

## Leadership Message: Strategic Learning 2012-2014

### Girl Scouts of Gulfcoast Florida, Inc.

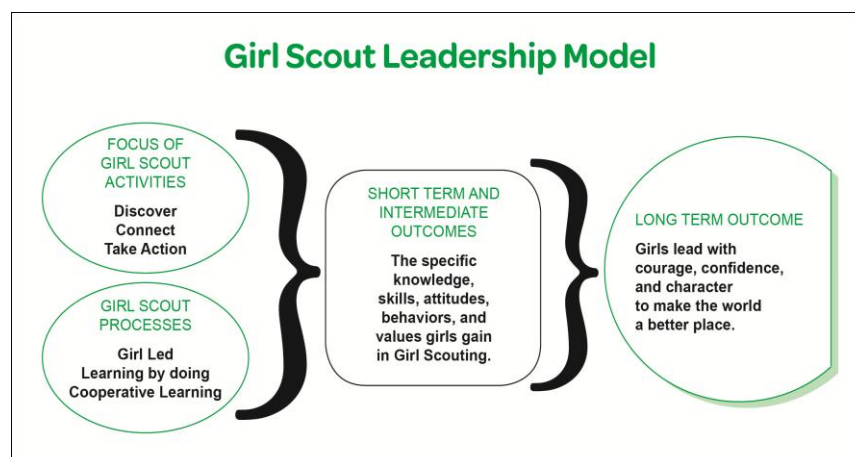
September 2011

Girl Scouts of Gulfcoast Florida, Inc. honors its 50 year legacy to deliver the premier leadership experience for girls in kindergarten through twelfth grade, where meaningful relationships with adult volunteers and partnerships with the community inspire all girls to develop courage, confidence and character to make the world a better place.

The world has changed since 1912 and the founding of Girl Scouting. Our commitment to girls and our focus on providing a positive and quality leadership experience is unwavering. We must provide an experience that girls need in a way they want. We must focus our limited resources of today on what matters most in order to deliver our promise to girls for the next 100 years. We believe that the process of Strategic Learning will be the bridge to that success for girls in our council for the future.

### The Girl Scout Leadership Experience

Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence and character who make the world a better place.



## **Girl Scout Activities**

*Discover*—Girls will understand themselves and their values, and use their knowledge and skills to explore the world.

Outcomes:

1. Girls develop a strong sense of self.
2. Girls develop positive values.
3. Girls gain practical life skills.
4. Girls seek challenges in the world
5. Girls develop critical thinking.

*Connect*—Girls will care about, inspire, and team with others locally and globally.

Outcomes:

1. Girls develop healthy relationships.
2. Girls promote cooperation and team building.
3. Girls can resolve conflicts.
4. Girls advance diversity in a multicultural world.
5. Girls feel connected to their communities, locally and globally.

*Take Action*—Girls will act to make the world a better place.

Outcomes:

1. Girls can identify community needs.
2. Girls are resourceful problem solvers.
3. Girls advocate for themselves and others, locally and globally.
4. Girls educate and inspire others to act.
4. Girls feel empowered to make a difference in the world.

## **Girl Scout Processes**

*Girl Led*—girls play an active part in figuring out the “what, where, when, how, and why” of their activities. They lead the planning and decision making as much as possible;

*Learning by Doing*--a hands-on learning process that engages girls in continuous cycles of action and reflection, resulting in a deeper understanding of concepts and mastery of practical skills. As they participate in meaningful activities and then reflect on them, girls get to explore their own questions, discover answers, gain new skills, and share ideas and observations with others; and

*Cooperative Learning*-- girls work together toward shared goals in an atmosphere of respect and collaboration that encourages sharing skills, knowledge, and learning. Working together in an all girl environment encourages girls to feel powerful and emotionally and physically safe. It allows them to experience a sense of belonging in diverse groups.

Girls and adult volunteers can participate in Girl Scouting through a variety of Pathways: troop, series, event, environmental leadership/camp, travel, and virtual.

### **The National Program Portfolio: Journeys and The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting**

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience is brought to life through the Journeys-books, awards and resource materials designed specifically to appeal to girls in grades K-12. Each Girl Scout Leadership Journey consists of six books, one for each Girl Scout grade level.

***It's Your World-Change It!*** Engages girls in a critical thinking process related to identifying and researching issues they care about.

***It's Your Planet-Love It!*** Engages girls in exploring the wonders of the natural world.

***It's Your Story-Tell It!*** Engages girls in storytelling and creative expression.

*The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* is the new guide for girls. It consists of grade appropriate badges and activities that offer girls the opportunity to build specific skills to become more confident and develop a strong sense of self.

The Girl Scout Leadership Journeys and The Girls Guide to Girl Scouting are the foundation upon which girls develop leadership.

### **The History of Strategic Learning, Girl Scouts of Gulfcoast Florida, Inc.**

The Board of Directors fully embraced Strategic Learning as our direction and model for transformational change beginning in early 2010, and during board work at the December 4, 2010 and March 12, 2011 meetings. Christine Yekel, in her role as 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, is designated as the board advocate for the process and will report on the progress of the Strategic Learning at each board meeting.

In October 2010, Sue Stewart, CEO; Linda Getzen, President; and Debbie McDowell-Tate, COO and project manager, along with other professional Girl Scout staff from across the country participated in the Strategic Learning process led by GSUSA project consultant Willie Pietersen. We learned the value of a strategic approach, how to listen and ask the right questions (to give us the right answers) and how to ensure both short and long term success by designing a winning proposition with a clear and simple focus.

