

## REGIONAL FORUM HIGHLIGHTS



GIRL SCOUTS HEART OF CENTRAL CALIFORNIA 3005 GOLD CANAL DRIVE RANCHO CORDOVA, CA 95670

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October 14, 2009 Main Office – Rancho Cordova  
October 15, 2009 Modesto

### Attendance:

Rancho Cordova: 51  
Modesto: 12

Catherine Conner, Board Chair, Robin Kren, Board Vice President, and Board Members Anita Rohn and Toni Rubin were in attendance at one or both of the meetings.

### Purpose and Format of Meeting

- These regional forums are a means of two-way communication which is part of the new governance structure adopted at the February 2009 annual meeting.
- The topics discussed at these forums were established by the survey conducted at the Representative Assembly Members training held in June 2009.
- Results from the topic discussions will be reviewed and forwarded to the appropriate body for consideration and/or action. For example, if a subject deals with governance, it will be forwarded to the Board Chair for consideration. Any subject that deals with operations will be forwarded to the CEO for consideration.

### Annual Meeting

- Annual meeting is scheduled for Saturday, February 6, 2010 at the CSU Alumni Association Center
- Representatives will receive information via email and some information will be posted on the website
  - Representatives need to present the information at service unit meetings and get feedback from the members.
  - Representatives need to be prepared to share the feedback at the annual meeting
- Bylaws will be an item for consideration at the annual meeting.
- After the annual meeting, representatives should share with their service units what took place at the meeting.

### Website

- Governance web page is available at <http://www.girlscoutshcc.org/gshccadmin/site1/adult/adult/governance.asp>
- Go check it out and check back often
- It was suggested that we have a “what’s new” link on the governance page so representatives can easily find things recently added, upcoming events, etc.
- Use the governance email address, [governance@girlscoutshcc.org](mailto:governance@girlscoutshcc.org), to provide suggestions for improvement, comments, etc.

### Newsletter

- Solicited comments from the participants about the first governance newsletter issued

- Feedback was positive
- Some suggestions for improvement were:
  - Upcoming Events Bullets
  - Connection to Twitter/Facebook (add follow Facebook link to council site)
  - Provide forum topics as early as possible, suggest 2 months so representatives can get input from the service unit
  - Newsletter too long. Use more bullets and not so much text.
  - Create an “Action Required” area to draw attention to what Representative Assembly Members need to absolutely read
  - List important bulleted information and then a link to a pdf file to read the rest of the information
- Use the governance email address, [governance@girlscoutshcc.org](mailto:governance@girlscoutshcc.org), to provide suggestions for improvement, comments, etc.

### **Small Group Discussions**

Below are the highlights of the small group discussions held at each regional forum. As we process this list, we will let you know what action has been taken.

#### ***How to retain girls in Girl Scouts especially at the older girl level***

- Girls at this age are busy. We need to be their #1 choice – we need to meet their needs
- Educate the leaders better about progression (too long since core training – leaders are forgetting)
- Sell Girl Scouts to older girls – we don’t do a good job at this; relate school requirements to what can be done in Girl Scouts (i.e., community service)
- Recruitment focuses too much on younger girls; not recruiting to older girls; not showing them what we have to offer
- Allow them to bring a buddy to the meeting
- Outside activities can lead to badges – need to sell this
- Girls are the best recruiters – instill that in them; have them be recruiters at fairs and events
- Get parent buy-in; show how Girl Scouts helps the girls; workshops for parents to explain the program (regional training, web based)
- Establish a senior forum (planning board) – each troop sends a representative; they plan council-wide activities for older girls
- Interesting older girl activities keep them involved
- Involve them with younger girls as mentors, more trips/externship availability
- Option to opt out of incentives at the Junior grade level
- Update books to fit today’s girls
- More leadership roles
- Make the program more like Boy Scouts. Boy Scouts is a priority in the family’s life
- Mentor younger troops
- Service projects
- Community partnerships
- Let girls lead troop and let them pick activities, trips, etc.
- Offer more activities/events for their age level

