



The Benefits of Being a Girl Scout Volunteer

More than just a ‘helpers’ high,’ science shows that volunteering is linked to many benefits! These include a sense of mattering, of purpose, and of full engagement with life—knowing that one’s activities are aligned with one’s deeply held values and ‘true self.’

Research also shows that volunteering provides opportunities to boost social well-being through social contribution, social acceptance (trust in others), and social connectedness.²

Such benefits are called *eudaimonic well-being*, a term coined by the Ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle to mean *human flourishing*.^{1,2,3,4,5} Recent research analyzing findings from dozens of scholarly studies shows that volunteering opportunities that combine informally helping others and volunteering with an organization—the type that typifies Girl Scout volunteers—**is linked to greater eudaimonic well-being**—and this link is especially strong for women and younger volunteers.¹

Through volunteering with Girl Scouts, troop leaders experience the following benefits^{6,7}

90%
feel they
make a
difference
in the lives of
girls.

83%
say they gain
a sense of
purpose
volunteering
with Girl
Scouts.

76%
make friends
through their
service as a
troop leader.

74%
become more
involved
in their
communities.

62%
feel energized
all or most of
the time they
volunteer as a
troop leader.

20%
gain career
or job
opportunities
through their
Girl Scout
volunteering.

Troop Leaders tell us—in their own words— what being a volunteer means to them.

It's making a difference and being a role model:

- *"I always strive to set an example for the girls that being yourself is a beautiful and amazing thing, and that doing the right thing is the coolest thing to do. I make sure to be the person who I wanted in my life for the girls in my troop. I haven't yet found a career that I believe is anywhere near as important as inspiring the next generation of young women. Girl Scouts gives me the opportunity to do what I think is most important in the world and makes my volunteer hours worth every minute. (Missouri)*
- *"A month after we did our First Aid badge, a Junior came in and described using the Heimlich maneuver (appropriately) on her younger sister. If there were any doubts about the value of what we do, that put an end to them." (North Carolina)*
- *"I feel like the girls look up to me in a way very different than how they see their parents. They've seen me finish law school, be late to a meeting because I was writing a paper, fail the bar, study for the bar again, and start my first full-time job." (California)*

It's creating community:

- *"Before Girl Scouts, I wanted to establish myself in some way in our community, as a leader and person that was a role model for girls. Girl Scouts provided me with that and so much more. I have loved getting to know the families in a new way and creating a little family and is always there to stand by each other. Watching the girls grow personally and as friends has been rewarding and keeps me going." (Pennsylvania)*
- *"Our meetings are a regular and wonderful chance to get together and be the best version of ourselves. To channel out stress and build each other up. Me and the girls together. Long term I want them to be resilient and not afraid - of being outside, or to make sales or try something new -all the great things, but really our time together is enough." (Washington D.C.)*

It's life changing:

- *"Being a troop leader helps me feel needed and important, something I don't always feel as a stay-at-home-mom!" (Texas)*
- *"I always wanted to volunteer within my community but couldn't find an opportunity that matched my schedule and skill set. Watching the girls in my troop grow and learn makes me more sure of my place in my community and in the world." (Massachusetts)*
- *"As a young adult without children of my own and a stressful job, Girl Scouts (meetings, events and the friendships built GS) has all helped me balance my life. I no longer spend all of my waking hours on the daunting parts of my job and instead, spend my time doing things that really impact the world." (Colorado)*



Being part of a movement means that small ways of giving back have a huge impact!

Our Girl Scout Volunteers don't just make a difference in the individual lives of girls, they also make a huge impact in their communities! *During just the first **3 months** of the COVID pandemic, our research found that troop leaders—and their troops—were giving back in enormous ways.¹*

27,375

girls and troop leaders engaged in COVID-related relief efforts and the collective impact is huge! This amounted to

350,000

cumulative hours of community service (an average of 13 hours per troop)

- ◆ **356,000** donation drives
- ◆ **20,000** organized community support efforts

And the impact is clear—collectively, this meant hundreds of thousands of care items:



612,000

cards or letters sent to COVID patients or healthcare workers



776,000

masks made/donated



267,000

meals donated or delivered



16,000

bottles of hand sanitizer created

¹ Troop Leader impact numbers computed based on GSVC troop leader reports of COVID-related service

For girls, the impact of volunteers is clear!

Research shows having a caring adult in their lives can buffer youth from negative influences and support their success. Our [past research](#) found that girls who have at least one adult in Girl Scouts who makes them feel valuable and helps them think about their future exhibit stronger leadership outcomes than girls who lack this support. And Girl Scouts are more likely to have such supportive adults than non-Girl Scouts.

What do girls and parents/caregivers say about their troop leaders?^{8,9}

91%

Girls say their leader **cares about them** as a person.

86%

Girls say their leader **makes them feel important.**

80%

Girls say their leader **helps them pursue their goals**

70%

Girls say their leader helps them **think about the future.**

■ *“My troop leader is not only a role model and major influence on my life, she is like a second mom. Girl Scouts has taught me that I can make a difference in the world and my voice matters. I have learned to become independent and that every decision I make affects the people around me.”* Cadette

■ *“I was most impacted by the strong women role models I was given through my troop leaders. They inspired me to persevere and see beyond the struggle that I was experiencing in the present to see the joy within the accomplishments. Whether it was learning to swim all the way to the end of the pool without a life vest for the first time, or dealing with family illness, my troop leaders showed me the merits in hard work, dedication, and perseverance.”* Ambassador

99%

Parents/caregivers say their girl's leader made their girl feel like **part of a group**

94%

Parents/caregivers say their girl's leader made their family feel like **part of a community**

The **Girl Scout Research Institute** conducts original research on girls' healthy development, well-being, and leadership. Learn more at www.girlscouts.org/research.

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- (6) 2019 Girl Scout Voices Count National Survey of Troop Leaders.
- (7) 2020 Girl Scout Voices Count National Survey of Troop Leaders.
- (8) 2020 Girl Scout Voices Count National Survey of Girls.
- (9) 2020 Girl Scout Voices Count National Survey of Parents.