



# GROWING TOGETHER

## A Volunteer Event

### 2026

This guide will help you plan your day  
at our Growing Together event on  
**Saturday, September 26, 2026,**  
at the Tinley Park Convention Center.

**girlscouts**   
of greater chicago  
and northwest  
indiana

# All About Growing Together



## WHO and WHAT:

Our Growing Together event is part kickoff for the new Girl Scout year, part expo, part recognition, and ALL volunteer appreciation!

We'll have volunteer workshops, a volunteer appreciation celebration, our adult recognition ceremony, volunteer resource stations, volunteer lounge areas, our retail shop, and so much more!

Your day includes a fully plated breakfast, a robust market-style lunch, and our volunteer appreciation dessert buffet.

Whether you're a new leader, an experienced leader, a troop volunteer, a service unit team member, a product program volunteer, a council trainer, historian, or aspire to be more involved, this event will have something for YOU!

This event is open to any registered Girl Scout adult.



## WHEN and WHERE:

Growing Together will be **Saturday, September 26, 2026**, at the Tinley Park Convention Center, located at 18451 Convention Center Dr, Tinley Park, IL 60477. Check-in will begin at 8:00 AM at the South Entrance of the building. The Volunteer Appreciation Celebration will end at 6:00 PM.



## WHY REGISTER:

- To create a space where you can connect with other volunteers, staff, and other Girl Scout members.
- To learn through a variety of enriching sessions and enhance your volunteer knowledge to be your most amazing self.
- To get excited, motivated, energized, and prepared for the new Girl Scout year.
- To have fun together and share the Girl Scout spirit!



## HOW TO REGISTER:

Registration for Growing Together will open May 1, 2026.

**Early Bird Pricing of \$50 will be available until July 31, 2026.**

Your registration includes event materials, swag bag, personalized event patch (see page 3), plated breakfast, market-style lunch, dessert buffet, your choice of two breakout sessions, and more fun than one day can actually hold!

*\*Regular pricing of \$65 for Growing Together will start on August 1, 2026.*

**All adult members who renew their Girl Scout membership before July 31, 2026, will receive a code to save \$10 off their Growing Together registration.**

**PLUS... your troop or service unit funds can be used in part or in whole to pay for Growing Together!**



# Our Theme

Growing Together is a celebration of everything we love about a whole year of volunteer events with a fresh twist! Since YOU are the center of this event, we are customizing the event patches to reflect YOU. Every volunteer who registers by September 12, 2026, will receive an event patch with their name. To add even more customized fun to this event, we hope that you'll get involved in one or more of the following ways:

- Dress to impress. Represent your favorite era of Girl Scouts or show us your most creative, future-forward style. Part of a team? Show off your Girl Scout squad spirit!
- Share pictures and posts from the event—don't forget to use **#gcnwiflowing** in your post.
- Bring SWAPS to trade throughout the day. SWAPS (Special Whatchamacallits Affectionately Pinned Somewhere) are inspired by Girl Scout history. This beloved Girl Scout tradition is all about exchanging small, handmade keepsakes that celebrate who you are! We're expecting about 500 attendees. Make as many or as few as you'd like. Flowers and gardening are perfect themes for your Growing Together event SWAPS!

Get ready to celebrate who we are and all that we can achieve when we work together!



## Council Swag

*Council Swag available for pre-order when you register!*

First look exclusively at volunteer event!



# Event Schedule

This event schedule is subject to change as we finalize the details for the day. An adjusted event schedule will be shared with you when you check in for the event.



## **7:45 – 8:45 AM | Registration & Networking**

Music, photo booth, and early shopping in the Expo Marketplace.



## **9:00 – 10:15 AM | Welcome, Breakfast, & Panel Discussion**

- ◀ 9:00 AM: Welcome: Emcee welcome and color guard presentation. Remarks from Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana CEO Nancy Wright and an overview of the day.
- ◀ 9:20 AM: Plated breakfast served
- ◀ 9:45 AM: Panel discussion



## **10:25 – 11:25 AM | Morning Workshop Session *(see Workshops on the next page)***

You'll have your choice of workshops when you register for the event.



## **11:35 AM – 12:25 PM | Marketplace & Connection Time**

Shop, network, and check out our volunteer resource stations and lounges.



## **12:35 – 1:50 PM | Lunch & Networking Session**

Market-style lunch with roundtable conversation prompts. Lunch will be open seating.



## **2:00 – 3:00 PM | Afternoon Workshop Session *(see Workshops on the next page)***

You'll have your choice of workshops when you register for the event.



## **3:10 – 4:00 PM | Shopping, Fun, & Connection**

Shop, network, and check out our volunteer resource stations and lounges.



## **4:00 – 6:00 PM | Sweet Celebration: Our Appreciation Reception**

Join us as we end the day with a sweet celebration of everyone who makes Girl Scouting possible. Enjoy dessert and refreshments while we recognize those receiving Girl Scout awards and celebrate the collective impact of everyone who makes a difference every day!



# Workshops

These workshops will be offered twice during the event, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. Please use this worksheet to rank sessions in order of preference. You'll be asked for your workshop preferences when you register for the event. Requests will be filled on a first-come, first-serve basis.