- More summer activities
- Improve reputation
- Council support for destinations
- Co-ed events (high adventure) with Boy Scouts
- More local events, activities, training
- Rock climbing, scuba diving
- Events run with young adult members
- Workshops – stress relief, time management, practical skills (i.e., college application advisory, college tours, “u.c. road trip)
- Informational meetings by council to promote opportunities for older girls
- “Transition Year” information/activities for leaders & girls at all age levels (such as Movin on Up)
- Promote awards
- Mix and match troops – networking troops to allow girls to participate in activities that interest them (service unit or council)
- Promote the value of the Girl Scout leadership program
- Council workshops to retain leaders
- Offer more than one session of popular council events
- Girl Scout lounge for older girls – service unit/council – hanging out, low key
- Support middle schoolers
- Prevent loss of leaders
  - Help leaders build expectation of future in Girl Scouts to be able to encourage girls
  - Leaders match program with girl’s needs
  - Experienced leaders mentoring new leaders
- Stick with one program – too many changes over the last few years

***Ways to make it easier to be a troop leader***

- Publicize non-traditional ways to run a troop
- Journey books are helpful
- Online training – more of it
- Don’t have to be super woman – use resources for help
- Membership Directors should follow-up, make personal contact with them
- Strengthen mentor program; assign mentors possibly not from the same service unit
- Less information at orientation – only the essentials; less overwhelming
- Something at leader meetings each month to help them (mini-workshops, training, etc.)
- Priority for training to occur sooner
- Classroom trainings need to be timely for leaders; not too months out
- Service teams needs to be more available to get leaders going (i.e., conduct orientation whenever, wherever, to get them going)
- Teach them how to delegate; isn’t too difficult if you have participation from parents
- Clearer guidelines for parent involvement
- Less paperwork

- Quarterly meetings
- Less “mandatory” trainings (especially if you’ve had a troop for a while)
- Have age level “break-out” trainings at meetings
- Group emails
- Have more events for Leaders at Modesto office
- Flexible training options (online, classroom, more dates)
- Keep up the support for new leaders and more online resources for badges, meetings
- Offer trainings in their area (e.g. Turlock)
- More access to council office (can’t get there during business hours)
- More online training
- More information on website (too many clicks to get to get to link)
- Simplified website (too busy – list connections)
- Notes on website – when there are changes on the website
- Continuity on website
- Service Unit websites
- No bridging patch for Ambassadors
- Dividing older girl leader training by age level (not 11-17 as a group)
- Awards by age level on website
- More outlying area training
- PDF creator forms (savable forms); more online forms
- Keep training scheduled – even for small groups (don’t cancel)
- Skype/Conference Call for training
- Recruiting trainers
- Stabilize program; older girl program (i.e., Gold and Silver)
- When new program is rolled out, have all materials
- Consistency for material information; confusion on Journey vs regular program
- Use of program aides
- Training for computer skills, internet skills (girl trainers?)
- Yahoo groups for service units and troops
- Virtual meetings
- Simplify fall sales
- Meetings in a box are great! Should be available for all age levels
- Planned roundtable discussion for new leaders at service unit
- Too many program choices
- What program (Try-Its, Badges) blends with Journeys
- Need 3 years for Juniors; 2 years not enough for Bronze Award
- Don’t like the 2 year per age levels
- More equipment for leaders to check out
- Create buddy/collaborative troops
- Older girls available to assist troops
- Need training related to running a troop

- Leaders edition of badge book with more detail than leaders guide (more like Merit Badge book for Boy Scouts)
- More access to Ecouncil to correct mistakes
- Help with transition for all age levels
- Information on no/low cost websites; “how to” info on website for service unit events

***What should be the major priorities to GSHCC for the next four years?***

- Bronze, Silver and Gold are not known; showcase the awards – need prestige
- Retaining and getting girls
- Focus of adult recruitment
- Work at Camp Menzies – kitchen geared to younger girls
- Publicize the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary
- Publicize the service that girls do
- How can council help facilitate community connections
- Continue to promote leadership goals, world-wide affairs
- Update books/badges
- Global impact and friendships
- Community reach out
- Co-sponsor events geared towards recruiting more girls
- Put together an actual 3-day day camp for all Girl Scouts to each badges. Volunteer youth run the booths
- Combine the Sacramento area events with the Modesto area better
- Community service to show the girls ways they can impact their community
- Develop new badges more relevant to the interests of today’s girls
- Maintaining as much as we can for financial aide during this economic crisis
- Keep themes interesting for all ages
- New office information
- Continue to work on the website; keep it up to date
- Ecouncil – confirmation
- Better public image
- Promote Girl Scout Gold Award
- More interesting council events (program and training more frequently; online service unit training)
- Partner with other organizations
- Retention – girls and leaders
- Look at programs (girl and adult) opportunities and what really is needed.
- Gold Award Alliance for girls that have earned their Gold Award
- Programs more flexible – spread them out; have trainings in summer
- Policies that improve health and girls outdoor activities
- Outdoor emphasis is gone. Need more outdoor experience; organize at council level
- Buddy system for camping
- Few older girls; work on “coolness”

