



The Girl Scout Advantage: FAQs

Overview

In October of 2017, Boy Scouts of America (BSA) announced it would open its Cub Scouts program to girls in 2018, with programs for older girls expected to be available in 2019.

For more than a century, Girl Scouts has delivered unparalleled experiences backed by [proven research](#) that invite girls to discover their passions, develop leadership and people skills, explore their worlds, and embark on new adventures. Adult mentors and strong female role models show girls they can be anything they want to be.

The purpose of this FAQ is to empower Girl Scout members, volunteers, and supporters to speak with one voice in responding to questions they may receive in the field.

If you have additional questions this FAQ does not answer, please contact Communications Director Elizabeth Fairchild, efairchild@girlscoutsoc.org.

Q: What is GSOC's official response to BSA's announcement?

A: We are disappointed that Boy Scouts of America chose to open its program to girls in violation of its charter, rather than focus on the 90% of U.S. boys not currently served by Boy Scouts. We believe strongly in the importance of the safe, all-girl, girl-led, and girl-friendly environment that Girl Scouts provides. Moreover, we are confident that our girl-centered program provides the best opportunity for all girls to thrive and become Go-Getters, Innovators, Risk-Takers, and Leaders (G.I.R.L.)™. Girl Scouts is the *only* organization with over 100 years of experience, backed by [proven research](#), on how to help girls succeed.

Recently retired Girl Scouts of Orange County CEO Nancy Nygren published a letter to all GSOC members and supporters on October 12, 2017, which you can read [here](#). We also encourage you to read Girl Scouts of the USA CEO Sylvia Acevedo's Op-ed, "[Girls are stars in Girl Scouts. They'd be supporting players in Boy Scouts.](#)" published in USA Today on October 24, 2017.

Q: What is the timeline for Boy Scouts recruiting girls?

A: According to Boy Scouts of America, starting in 2018, families can choose to sign up their sons and daughters for Cub Scouts, and girls and boys will receive the same Cub Scout program. To our knowledge, the program has not been adapted for girls. Expected to be announced in 2018 and projected to be available in 2019, the organization will also deliver a



program to older girls that will enable them to earn the Eagle Scout rank using the same Boy Scout curriculum.

Q: What does Boy Scouts' decision to open its membership to girls mean for Girl Scouts?

A: Though our movement faces new competition, Girl Scouts, unlike any other organization, taps into girls' unique developmental needs with research-backed, proven programming that prepares girls for a lifetime of leadership. For over 100 years, we have been introducing girls to girl-led experiences, skills, and key connections no other organization offers. When girls choose Girl Scouts they learn to be leaders-- ready to overcome challenges and stand up, stand out, and stand tall. We are GIRL SCOUT STRONG!

We are proud of Girl Scouts' role in our country's history and are embracing and amplifying our impact. Between the power of our members and our proven Girl Scout Leadership Experience, there's no challenge our girls can't overcome, no goal they can't reach. We have never been better prepared to equip the next generation of female leaders with the skills they need to live their best lives.

Q: How can I Take Action to support Girl Scouts?

A: Our volunteers, parents, Girl Scouts, and Girl Scout supporters are the lifeblood of our organization. We need you to share the value of Girl Scouts, through your stories and experiences, with your family, friends, and community. Tell others what you or your girl have gained through the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and why Girl Scouts matters to you. On social media, share content, such as news articles and valuable blog posts that promote the importance and impact of Girl Scouting.

Follow [GSOC](#) and [GSUSA](#) on Facebook, and share your Girl Scout story using #becauseofGirlScouts. Be sure to tag @GirlScoutsOC.

Q: Is Girl Scouts planning to open its program to boys?

A: No. Girl Scouts has always been, and will continue to be, exclusively for girls. Our all-girl, girl-led, and girl-friendly program provides the best opportunities for girls to learn and thrive.

Q: Why is the single-gender environment considered a "safe space" for girls?

A: Not all girls have access to single-gender environments in other parts of their lives. Girl Scouts' single-gender program offers girls the opportunity to try new things, learn from mistakes, and achieve success in areas they might not be comfortable experiencing in the presence of boys. It is important and beneficial for girls to have opportunities to lead, speak up, and take risks in a supportive all-girl environment where they feel comfortable being themselves.



No matter how the Boy Scouts try to structure their programming to include girls, the fact is in Girl Scouts, girls have always been the stars. **Our program doesn't just include girls, it was developed specifically FOR girls.**

Q: Why don't the two organizations join forces?

A: Girl Scouts of Orange County has a long history of collaborating with our local Boy Scout council through opportunities such as Scouting for Food (where Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts have collected over 5 million pounds of food since 1988) and [One Billion Acts of Kindness](#).

Additionally, our Vietnamese troop model includes Girl Scout troops and Boy Scout troops, which come together for shared activities such as hiking and camping, but separate for Girl Scout and Boy Scout program. The two organizations, however, remain separate. At Girl Scouts, we are strong believers in the benefits of offering girls opportunities to learn and thrive in a single-gender environment. This safe space offered by Girl Scouts fosters collaboration instead of competition and promotes support among girls, enabling them to stretch beyond their limits and transfer valuable knowledge and skills to any environment, both now and in the future.

Q: Is there research supporting Girl Scouts as a valuable scouting experience for girls?

