



April 2026 Council Updates

girlscouts 
of greater chicago
and northwest
indiana

Announcements



Badge Boost of the Month

Every month, **Badge Boost** highlights a training designed to give you tools and ideas to make troop life more meaningful.

This month's Boost features our new **430 Overnight Excursion Training**, (which replaces 430 Cabin Camping).

This training empowers leaders to plan and lead safe, fun, and memorable overnight adventures with their girls—whether at camp, hotels, or other approved sites.

This Month's Badge Boost is Here



Head to the gsLearn library and search

430 Overnight Excursion Training

and get ready to bring your troop's adventures to the next level—overnight!



Girl Scouts *Give Blood*

Double your impact.
Save a life & support
your council.

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 **versiti**
Blood Center of Illinois

Every blood donation helps save lives.

Join Versiti Blood Center of Illinois for an upcoming blood drive through the month of April and help support patients in need.

As a thank you on Thursdays in April, blood donors will receive a complimentary box of cookies from Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana (while supplies last).

For every blood donation made, our council will receive \$10.

(Make sure to use code GCNWI in the notes when making your appointment so our council gets credit!)

Schedule your appointment today and make a difference donateblood.versiti.org

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, September 26, 2026

Tinley Park Convention Center, 18451 Convention Center Dr, Tinley Park, IL 60477



GROWING TOGETHER
A Volunteer Event
2026

An event resource guide will be out by mid-April.
Registration for the event will open on May 1.

Prepping for Spring: Early Renewal & AFRs



Hey troop leaders!
Troop Annual
Finance Reports
are due by
July 30!

Wednesday, May 6, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, May 12, 12:00 p.m.
Saturday, May 16, 10:00 a.m.
Monday, May 18, 10:00 a.m.
Thursday, May 28, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, June 2, 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, June 10, 12:00 p.m.
Saturday, June 13, 10:00 a.m.
Monday, June 15, 10:00 a.m.
Thursday, June 25, 7:00 p.m.
Monday, July 27, 7:00 p.m.

Unsure how to submit your report? Need some tips and tricks?
Join us at an Annual Finance Report Office Hour.

Sign up for one of these office hours
at bit.ly/AFROfficeHours2026

Annual Financial Report (AFR)

- Now is a great time to start preparing for **AFRs**, which are due by **July 30**.
- You can find training in **gsLearn** under the **430: Managing Troop Finances** course.
- **Pro tip:** Update your Detailed Report **monthly** to stay on top of your finances and avoid the summer rush!
- The **Detailed Report** is located under the **Additional References** tab.



Questions? Email customer care@girlscoutsgcnwi.org

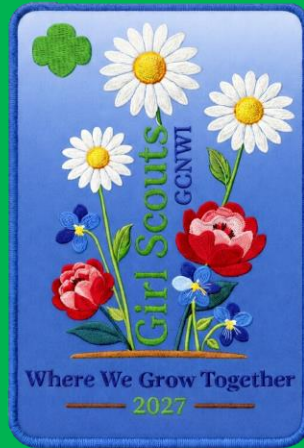
This Years Giveaways:



Commemorative Bucket hat



2027 Renewal Patch



Start Planning Your Troop Renewal!

Get ready for another unforgettable year of Girl Scouts! Renew your troop's membership and continue nurturing the confidence, leadership, and friendships that help your girls—and your community—thrive.

Renew **80% of your troop between April 1 and May 31, 2026**, and your troop will earn an exciting giveaway as a reward for your commitment. Let's keep the momentum growing!

**Bucket hat comes in all white – above is an example of how your troop can decorate their hats.*

Product Program

DON'T FORGET!

- ✓ Download your Digital Cookie Reports — Deadline: May 28
- ✓ Also remind parents to save their contact list now!

It'll be a lifesaver when fall product and the cookie season roll back around.

After May 28, Digital Cookie closes and there will be no access to this info — not even for Product Staff.

Save it now, thank yourself later! 🧡



Thank YOU, Cookie Volunteers!



♥ For showing up.

♥ For working hard.

♥ For making it fun.

♥ Thank you...from the bottom of our
cookie-filled hearts!

Girl Experience Highlights

Explore more with the Girl Experience Guide!

To view the Girl Experience Guide,
scan the QR code or visit
girlscout.info/GirlExperienceGuide



Flip through the
Girl Experience
Guide to explore
engaging, hands-
on experiences for
Girl Scouts!



Life Skills



Community Service



Financial Literacy



Highest Awards



S.T.E.M.



Trip and Travel

What will she
discover?



