

Girl Scouts to celebrate 100 years

Written by Darci Tomky

Their mission is to build girls of courage, confidence and character who make the world a better place, but in the sweet innocence of a child, one young member said girls should join because, well, it's a club for girls!

The Holyoke Girl Scout multi-level troops are 28 girls strong, with girls from kindergarten through high school.

This year they join 3.2 million other Girl Scouts and adult volunteers across America to celebrate the "Year of the Girl" in honor of Girl Scouts' 100th anniversary.

"There's been a lot of progress in the last 100 years for sure," said troop leader Ravon Krueger.

Girl Scouts was founded by Juliette Gordon Low, who organized the first Girl Scout troop March 12, 1912 in Savannah, Ga. Girl Scouts of the USA was chartered by the U.S. Congress March 16, 1950.

For 100 years, Girl Scouts has been empowering girls and allowing them to discover the fun, friendship and power of girls together. According to the Girl Scouts' website, girls grow courageous and strong through a variety of enriching experiences like extraordinary field trips, sports skill-building clinics, community service projects, cultural exchanges and environmental stewardships.



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Sisters Eva and Charlotte Kramer check their sales list and collect some delicious Girl Scout cookies for a customer last week. Samoas and Thin Mints always seem to be the most popular sellers out of the eight varieties of Girl Scout cookies. —Enterprise photo

“Girls get a little bit of everything,” said Krueger, noting how Girl Scouts is unique because members get a taste of all areas from sports to business to science.

Girl Scouting helps girls develop their leadership potential through activities that enable them to discover their values, skills and the world around them; connect with others in a multicultural environment; and take action to make a difference in the world.

Girl Scouts in Holyoke, which probably began in the 1950s or '60s, has had its ups and downs over the years.

Leaders Lori Kramer and Ravon Krueger are excited they now have almost 30 registered girls in the troop.

Even though Girl Scout cookie sales is their most well-known activity, Krueger said Girl Scouts is a lot more than just cookies!

During the school year, they meet every Thursday after school in the elementary cafeteria, alternating with half of the girls one week and the other half the next week.

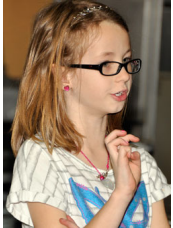
Special curriculum is used for Daisies, kindergarten and first grade; Brownies, grades 2-3; Juniors, grades 4-5; Cadettes, grades 6-8; Seniors, grades 9-10; and Ambassadors, grades 11-12.

This year they'll also be going through curriculum activities based on the 100th anniversary.

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Activities give the girls experience in science and technology, business and economic literacy, and outdoor and environmental awareness.



Brownie Taylor Trumper gets ready to hold up the Girl Scout sign and recite the Girl Scout promise.

—Enterprise photo

Some of the Brownie members said they would encourage other girls to join Girl Scouts because they get to learn about things, do experiments and sing songs, while Ana Castro said her favorite thing is the games.

Right now the girls are learning a lot of new things about water, which is definitely a highlight for Eva Kramer. The water experiments were one of Loren Jo Oberle's favorite activities.

A Bubble and Badge Bonanza Day and swimming pool party are some of the other highlights for Holyoke Girl Scouts.

Fall-season candy, nut and magazine sales help fund troop supplies and books for the girls and kick off the year.

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And, of course, the girls can't forget about cookie sales—a favorite of Brownies Serina Almeida and Taylor Trumper.

Girl Scout cookies have been around since 1917, and just about everybody has a favorite cookie and looks forward to the annual sales to satisfy their Girl Scout cookie cravings!



Cookies, cookies and more cookies! Eva Kramer, Bria Thomas and Charlotte Kramer hold up the Girl Scout sign while posing in front of the mountain of cookie boxes ready for individual sales. Cookie sales began Jan. 22 and will last until March 4. —Enterprise photo

Do-Si-Dos, Dulce de Leche, Samoas, Tagalongs, Thank U Berry Munch, Thin Mints and Trefoils have grown in popularity over the years. Savannah Smiles is a new cookie this year, remembering the birthplace of Girl Scouts in Georgia 100 years ago.

When asked why they sell cookies, the Girl Scouts simply replied, “So people can eat them and love them!”

Besides the funds raised from cookie sales, girls are also developing skills like goal-setting, decision-making, money management, people skills and business ethics.

“They’re little business ladies,” said Krueger, adding that the girls are learning at a young age

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how to take rejection, build character and think about others.

They also emphasize learning about safety and important skills like making change.

Cookie sales started Jan. 22 and will last until March 4. Leaders helped the girls use the prize chart to pick a realistic goal for their cookie sales. They set both individual and troop goals.

Not only can girls earn prizes, they can also earn money for their troop which is put toward supplies, uniforms, books and patches as well as a fun party to reward the girls for great cookie sales. Money also goes toward service projects.

A change for this year is that the cookies are available the same time the order is taken, so now customers can instantly satisfy that annual Girl Scout cookie craving!

Local booth sales begin Feb. 11 with a plan to sell cookies at HHS basketball games, Holyoke Marketplace and Viaero.

As the largest girl-led business in the country, Girl Scout cookie sales generate \$700 million nationwide each year.

Girls earn \$0.60 for their local troops from each \$3.50 box.

Instead of hoarding all the cookies for themselves, customers can also choose to purchase a box of cookies for the Girl Scout Hometown Heroes program. In Holyoke, these cookie boxes will be put into care packages and sent to local military people through the Holyoke Chamber of Commerce.

Girl Scout camps are other incentives for cookie sales, as money can be designated to offset

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some camp fees.



Brownie girls recite the Girl Scout Promise and Law at their meeting Thursday, Jan. 26. Pictured from left are Ana Castro, Serina Almeida, Charlotte Kramer (hidden), Taylor Trumper, leader Ravon Krueger, Loren Jo Oberle and Eva Kramer. —Enterprise photo

Krueger said there are resident camps with girls from all over the state, but the Holyoke troop prefers to rent out a Girl Scout camp for their service unit, which just includes Holyoke, Haxtun and Julesburg.

In recent years they have gone to a Girl Scout camp called Magic Sky Ranch near Red Feather Lakes in the Poudre Canyon.

Last year almost 20 Holyoke girls attended the three-day, two-night camp, with the older girls being the most excited about it, said Krueger.

Since they rented the ranch, the local troops could plan all their own activities. Glowtastic was the 2011 theme with glow-in-the-dark everything! Girls had a blast painting T-shirts and other items with special glow-in-the-dark paint.

Whether they are camping, selling cookies or doing experiments, there's no doubt Girl Scouts is having a deep, positive impact on girls today and will continue to impact those girls through

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adulthood.

Over 50 million American women are Girl Scout alumnae, including millions of business owners as well as senators, representatives and others in important political and business roles.

Krueger said they are always looking for adult volunteers to help with regular Girl Scout meetings. Both girls and volunteers can register at any point during the year. Anyone interested or those with questions should call Krueger at 970-520-9182.

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