- Work on making them proud to wear their uniform
- Incorporate the outdoor ideas in our media
- Sanity in Safety-Wise
- Lifeguard training is expensive
- Journey training like Project Wild; how to present
- More online training
- Online record keeping (membership roster, school) on ecouncil
- Too many trainings are being cancelled – need to figure out how to get training
- How to go from structure Junior Girl Scouts to unstructured Cadette Girl Scouts (awards, focus books, interest projects)
- Come up with ways to engage older girls (older girls involved in service unit support, emails to girls directly, emails to parents as well)
- Need to be on Facebook, My Space
- Review new governance structure every three years; reevaluate
- Consistency in program; transition information (Silver and Gold Award new and old requirements)
- Need a resource database to keep information on girls
- Make Girl Scouts relevant and how important the program is
- More support to older girls
- Partner with girls and parents – connect the parents; how to sell Girl Scouts to the parents; orientation to parents; GSHCC starts at the district level

***Identification of organizations in your community that could partner with Girl Scouts***

- Boy Scouts (do things together)
- Lions Clubs
- Samaritan Village in Hughson is willing to welcome activities
- VFW Women's Auxiliary
- VFW (sponsorship to troops, scholarships to girls)
- Churches
- Salvation Army
- City of Turlock
- Nursing homes
- Local ministries
- Beautification committees
- Retirement homes
- Shelters
- Elks Lodge, Moose Lodge to use facilities (Elk Grove)
- Professional Women's Organizations
- CSU, UC Davis (i.e., Ag Day at Davis)
- Roundtable Pizza (tours)
- Dairy Queen
- Collision Center
- Orchard Supply Hardware (OSH) will work with Girl Scouts

- Intel offering programs
- Kaiser
- Raleys and Bel Air
- Food banks
- Rotary Club
- Blue Star Moms
- Wal-Mart, Target
- Banks
- Working with parks (county and city)
- Soroptomist, Kiwanis
- Sororities
- Schools
- Sacramento Children's Home
- Society of Women Engineers
- SPCA
- Union Bank (set up program to budget, talk to younger girls, tours)
- National Weather Service (council event)
- Ski Patrol
- PG&E (council event)
- State and federal organizations (fish and game, mosquito vector, water district, irrigation districts, etc)
- Citrus Heights Police department – has a program for kids
- Farm Bureau
- 4-H Clubs
- Put all the above information onto the website for leaders to access
- Local adopt a trail or creek programs
- Advertise with organizations what troops/service units can do
- Habitat for Humanity work projects
- Women's groups/societies/organizations/auxiliaries
- Clarify when contact should come from the Council level vs. the service unit/troop level
- Clarify for troops/service units relationships with other organizations, especially when it comes to raising money. Lots of confusion out there about what is or is not okay (i.e., Breast Cancer Walk okay as a Girl Scout team or only as themselves then donate money from the troop?)

***Ways to elevate the prestige of the Girl Scout Gold Award***

- Maintain the integrity of the award; don't water down
- Make it part of a local school event (i.e., ½ time of a big sporting game)
- Local Public Relations
- More visible in schools
- More information about scholarships
- Public doesn't recognize the award
- Remind girls that Gold Award looks good on applications

