



## Costa de Oro Service Unit

### What Every Leader Should Know

Thank you for volunteering to be a Girl Scout Leader. Here are a few things you should know about Girl Scout practices.

**Leadership.** In our Council, all leaders are equal. Co-leaders are not assistants to the leader. For our Service Unit, the 01 designation is given to the primary troop contact. They are the first one called with a troop question, usually handle the troop paperwork, and will receive any mail sent to the troop via post. The 02 designation is used for co-leaders. All leaders (whether the primary or co-leader) have an equal voice in the running of the troop and in the decisions that are made.

**Inclusion.** Girl Scouts does not discriminate against any girl. If she cannot afford the expense, Council may be able to provide her family with financial assistance. If she has a disability or social issues, you can ask the parent to assist you in making the troop activities accessible to her but she cannot be rejected for these reasons.

**Troop Safety.** There are adult-to-girl ratios for each grade level but there is always a minimum of two non-related adults at any Girl Scout activity and at least one of those adults must be a troop leader and a female.

**Troop Operation.** Once you form a troop, you and your girls act as a unit. You make troop decisions by vote and, if old enough, you ask the girls what they want for their troop. When funds enter your troop bank account, they become the property of Girl Scouts. All girls have an equal vote in how that money should be spent (no matter how many boxes of cookies they each sold ;). If the troop votes to participate in an activity and all the girls in your troop are offered the same opportunity to attend, your troop participates even if all the girls cannot be present because it is a troop activity. Many troops earn official insignia (badges, journeys) at troop meetings. If a girl is absent during that meeting, she must make up the missed activity in order to earn the insignia.

**Troop Money Earning versus Fundraising.** Only Council can fund-raise; troops participate in money earning activities. This means your troop cannot hold a Pizza night where your families buy food and your troop gets a percentage. You cannot support other organizations, such as Pampered Chef and Tupperware. Money earning is done by the efforts of the girls themselves. First, your troop must participate in both Council product sales—nuts/magazines in the fall and cookies in the spring. Next, you need to complete a Money Earning Application and submit it to Council for approval. Then plan your activity—a car wash, rummage sale, bake sale, collect donated books and hold a book sale, make items to sell at a boutique, etc. Note: you may not hold your activity during the sales period of either of the Council product sales. Cash donations made to troops is not recommended as this is contrary to the money-earning format; however, you can accept in-kind donations, such as glue sticks, markers, etc.

**Conflict Resolution.** Leadership is like a marriage: it can be a good marriage, or it can be a bad marriage—just don't take it out in front of the kids. This means, if you are having any issues with your other leader(s), take the time to meet with them away from the troop, express what you are feeling and why, and come up with a solution. Don't hold it in until it pops out unexpectedly and inappropriately in front of the girls. The Service Unit and Council can help you with matters of conflict resolution.

**Male Girl Scouts.** Yes, that's what I said, male Girl Scouts. Men can volunteer to help with your troop. There are just a few special rules you all need to follow. At troop meetings and other events, an adult woman not related to him must be present. He can never be alone with the girls. As a field trip driver, there must be an adult woman also in the car and she cannot be related to him by blood nor marriage. A male volunteer can take Troop Camping training and serve as your troop's Outdoor Trained Adult; but, when camping, he must have his own tent or be in a males-only tent, or there can be a family tent with only his own daughter with him. He should also have his own bathroom facilities. Anything you can think of to keep him above any suspicion at all, do it. It is for his protection as well as the girls. As with all other adults who are in contact with the girls, he would have to have passed the Council background check.

**Drinking and Smoking**—just say No. There is no drinking of alcohol at a girl event. That means when you and your troop families are sitting around a campfire after the girls have gone to sleep in their tents, you cannot bring out the beer. The entire event is a girl event, even if they are sleeping. If you host troop meetings or parties at family homes, there is no drinking alcohol at the meal. There is no smoking allowed in front of the girls. If smoking is necessary, it must be done away from and out of sight of the troop activity.

These practices are meant to keep you and your girls in good standing, safe during troop activities, and help you to “build girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place.”