The Council Strategy Team, a talented group of twenty-six (volunteers, staff, community collaborators, donors, and members of the Board of Directors) representing all regions of our council, began a rigorous and prescribed situational analysis in five areas during January and February 2011. The five groups: customers (girls), competitors, sector trends, stakeholders, and our own

realities were directed to think strategically and creatively concerning key challenges, opportunities and the direction of the council.

Data was gathered, surveys of customers (girls) and stakeholders (parents, volunteers, donors, community organizations, staff and others) were conducted. National and local research was reviewed to identify best practices, trends in youth leadership and girl development, and projected regional census and demographics. Through hours of homework, team phone calls and three all day work sessions, the Council Strategy Team creatively and energetically identified and developed our key insights, our competitive focus and winning proposition.

Many thanks to the Strategic Learning team for creating the framework for our future success.

### **Our Key insights:**

- It's about the girls  
How do we appeal to and best meet the needs of girls and their parents?
- Membership
  - Market Share below National Average (7.6% to 9.0%)
  - 50% served by staff with 17% retention rate
  - Significant loss of girls after 5th grade
- Girls of color served in non-troop activities disproportionate to white girls
- Need for compelling brand image – has broad impact
- Strategic Partnerships
  - Increase funding
  - Efficient use of human and financial capital
- Technology – We are woefully behind the times with technology which holds us back on:
  - Relevance to Girls (not moving at the speed of girls)
  - Business efficiency and effectiveness
  - Volunteer Engagement and Communication
  - Brand Management
  - Making it easy to engage with and understand Girl Scouts
- Outcomes are critical for future success in funding and proving our relevance and impact on girls
- Critical to Diversify Funding
- Alumnae – Under-utilized resource > funding, volunteerism, Strategic Partnerships
- Program, Pathways and Volunteerism

- Diversification through pathways critical for future success – recruitment, retention of girls and adults
- Staff Levels (reduction in force over several years)
- Analyze and develop camp pathway more fully
- How do we engage volunteers in delivering the Girl Scout Leadership Experience?
- How do we enhance the volunteer experience through training, recognition, leadership development and stimulating opportunities?

### **Implications:**

- Failure to reach the full diversity of our population could lead to future decline in membership and is a missed opportunity;
- Our current way of delivering program to girls is not a sustainable growth model and needs to be totally rethought and overhauled;
- Without full understanding of who we are, what we stand for and the value we deliver, we risk loss of funding, membership and public support;
- Given the reality of non-profit competition for dollars and limited resources, strategic partnerships offer a creative and efficient way to reach more girls;
- Technology continues to be a challenge but without gaining ground will leave us further and further behind the times and threatens our relevance and effectiveness.

### **Our Competitive Focus:**

1. Raise market share in all regions.
  - Special focus on Lee, Sarasota, Collier and Manatee.
2. Girl membership reflects the diversity of our regions with a focus on K-6.
  - Special focus on Daisy recruitment.
  - Special focus on retention in grades 4 to 6.
3. Quality, integrated, mutually supportive pathways.
  - Special focus on the troop pathway in grades K – 3.
  - Special focus on environmental education/camp pathway in grades 4 – 6.
  - Special focus on series pathway in grades 4 – 6.

## **Our Winning Proposition:**

In Girl Scouts of Gulfcoast Florida, a girl belongs to a sisterhood of friends dedicated to fun, discovery, exploration and taking action in her world.

## **Our Five Key Priorities: (No ranking or prioritization implied)**

Funding\* Marketing \*Pathways and Outcomes\* Technology \*Volunteerism

**Funding** – increase and diversify public support.

- Engage and inspire alumnae as givers
- Leverage strategic partnerships for funding

**Marketing** – use targeted messages to communicate the brand.

- Target marketing to customers (girls) and stakeholders
- Leverage strategic partnerships to spread the Girl Scout message & brand

**Pathways and Outcomes** – implement quality pathways that meet girls' needs, delivered by volunteers in ways girls want.

- Ensure measurable GSLE outcomes across pathways
- Develop and leverage strategic partnerships for efficient use of human & financial capital
- Ensure diversity of girls across pathways

**Technology** – utilize diverse technology to move at the speed of girls.

- Leverage strategic partnerships as source of funding and/or technical expertise
- Enable efficient and effective communication between customers and stakeholders, and business systems and practices

**Volunteerism** – implement a volunteerism system that attracts, engages and retains diverse, qualified volunteers through flexible volunteer pathways.

- Increase diversity of volunteers to reflect parity with community
- Recruit alumnae as volunteers
- Leverage strategic partnerships as source of volunteers
-

## **Implementation**

All Staff are assigned to work as part of a cross functional gap team, lead by gap champions and the Strategic Learning Leadership Team. This is our way of work.

The teams will:

1. Translate the Key Priorities into Gaps with accountable Gap Champions.
2. Pursue and measure progress with relentless determination.
3. Gather additional input and listen to and work with customers (girls) and stakeholders (parents, volunteers, donors and the community).
4. Align all the levers of the business system behind the strategy.
5. Deliver a simple leadership message to win the hearts and minds of our staff and volunteers and repeat it continuously.
6. Create an action plan to overcome resistance and drive momentum.

Action Plan will:

Maximize participation

Generate short-term wins

Identify resisters and inspire their participation or seek their removal

Set a shining example

Honoring the history of Girl Scouts of Gulfcoast Florida, Inc. and the importance of the democratic process and responsibility of customers and stakeholders to engage and influence the process, communication will be transparent, mutually respectful, and ongoing.

The partnership between customers (girls), parents, adult volunteers, alumnae, donors, and community organizations is required for the next 100 years to ensure that a vibrant, relevant and quality Girl Scout Leadership Experience is available and accessible for all girls in our region.

The end result of our united effort will be to deliver on our promise to all girls, to create greater value for all members and the community, and to inspire one united Girl Scout Movement and voice for girls.