A: Yes! Our programs are research- and evidence-based. From this research, we know that Girl Scouts excel in important aspects of life. A report published by the Girl Scout Research Institute this past summer, [The Girl Scout Impact Study](#), reveals that participating in Girl Scouts helps girls develop key leadership skills they need to be successful in life. Compared to their peers, Girl Scouts are more likely than non-Girl Scouts to be leaders because they:

- ✓ Have confidence in themselves and their abilities (80 percent vs. 68 percent)
- ✓ Act ethically and responsibly, and show concern for others (75 percent vs. 59 percent)
- ✓ Seek challenges and learn from setbacks (62 percent vs. 42 percent)
- ✓ Develop and maintain healthy relationships (60 percent vs. 43 percent)
- ✓ Identify and solve problems in their communities (57 percent vs. 28 percent)
- ✓ Take an active role in decision making (80 percent vs. 51 percent)

Q: Does Girl Scouts have an award equivalent to the Eagle Scout?

A: Yes! The Girl Scout Gold Award, the highest honor a Girl Scout can earn, has been recognizing the efforts of women to change the world for over 100 years. Approximately six percent of Girl Scouts reach this pinnacle of achievement during their Girl Scout years. In Orange County, approximately 100 Girl Scouts earn the Girl Scout Gold Award each year. To earn this prestigious award, girls typically spend one to two years on their Gold Award project, during which time they tackle a local or global community issue (such as poverty, illiteracy, or the environment) that they are passionate about and create long-term sustainable change.



Q: Who are the National Young Women of Distinction?

Each year Girl Scouts selects 10 Girl Scouts, from an elite group of Gold Award recipients across the nation, as its prestigious National Young Women of Distinction. Girl Scouts of Orange County is proud to have two recent National Young Women of Distinction: 2017 recipient [Sharleen Loh](#), whose project STEMup4Youth has reached more than 5,000 underserved Orange County youth with hands-on STEM experiences, and 2015 recipient [Liza Villanueva](#), who established mobile learning centers for children in the Philippines.

Q: Why do Boy Scouts get to do more high adventure activities, some of which Girl Scouts can't do?

A: Actually, that is a myth. Girl Scout programming offers many identical or comparable outdoor and high adventure opportunities. From taking aim at archery, to outdoor survival, to exploring the scenic Idyllwild Mountains at Girl Scouts of Orange County's Camp Scherman, Girl Scouts provides many opportunities for girls to take risks in high adventure situations. There are few activities Boy Scouts permits that Girl Scouts does not (primarily firearm usage). The safety of our members is paramount. Girl Scouts of Orange County follows [GSUSA's Safety Activity Checkpoints](#), as well as our own risk management plans to review activities deemed high risk.

Q: I like that Boy Scouts get outdoors. What is Girl Scouts doing to get girls outdoors?

A: Outdoors is one of Girl Scouts' four high focus program areas. Activities such as hiking, camping, canoeing, and archery all offer girls opportunities to have exciting, girl-led outdoor adventures while they learn important skills and valuable life lessons, like self-reliance, leadership, and perseverance. In fact, 75 percent of girls say that Girl Scouts gave them the opportunity to build skills or try new outdoor activities. This year Girl Scouts introduced [23 new STEM and Outdoor Journeys and badges](#) for girls at all levels (from Daisy to Ambassador) that are designed to get girls outside.

Q: Boy Scouts' model of serving both boys and girls seems more convenient for busy families. Do you agree?

A: Full details have not been shared about how Boy Scouts is going to provide a convenient family experience that accommodates both boys and girls. While outwardly, it may seem more convenient, our understanding is that outside of the monthly pack meetings, boy dens and girl dens will still meet separately, likely at different times, locations, and frequencies.

Girl Scouts has introduced several new tools and strategies that have made Girl Scouts more convenient for even the busiest families. We encourage you to explore Girl Scouts for your family. We are confident you will find Girl Scouts the best place for your girl to explore her full potential in a girl-led, girl-focused environment with programming designed specifically for girls.



Q: What is the difference between being a Girl Scout Troop Leader and being a Boy Scout Leader?

A: Both Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts pair adult mentors with youth in leadership development programs that focus on character development, life skills, and service to the community. While Boy Scouts' model focuses on individual and personal development through progression of traditional military style ranks, leadership skills are baked into Girl Scouts' progression. In Girl Scouts, troop leaders guide girls in developing the courage, confidence, and character to empower themselves for a lifetime of leadership and drive sustainable solutions to causes they care deeply about.

Boy Scouts is known for its outdoor education program. Girl Scouts' program embraces four distinct program pillars – Outdoors, STEM, Entrepreneurship, and Life Skills. Girl Scout troop leaders have the opportunity to introduce girls to experiences in areas where they traditionally have not had equal access (such as STEM) and watch as they discover the greatness inside.

Where Boy Scouts' Cub Scout program is primarily parent-led through age 10, a Girl Scout troop leader's role is to support girls in leading their own adventure from the very beginning. Even our youngest Kindergarten Daisies come up with their own ideas, build teams, and experience great pride in making a positive impact. Girl Scout Troop Leaders work with girls to make decisions about badges, Journeys, and troop activities-- and have access to robust training and resources (i.e. the Volunteer Toolkit, Level Essentials) to support volunteers every step of the way. Girl Scouts of Orange County also has 37 local Girl Scouts volunteer groups, called Service Units, which provide support and offer events for troops in their area.

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