

Communicating the “Girl Scout Difference” in your Community

May 3, 2018

Making the Case for Girl Scouts.

Dear Volunteers,

In light of the Boy Scouts of America announcing they will begin accepting female Cub Scouts starting June 11th, it is more important than ever that we assert our position of being the “Girl Experts”. In your day-to-day interactions with parents, members of the community and beyond, you will more than likely be asked what your thoughts are on BSA’s new recruitment strategy.

To enable our council to speak with one clear voice about the value of what we--the single best girl leadership development program in the world--offer and help you emphasize our position in the marketplace, Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council has provided you with the necessary resources here to do just that.

While we request that you forward any media inquiries you may receive from local news outlets regarding this topic to the council (contact: Meghan Smith, External Relations Manager, Meghan.Smith@bdgsc.org), we also understand that you may be asked questions about BSA’s recruitment of girls at events and in your day-to-day conversations about Girl Scouts. Please see the below sections to learn how to make the case for Girl Scouts in your communities.

Lastly, remember who we are. In situations like these, responses can range from graceful to hostile; we strive to always to uphold our Girl Scout Promise and Law.

Yours in Girl Scouting,

Beth Casey, CEO

Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council

Key Messages.

GSUSA has encouraged us, when discussing with media and out in the community, to “pivot away from Boy Scouts and **emphasize Girl Scouts’ efforts to prepare girls for a lifetime of leadership**, including our upcoming programmatic rollout, new initiatives at the council level, and our unparalleled expertise in girl-focused programming.”

Here’s what you can say to others:

- Girl Scouts is a 21st century experience for girls and remains the *best* leadership development organization designed to help them learn to be leaders in today’s world.

- No other organization is bringing together time-tested, research-backed methods with exciting, modern programming that speaks to today's girls and is designed to cater to the strengths of girls' leadership development.
- Girl Scouts is uniting the best of our legacy experiences—like outdoor adventure, camping, and our cookie program—with exciting, modern programs in STEM, computer science, computational thinking, and engineering to ensure we offer a truly one-of-a-kind experience for today's girls.
- At Girl Scouts, we are proud of our diverse and inclusive reach. Approximately 30 percent of our girls come from underserved and underrepresented communities, allowing Girl Scouts to serve as a pathway to a brighter future.
- We were disappointed with Boy Scouts' decision, not because there's a new competitor, but because this competitor can't meet today's girls in the modern world they live in.
- Boy Scouts lacks the girl programming, the expertise, and the insight to help girls develop the skills they need to be leaders in today's constantly changing, fast-paced world.
- Competitors come and go—but Girl Scouts focuses on moving forward at the pace of girls. We remain as committed and focused as ever before when it comes to serving today's girls in new, exciting, and future-focused ways, because the need for female leadership has never been greater.

The Girl Scout Difference.

If you are reading this, then you likely know that Girl Scouts and BSA are very different organizations, with very different programs. Both the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts care about building character and leadership. We go about it in different ways – and our Girl Scout way is based on research and over 100 years of experience about how to build confidence and leadership identity in girls.

Here are some key messages you can use when discussing the Girl Scout difference:

- What's the difference between Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts? Girl Scouts understands the vital connection between young girls' development and their future success, and we offer a leadership experience like no other.
- As the world's premier leadership development organization for girls, Girl Scouts welcomes girls of all backgrounds and interests who want to develop the courage, confidence, and character to make the world a better place.
- At Girl Scouts, everything we do is designed with and for today's girls so they can become tomorrow's leaders.
- No other organization is bringing together time-tested, research-backed methods with exciting, modern programming that speaks to today's girls and is designed to cater to the strengths of girls' leadership development.

- The single-gender environment offered by Girl Scouts creates an inclusive, safe space in which girls are free to explore their potential and take the lead without the distractions or pressures that can be found in a coed environment.
- The exciting, modern programming we offer meets the needs and interests of today's girls where they live—in both the outdoor and digital worlds of today—and helps them become the builders of tomorrow's world.
- The inclusive, girl-led, all-female environment of a Girl Scout troop creates a safe space in which girls can try new things, develop a range of skills, and take on leadership roles.
- Research shows that girls learn best in an all-girl, girl-led environment in which their specific needs are addressed and met.

Put simply, Girl Scouting works for today's girls. It's the best leadership experience for girls in the world because it's girl-led!

Should I still partner with Boy Scouts at the local level?

Whenever we consider a potential partner, we look at many different angles:

- *Does the partner share our goals of developing girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place?*
- *Does the partner create innovative, cutting-edge programming that meets modern girls where they already live?*
- *Does the partner have a history of expertise in serving girls?*
- *Is the partner a modern, 21st century organization willing to change to meet the needs of today's girls?*

When considering this potential partner, the truth is, the answer to all of those questions is “no.”

Here is an example many of you might find familiar, and how you can respond:

Question: We are still recruiting [with BSA] in areas together; should we stop doing this? We also have a combined community service project—a community food drive—scheduled for the fall. Additionally, we have a combined religious awards retreat planned for the spring 2018. So, any thoughts?

Answer: While some at BSA value their partnership with GS, unfortunately, given the current efforts of BSA leadership to recruit girls as Cub Scouts beginning in June, we recommend that you no longer recruit with them or share in community events together. We think this should be a peacemaking tone, yet one that is firm, given their leadership. We offer the following type of messaging:

Unfortunately, we cannot partner with you at this time. We have valued your 100-year history with us tremendously. Yet as long as your board and leadership have decided to serve girls

without working with us and in consideration of us, we must walk away from our community partnering.

From our lens, a healthy partnership is ideal, but until the BSA campaign reverses, our hands are tied.

In Conclusion...

Girl Scouts is **the best** organization in the country—and arguably the world—for girl leadership development. It is a dynamic organization with a long-term, agile growth strategy to provide girls with what they need more effectively than any other organization in a changing, competitive marketplace. Girl Scouts has been delivering the best in girl leadership and healthy development for over 100 years, and the organization taps expertise from the Girl Scout Research Institute to set its strategic direction.

Our focus has always been and always will be *girls*.