- Have something on school website
- Have schools and alumni recognize girls
- Create Gold Award Alliance consisting of girls who have earned the Gold who can mentor other girls to inspire and motivate them
- Sample projects on the website for inspiration
- Put grant and award possibilities on web site so girls know there are ways to fund their project
- Every girl who earned the award is posted on the council website with her name, picture, and description of her project; remains on website until next round of awards
- More newspaper articles
- Have leaders talk to parents; educate younger girl leaders so they can see the vision of the future. If the leaders don't know/understand, the girls don't.
- Invite elected officials to the ceremony
- Create a traveling display of awardees that goes to community events, libraries, etc.
- Should award ceremony be done at the local level, i.e., service unit? (similar to Boy Scouts)
- Use younger girls to help at any ceremony
- Emphasize importance of the award for college
- Clarify in publicity the importance of the Bronze, Silver and Gold
- Do both local and council ceremonies
- Make sure projects are truly Gold Award worthy
- Put on website famous women who have earned the Gold Award – as inspiration to girls thinking about earning the award. Would be good to put this in the newspaper also
- Get more information out about successful projects and importance to all leaders (not just older girls)
- Make sure all officials are contacted (use to girls got about 35 proclamations; now just 3 or so); More proclamations from officials
- Make sure president and first lady are involved and aware of the prestige
- Get local papers to do more coverage
- Encourage girls to write their own press release for local papers; make this part of their training
- Advertise Gold Award importance to colleges (UC Davis); educate college recruiters (i.e., send a letter to admission departments about what a Gold Award is)
- Discuss benefits for employers; Gold Award recipients enter military a rank higher than non Gold Award recipients
- Advertise Gold Award recipients on cookie boxes
- Need to increase awareness to girls; get more buzz among girls
- Encourage girls to go to annual meeting to hear Gold Award recipients talk
- Get information to all girls about ceremonies. Have them be part of the ceremony. Families work on ceremony.
- Take girls to the Silver and Gold Award ceremonies
- Need more “pomp and circumstance” at ceremonies
- More personal ceremony at service unit level

- Girls confused by paperwork
- Need more than 1 council ceremony; need more dates; perhaps quarterly
- GSUSA should stop changing the requirements
- Announcements on local radio stations that girls listen to (100.5, 107.9)
- Educate public on **what** girls have done
- Have Service Unit Community Relations Rep coordinate publicity
- Model ceremony after Boy Scout Eagle Award ceremony
- Give the other Girl Scouts more contact with past Gold Award recipients both new and older
- Encourage how manageable it is with a proper planned timeline; maybe do in the training; currently seems overwhelming. Current training is way too dry and boring
- More enthusiasm/encouragement from leaders to complete the process. Pump the girls up about the awards.

***Ideas for celebrating the 100 year anniversary of Girl Scouts in 2012***

- Need to have lots of press and publicity with a diverse audience appeal.
- Booklet for every troop leader with suggestions on activities and resources.
- Use new technologies like twitter or Facebook or whatever they have out in 2 years.
- List of “100” things to do...i.e. collect 100 coins.etc..
- Lots of Alumni involved
- Lots of history.. A traveling show.
- A big celebration similar to the 90<sup>th</sup> with everyone together.
- March on the Capitol.
- Former Girl Scouts in leadership or famous roles. Use in PR.
- A concert (rock) for the girls.
- A parade.
- A huge camporee or Jamboree or Scout-a-rama
- A Fun Run
- A big council wide party
- Re-produce historical badges and uniforms (patterns)
- Earth Day Picnic
- A Council-wide service project
- Historical places in your community to visit/ learn about.
- Special page on our website for a 100<sup>th</sup> - countdown and information.
- Time capsules for the future
- Festival with booths
- Host a State-wide celebration since we are in the capitol of CA
- Use Raley Field
- Girl- I would like to see all the girls together to share the fun.
- Find (seek out) past members to attend/ get involved.
- Contest for the design (patches, tee)
- Sing-a-long at the Capitol (West coast)
- Keep the cost down. \$10 or less.

- Find corporate sponsors
- Could have several mid-size events
- Create an event to be remembered because 100 is too special to miss.
- Like the environmental theme for take action projects
- Reforestation project would be good
- A campaign type of project, i.e.; no smoking, good choices
- A huge camporee with a parade on last day
- Highlight Gold Award recipients
- Whole council event of Lights out for 100 minutes at the same time. March 12?
- Recycling contest
- Competition between service units
- Penny mural type of contest/project.
- Enter a Rose Parade float
- Creek Week “junk art” fair/competition
- Revive something from 1912
- Learn semaphore (flag signaling)
- Partner with the new Children’s Museum (in RC) or Ca History Museum for a yearlong display
- Use personal stories in a full page in newspaper. Celebrity bios.
- Celebrate publicly but also within the membership too.
- Adults should have a special event too, not just for girls
- A Jamboree event with SWAPS, entertainers, even rides etc.
- Arrange to have Girl Scout Day at the State Fair, and other BIG events.
- 100<sup>th</sup> T-shirt
- Reforesting areas
- National holiday!
- Huge luau with dancers and all
- Year-long celebration with service unit events, council events, troop events