Lead with Confidence

Saturday, May 2

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Greene Wood Gathering Place

girlscout.info/LeadAB



Graduating Senior Ceremony

Saturday, May 30

1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Hilton Oak Lawn

girlscout.info/awards



Highest Awards Picnic

Sunday, July 12

3:00 - 5:30 p.m.

Joliet Gathering Place

girlscout.info/Picnic



Chicago Big Bus Tour & Scavenger Hunt

Saturday, May 2, 11:30 a.m.



Kalahari Resorts Troop and Family Getaway

June 5 – 7

(One or two night options available)



Girl Scout Family Day Holiday World & Splashin' Safari

Saturday, August 29
(roundtrip transportation
provided)

<https://girlscout.info/travel>

Questions? Contact GSTravel@GirlScoutsGCNWI.org



Ready, Set, Travel! Volunteer Travel Training



Designed to help you plan and lead safe, memorable trips, this training is your first step toward exciting Girl Scout travel opportunities.

Before planning any travel, complete **430 Ready, Set, Travel** training in the gsLearn system.

Log into gsLearn through your MyGS account, then scan the QR code or click the link below:



bit.ly/3UXYdNL

Questions? gstravel@girlscoutsgcnwi.org

Outdoor Experience Highlights



Outdoor Program Upcoming Events



Looking for an exciting, outdoor adventure? From learning new outdoor skills or simply roasting a s'more, Girl Scouts GCNWI has got you covered!



Go Green for Good
April 18-19, 2026
At Camp Juniper Knoll

Team up with new friends and old to make the world a greener, cleaner place—one courageous Girl Scout at a time!

Daisy Outdoor Extravaganza
Multiple sessions, locations,
and times available
April - August 2026

Come explore camp during an
afternoon designed just for
Girl Scout Daisies!
(Ages 4+ and Grades Pre-K - 1)



**Scan the QR code or
click [HERE](#) to register
for a variety of
year-round programs!**



Find
programs by
using the new
Search Bar!

Scan the QR code or
click [HERE](#)
to reserve a spot at
Camp Greene Wood
for your next troop
meeting!





More Outdoor Program



Get Outdoors Challenge

Spring: May 2, 2026 at Camp Greene Wood

Summer: June 27, 2026 at the Joliet GP



Complete seasonal challenges to earn the Outdoor Challenge Patch. Make lasting memories this season!

You and Me: Mother's Day

May 9-10, 2026

at Camp Butternut Springs
(Saturday-only option also available)

Spend quality bonding time with your Girl Scout in nature! Go on hikes, make crafts, and celebrate love at this special weekend event.



Campfire Cone Cookout

May 15, 2026 at the Joliet GP and the Vernon Hills GP

Join us around the campfire for the sweet celebration of Chocolate Chip Day! Are you ready to CHIP in and join in on the fun?



Scan the QR code or click [HERE](#) to register for a GCNWI Outdoor Experience!



[Click here to check out the Girl Experience Guide](#) for more outdoor programs and opportunities to explore nature



NOW HIRING: Summer Camp Staff

Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago & Northwest Indiana is hiring for summer camp staff at Camp Butternut Springs (Valparaiso, Indiana), Camp Greene Wood (Woodridge, Illinois), and Camp Juniper Knoll (East Troy, Wisconsin). A variety of jobs and internships are available at each camp. For more information and job applications, check out the link below!

Scan QR code or [click here](#) to visit our [Summer Camp Employment page](#)



Volunteer Experience



For Ambassador Girl Scouts

The Pinnacle Award honors Ambassador Girl Scouts (grades 11-12) who have demonstrated outstanding leadership through their Girl Scout experience.



To qualify for this GCNWI award, Girl Scout Ambassadors must document their experiences by earning at least seven leadership points, which can be achieved through a combination of Girl Scout and other extracurricular experiences.

**Applications for the 2026 Pinnacle Award
are open
January 1 – May 31, 2026**

For a full list of ways to earn leadership points and to apply visit: bit.ly/PinnacleGCNWI

Questions? Email Alaina at agreene@girlscoutsgcnwi.org

Do you know an amazing Volunteer?

Consider nominating them for a formal award!

Board Approved Recognition Awards

Nominations close
April 30, 2026!

Service Unit Approved Award deadlines are set by the Service Unit and are typically in the Spring.



Visit girlscoutsgcnwi.org/recognition

for more information,
including our Guide!

Where
Appreciation
Grows!

Volunteer
Appreciation
Guide

A guide recognizing Girl Scout volunteers in your life—including our Volunteer Appreciation calendar and an overview of our Volunteer Recognitions.

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Girl Scout Hero

Briana A.
Jenna C.
Paladin



Do you know an amazing Community Partner who supports Girl Scouting?

