

Girl Scout Mythbusters

Girl Scouts and Scouting America¹ are, and always have been, two very different organizations. Since Scouting America started recruiting girls to their program, there has been confusion.

Here are common myths and the facts.

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 of Virginia Skyline operates three camp properties in Charlottesville, Lynchburg and Roanoke, VA, for girls to experience all the outdoors has to offer.

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, backpacking, rock climbing, kayaking, high ropes course, horseback riding, winter survival, and so much more.
- Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline has The Skyline Adventurers program, where teen girls experience the fun of backpacking, kayaking, canoeing, hiking, mountain biking, rock climbing, camping, outdoor cooking and travel — local, national and international trips!
- 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 Scouting America 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.

¹ Formerly, Boy Scouts of America

Crafts are the only hands-on activity

Girl Scouts are builders.

- If girls want to create fashions through sewing, weld, make jewelry, change a tire, or re-build an engine, they can!
- This year, Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline girls are building buddy benches, little libraries, filming and editing videos, advocating for issues they care about, designing and coding websites, creating catapults, launching rockets, and more!

The cookie sale is just about making money

Girl Scouts do a great job at creating revenue, but the cookie sale 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 of Virginia Skyline's 2018 Cookie Program, troops earned more than \$550,000 to fuel adventures, awards, and service projects.

Earning the Girl Scout Gold Award is less important 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!

It's hard for families (especially dads) to get involved with Girl Scouts

Family participation is encouraged.

- We encourage the entire family to get involved, and lots of dads volunteer in different ways, supporting as co-leaders of troops, cookie sale coordinators, and camp volunteers.
- 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 troop leaders get the opportunity to bond with their daughters as they move through the Girl Scout program.

Girls Scouts is For Girls. By Girls. All Girls.

The benefits of the single-gender environment has been well-documented by educators, scholars, other girl and youth-serving organizations, and Girl Scouts and their families. Girl Scouts designs our programming based on research about how best to empower girls to lead, thrive, and gain skills. By being a girl-led, girl-only program, we encourage girls to discover who they are, free of norms and rules imposed on them by media and society.