## **The Power of One Caring Adult (Showing Up When It's Hard: Being a Trusted Adult)**

Youth are watching how adults respond because they learn safety from our steadiness. This workshop will focus on how to hold space for others' fear and grief without burning out. We'll explore what makes an adult "trusted," practice listening without fixing, and outline what boundary mapping looks like.

## **Listening to Girls Today, Responding with Care: Turning Insight into Action**

Using data from the recent Indiana Girl Report, we'll discuss what scenarios look like in girls' actual lives and what girls might feel as a result - and what we can all do differently to support them.

## **Creating Emotional Safety and Belonging for Every Girl**

Learn what "belonging" looks like from the perspective on girls. During this workshop, we'll discuss inclusive practices for girls navigating their identity, their family dynamics, or being excluded.

## **You Matter Too: Managing (Preventing) Compassion Fatigue**

Volunteers play a powerful role in shaping spaces where girls feel safe, confident, and valued. That impact is strongest when volunteers feel supported and connected themselves. This workshop centers the idea that caring for others and caring for yourself go hand in hand. We will explore simple, realistic ways to stay energized, present, and aligned with purpose while leading and supporting girls.

## **How Artificial Intelligence (AI) Can Support Your Girl Scout Leadership**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) isn't here to replace volunteers; it's here to support them. In this session, we'll explore the basics of AI - how it works and where it gets its information. We'll also offer some practical, ethical, and mission-aligned ways AI tools can help volunteers design inclusive, accessible troop meetings to respond to the diverse needs of girls - and to save you time in planning so you can focus more on connection with your Girl Scouts.

## **Confidently Supporting Girls with Disabilities in Your Troop**

Every girl deserves a space where she feels capable, included, and valued for who she is. This workshop will help volunteers build confidence and practical tools to support girls with visible and invisible disabilities. Topics of conversation will include: understanding different types of disabilities (physical, developmental, sensory, learning, emotional/behavioral), solutions for creating flexible, accessible troop experiences without lowering expectations or singling out Girl Scouts - all based on simple, realistic accommodations that volunteers can implement in their meeting spaces.



# Sweet Celebration: Our Appreciation Reception

---

Let's celebrate Girl Scouts and everyone who makes Girl Scouting possible. This closing reception will be full of sweet moments, from our dessert buffet to our award ceremony, you won't want to miss the fun!

---

Every year, we recognize adult members with the **Years of Service Pin**. This pin is presented in 5-year increments (5 years, 10 years, 15 years, etc.) based on a registered adult's years of service (not including years as a girl member). If the 2025-2026 membership year was a milestone year for you and you would like to be presented with your pin at the reception, please be sure to indicate that you're an awardee when registering!



If you, or another volunteer that you know, have forgotten to indicate that you're an awardee on your registration, please reach out to **customer@girlscoutsgcnwi.org** to amend your registration for the event.

Our awards ceremony will also include volunteer recognitions, special thanks to community members and organizations who support us, and our Ambassador Girl Scout Pinnacle Award recipients! To learn more about our recognitions, scan the QR code or visit **girlscout.info/3Id1ItD**.



# FAQ's



## Do I need to register in advance?

Yes, advance registration helps us plan meals, workshop room assignments, materials, and allows us to create a customized event patch for you! While we may have space for walk-ins, we can't guarantee food accommodations, workshop preferences, or a patch for the event.



## How do workshops and sessions work?

See our workshop options in this guide. Use the list to select your preferred sessions when you register for the event. All workshops will be offered in both morning and afternoon sessions. We'll fill requests in order of registration, prioritizing your top choices first, but we may need to assign you to other sessions if your top sessions are full.



## Do I have to attend the full day?

The event includes an expo-style portion of the day and the volunteer celebration at the end of the day. We'll be offering two tickets: one for the full day and one for just the volunteer celebration. While you aren't required to stay for the volunteer celebration, there's no discount to attend just the first part of the day.



## Is parking available?

Yes, the Tinley Park Convention Center has ample free parking for attendees.



## What should I wear?

Girl Scout uniforms or swag are always appropriate, but comfort should be a priority. Moving through the convention center will mean lots of steps, so comfortable shoes are recommended.



## What should I bring?

We recommend:

- ▶ A notebook and pen or a digital notepad.
- ▶ A reusable water bottle.
- ▶ SWAPS (see "Our Theme" for more information).
- ▶ Your enthusiasm and willingness to share!



## Is the venue accessible?

Yes, the venue is fully accessible. If you need accommodations, please let us know during registration so we can plan accordingly.



## Can I bring children?

This event is for adult volunteers and those receiving awards for supporting Girl Scouts. If you have Ambassador Girl Scouts involved at the service unit level, the content is appropriate for them, but there won't be any activities for younger Girl Scouts.



## Are payment plans or financial assistance available for Growing Together?

Payment plans and financial assistance are available on a case-by-case basis upon request. Please email [gstraining@girlscoutsgcnwi.org](mailto:gstraining@girlscoutsgcnwi.org) for more information.



## Who can I contact with questions?

Please email [customercare@girlscoutsgcnwi.org](mailto:customercare@girlscoutsgcnwi.org) with questions about this event.





**girl scouts**   
of greater chicago  
and northwest  
indiana