

GIRL SCOUTS AND LITERACY

LITERACY

Dreaming their biggest dreams, conquering their greatest fears, and speaking in their boldest voices, that's what Girl Scouting wants for every girl, and it all begins with a strong foundation. That's why enhancing literacy skills is one of Girl Scouts' primary objectives.

READING, WRITING, AND READY

Girl Scouts knows that literacy in and of itself pertains to more than simply the ability to read. Literacy also encompasses writing, communicating with others, and processing ideas—all of which impact a girl's success. Girl Scout founder Juliette Gordon Low encouraged literacy in the 1920s by publishing one of our nation's very first magazines for girls, *The American Girl*. Reading activities earned girls the Reader badge back then. Today, literacy activities are integral to Girl Scouting. Girls of all ages earn awards such as the Books, Writing for Real, and Express It! badges. Literacy activities include hip Web games, creative writing, teen newsletters, group chats, and more.

Girl Scouts is unwavering in its commitment to literacy, especially in light of current data, which indicate a serious need for greater resources nationwide. According to White House research for the **No Child Left Behind Act**, only one-third of fourth-graders are reading proficiently, and the remaining two-thirds of fourth-graders have a greater likelihood of dropping out of school. In support of the White House Act, the Girl Scout literacy program is helping girls nationwide gain and master the fundamental skills they will need to beat these odds and succeed in life.

A TRULY UNIQUE APPROACH

In addition to literacy badges and awards, Girl Scouts collaborated with the SBC Foundation (the charitable giving arm of SBC Communications Inc.) to develop a unique and rich book series called **Follow the Reader: A Girl Scout Family Reading Project**. The series is thoughtfully designed and takes a comprehensive approach, providing Girl Scouts between the ages of 4 and 11 and their families with fun-filled reading and skill-building activities that address phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency.

Two specific features make **Follow the Reader** unique. It's a family-based program designed to get parents and caretakers involved with their children's learning. It's also available in both English and Spanish. Like a growing number of Girl Scout resources on the Web, in pamphlets, on tapes, and in guide books, this series seeks to reach Latina girls, for whom English is a second language. Both English- and Spanish-speaking girls can comfortably learn to read in the language of their choice, or move back and forth from one language to the other, all in a relaxed family setting. Girls and their families are free to use these resources at home, in school, at Girl Scout meetings, or wherever they desire.

Follow the Reader is just one of the many Girl Scout activities that open up the wonderful world of reading to girls of all ages, races, ethnicities, and economic backgrounds. Through this innovative series, reading is emphasized as a joyous and pleasurable activity that can help girls discover who they are and who they want to be. It also introduces them to all the different cultures and peoples that make up the world community. With strong reading, writing, and communication skills, girls are better able to set goals, plan their futures, and achieve their dreams.

IN THE GIRL SCOUT LIBRARY

The **Follow the Reader** bilingual series includes three **Adventures in Reading** books:

- *Aventuras en lecturas para Daisy Girl Scouts*
- *Aventuras en lecturas para Brownie Girl Scouts*
- *Aventuras en lecturas para Junior Girl Scouts*

OTHER BILINGUAL MATERIALS INCLUDE:

- *Girl Scouts contra el tabaquismo (Girl Scouts Against Smoking)*
- *Lo que puede hacer una Girl Scout (What a Girl Scout Can Do)*
- *Hacer nuevas amistades (Making New Friends)*

PRESS INQUIRIES

Our program is impressive, but it's the girls who are amazing! To learn more about Girl Scout literacy activities, call your local Girl Scout council or contact the Communications Department at Girl Scouts of the USA at 1-800-GSUSA4U or media@girlscouts.org.

Here is a small sampling of the literacy awards/badges:

- Follow the Reader patch
- Write Away
- Write Now

Girl Scouts of the USA is the preeminent organization for girls and has more than 3.8 million girl and adult members. Girl Scouting fosters values, social awareness, and self-esteem in girls, while also teaching them critical life skills for future success. It's a very special girls-only place where girls discover the fun, friendship, and power of girls growing together. The organization strives to serve girls in every part of the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. To learn more about volunteering, partnership, or Girl Scout news, visit us on the Web at www.girlscouts.org.