Did you know we have two awards to recognize these amazing supporters?

The Girl Scout Enthusiast Award honors community partners at the local (troop or service unit) level.

The Girl Scout Hero Award honors community partners at the council or movement level.

Nominations are accepted year-round.

Learn more and nominate someone today by visiting

www.girlscoutsgcnwi.org/recognition



Recognition FAQs

Are there only volunteer awards?

No, we also have awards for Community Partners, Staff and Service Units. A full description of all awards is available in our guide.

Who can submit a nomination?

For most awards, anyone can submit a nomination (except for family of the nominee)!

How do I learn more?

Visit www.girlscoutsgcnwi.org/recognition for more info, including to find a copy of the new Volunteer Appreciation Guide.

Who do I contact with questions?
Email Alaina at
adultrecognition@girlscoutsgcnwi.org



Customer Care and Retail



www.girlscout.info/shopsaturdays

March - May

Burbank, Greene Wood, Joliet,
Schererville & Vernon Hills

March 21

April 18

April 25 - Joliet Only

May 16

Shops open 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Schererville open 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Volunteer Appreciation Month!



Spend \$50,
Get denim tote
for only \$15!

Retail value, \$25!
No purchasing exclusions.
One per transaction.



www.girlscout.info/gcnwishoppromotions

Vernon Hills Build-A-Bear Workshop



Schererville Build-A-Bear Workshop



Now offering parties!





GCNWI Bridging Kits

Daisy through Ambassador!



Congratulations!

This certifies that _____

has bridged from Girl Scout **Daisy** to Girl Scout **Brownie**

Troop Leader

Renee K. Wright
CEO, Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana

Date: _____ Troop #: _____

www.girlscout.info/gcnwibridgingkits

Belonging and Culture

Social Inclusion Experiences 2026

Register today at
girlscout.info/socialinclusion

Social Inclusion Experiences are coming
in March, April, and May

Experiences will include:

- Exploring Culture through Food
- Arts, Music, & Expression
- Local Cultural & Historical Museum Tours

Questions?

Contact: Veronica Aguiñaga, Director of Belonging and Culture
vaguinaga@Girlscoutsgcnwi.org



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Girl Scout Democratic Process



GIRL SCOUTS UNITE

July 23–25, 2026 | Washington, DC



1 Day Unite Tickets
are now available!



Every three years, Girl Scouts from across the Movement gather for the Girl Scout National Council Session.

YOU can join them!

Want to learn more?

Visit the
[GSUSA Convention Page](#)

Join the [GSUSA Convention Insider Email List](#) for the latest updates.

Troop and Volunteer Resources

Invite a Friend to Join the Fun!

Did you know that
you can get fun patch when you
invite a friend to join Girl Scouts?

All new Girl Scouts in grades K-12 who
refer a friend to join Girl Scouts are
eligible to receive:

- A lily pad friend patch...and
- One baby frog patch for every friend
you bring!

[Learn more here](#)



There is always room for MORE Girl Scouts!

- Encourage troops to make sure all their spots are filled
- Creating new troops in your communities

To learn more about the areas of opportunity in your community, contact your Community Specialist or email us at customercare@girlscoutsgcnwi.org

If you're a returning volunteer recruiting girls in your community, visit GirlScoutsGCNWI.org/recruitment to access flyers and other recruitment materials.





Use the **Troop Year Planner**
to plan an amazing Girl Scout year!

Visit bit.ly/TroopYearPlan to learn more





Council programs, camp, outdoor programs, and leadership training:

<https://girlscout.info/gcnwiregistration>

How to use your Cookie Dough voucher:

Use this link <https://girlscout.info/useCDandNB> to request that Cookie Dough be applied to your account on our registration site. Follow the instructions on the form and we will apply the requested amount towards your registration.

If you have any questions, contact
customercare@girlscoutsgcnwi.org

**Using Cookie Dough, Nutty Bucks, or a Gift Card
for council programs, camp, outdoor programs, and leadership training,
on our registration site.**

Are you looking for a no-cost meeting space for your Service Unit or troop?

Look no further.
You can reserve space at one of our Gathering Places.



Scan the QR code or
[click here to book meeting space](https://fs24.formsite.com/gsgcnwi2/jgrefeuz7u/index)
fs24.formsite.com/gsgcnwi2/jgrefeuz7u/index



Need Help?!

Whether you need help with a parent meeting or recruiting to fill your troop, we are here to help.

Contact Girl Scouts by phone or email to get connected to someone who can assist you!

Phone:

855-456-8347

Email:

CustomerCare@girlscoutsgcnwi.org