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**Girl Scouting builds girls
of courage, confidence,
and character, who make
the world a better place.**



Annual Girl Scout Cookie Program Empowers Girls with Entrepreneurial Spirit and Valuable Life Skills

Annual Activity is Much More Than a Tasty Tradition

(CHICAGO, IL) – It started in 1917 as a simple way for a group of Girl Scouts in Oklahoma to finance their local activities. More than 90 years later, hundreds of thousands of girls ages 5-17 engage in what has become one of the nation's premier financial literacy and entrepreneurship programs.

For generations of girls, the Girl Scout Cookie® Program has fostered a sense of personal and collective empowerment. It gives girls of all ages the opportunity to practice basic skills they will use throughout their lives, including money management and goal-setting. Participation ultimately furthers the Girl Scout Mission which is to build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

“Through this important annual activity, girls learn to set goals, develop action plans to reach those goals, work together as a team and cultivate a sense of business ethics. Additionally, they build confidence by developing public speaking and interpersonal communication skills. Girls acquire knowledge in money management, marketing and customer service at levels that are unmatched in other organizations,” said Maria Wynne, CEO of Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana.

Girl Scouts from all 245 communities that are part of the Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana council will accept pre-orders for Girl Scout Cookies Jan. 9 – 23, 2011, and will be offering cookies for immediate purchase during booth sales Feb. 18 – March 20, 2011. Customers will be able to select from eight varieties: Thank U Berry Munch, Samoas, Thin Mints, Trefoils, Tagalongs, Do-si-does, Lemon Chalet Cremes, and Dulce de Leche.

“It's not unusual for me to talk to women in leadership positions who proudly admit they had their first real-world experience in business when they sold Girl Scout Cookies. That tells me we're providing valuable experiences that will enable girls to fill all important leadership roles in the future,” added Wynne.

Profits from the sale of each \$4 box of cookies help the council recruit and train new volunteers; update experienced volunteers; offer council-wide program events and outdoor experiences; maintain council properties; pay for printed materials and postage; provide support for nearly 95,000 girls; and offer financial assistance to girls from economically disadvantaged areas. All profits are used locally.

A portion of the proceeds also goes directly to the troop level where girls decide how to spend it, thus further encouraging goal-setting and leadership abilities. Many local Girl Scouts also participate in the Gift of Caring program, a service project in which troops decide which organization in their community they would like to help and then ask customers to purchase and donate boxes of cookies that the troop will deliver to the organization.

About Girl Scouts

Founded in 1912, Girl Scouts of the USA is the preeminent leadership development organization for girls with 3.4 million girl and adult members worldwide. Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana impacts the lives of nearly 86,000 girls and 23,000 adult members in 245 communities in six Illinois counties (Cook, DuPage, Grundy, Kankakee, Lake, and Will) and four Indiana counties (Jasper, Lake, Newton, and Porter). For more information, visit www.girlscoutsgcnwi.org.

