedom. I have posted your letter and picture in my office and when people ask I will tell them that is a picture of the greatest Brownie Troop in America HOOAH!” – U.S. Serviceman (name withheld)*