

The Lowdown

Alum Newsletter // Fall 2024

SEE YOURSELF IN GIRL SCOUTS...

Since 1912, the lives of more than 50 million Girl Scout alums have been positively influenced—one could say even transformed—by their experiences as youth members in our Movement.

Girl Scouts encourages youth in grades K-12 to pursue their dreams and become leaders at home and in their communities.

Our alums are CEOs, farmers, scientists, activists, teachers, artists, engineers, park rangers, entrepreneurs, dreamers, doers and so much more thanks to the leadership and life skills they gained through Girl Scouting.

Our Movement's legacy and impact are everlasting!

Every alum who was once a young Girl Scout striving to make their world a better place should today see themselves as guides who support the next generations of Girl Scouts looking to achieve their dreams and imagine tomorrow's possibilities.

Check out these fun photo illustrations of our staff “seeing themselves” as youth members!



Destiny Tayler
Membership Engagement Manager



Zoe Zygmunt
Awards Engagement Manager



Hannah Heveland
Customer Engagement Manager

Throwback images provided; illustrations created by alum Ginger Van Allen, Multimedia Manager.

HOW DO YOU SEE YOURSELF
AS A GIRL SCOUT ALUM?

LOOK INSIDE!

- Alum Spotlight
- GSNYPENN Highlights: MY24
- Trips & Travel
- Staff Spotlight

Dear Friends of Girl Scouting,

I hope you're well and enjoying the beautiful fall weather! What a summer we've had; I felt like I was back home in Virginia.

We've been busy since our last edition of The Lowdown...

In March we hosted our Girl Scout Week event, Juliette: Our Remarkable Founder, which was a resounding success. (Learn more in this issue!)

Earlier this month, we held the long-awaited opening of the GSNYPENN Museum at our Maine Service Center. That project was completed thanks to a generous grant from the William G. Pomeroy Foundation. We can finally share what began as a labor of love before the pandemic with all of you! I'm humbled to add that at the grand opening, we also honored our History & Archives Committee for their many volunteer hours and contributions to making this dream a reality.

During Member Year 2024 (MY24), which concluded on September 30, our Girl Scouts traveled domestically to Niagara Falls and Salem, Mass., and internationally to the Galapagos! Girl Scouts is all about safe risk-taking and making local and global connections. Are you interested in supporting our Travel program? Look for more on the pages that follow!

This summer, our Comstock and Hoover properties hosted all-gender day camps with extended hours to support local working families. We're extra grateful for the financial support we received through the Jim and Juli Boeheim Foundation for our sessions at Camp Hoover. The foundation works to enrich the lives of children in Central New York. Our youth members also enjoyed traditional overnight Girl Scout camp experiences at Comstock, Trefoil and Amahami.

In Advancement, we've raised over \$400,000 this MY thanks to donors like you and through various grant awards. In addition, a generous Girl Scout alum's family gifted us \$40,000 to fund needed repairs at our Camp Amahami property in Deposit, NY.

We also recently celebrated the first anniversary of our GSNYPENN Press Shop—and what a year it's been! We're excited to have exceeded our "Year 1" goals in so many ways—you can read more about that in this issue! All revenue from our "products with a purpose" stays within GSNYPENN to support our mission of building girls of courage, confidence and character. How many local businesses can say that?!

I hope you enjoy this issue of The Lowdown and that you see yourself in these Girl Scout stories and experiences!

Yours in Girl Scouting,



JoAnne Morak
Vice President of Advancement & Retail Operations



GSNYPENN Board of Directors 2024-25

Officers:

Tiffany Alvarez Smith, Ed.D., Chair
Kathy Burke Barry, 1st Vice Chair
Katie MacIntyre, 2nd Vice Chair
Paloma Sarkar, Treasurer
Judy Suddaby, Secretary

GSNYPENN Senior Leadership Team

Julie Dale, Chief Executive Officer
Margaret Williams, Chief Business Officer
Jaime Alvarez, Vice President of Marketing & Communications
JoAnne Morak, Vice President of Advancement & Retail Operations
Liz Schmidt, Vice President of Property & Programs
Sara Scott, Vice President of Membership Engagement & Data Services
Christina Verratti, Vice President of Product Programs & Volunteer Services

The Lowdown Staff

Executive Editor: Jaime Alvarez
Editor: JoAnne Morak
Creative Director: Kaitlyn Greer
Contributors: JoAnne Morak, Holly Pelzer, Jennifer Phillips, Ginger Van Allen
Printed By: Upstate Printing

The Lowdown is published biannually by Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways. Please direct questions, comments, news, and suggestions to JoAnne Morak at jmorak@gsnypenn.org or 315.288.0953.

Members-at-Large:

Debbie Calkins
Tiffany Campau, Ed.D.
Judi Dixon
Tamara Harris
Luana Lovenguth
Michelle McCabe-Szczepanski
Karen Perwitz
Morgan Prince
Karen Roth
Mike Sabo
Sheri Seguin
Vanessa Teamoh
Natalie Thompson

Alu

My Girl Written By: Ho

I've been a Girl Scout since 1980. I started as a Brownie in Foothills, a GSNYPENN Legacy Council, and attended Camp Glengarra for four years as a Junior and Cadette. Along with all the regular badges earned, I also received the Lutheran Religious Award, God and Country Religious Award and Girl Scout Silver Award. I



graduated in 1991 as a Senior (they did not have Daisies or Ambassadors back then) and returned to volunteering for another year after that with a Daisy troop and thinking how cool it was that I could now serve as a Girl Scout volunteer!

I became a Lifetime Member as an adult volunteer in 2014 when my niece, Jasmin, wanted to join our Movement. I'm still a leader for her legacy troop and co-leader of a few others. I became a Facilitator in 2016, an Encampment Director in 2017 and Service Unit Manager (SUM) and the many roles that entails in 2018. In the last few years, I have also mentored other SUMs. In the past decade as a GSNYPENN volunteer, I've earned the Volunteer of Excellence Award, Bronze Pin, Trefoil Award (with my Girl Scout sister), Appreciation Pin and Ever-Green Award. I'm enormously proud to share that our SU has earned the President's Award four times now—in MY Years 2019, 2021, 2022 and 2023!

Members of my family have also been active in our Movement. My mom, Connie Pelzer, was a Girl Scout from 1958 into the 1960s, serving as my troop leader and an SU leader and Council Delegate in the 1980s. She helped start the first Girl Scout Day Camp in Little Falls, N.Y., served as Camp Director with help from my troop. My sister-in-law, Jessica Pelzer, was a Girl Scout in the 1990s and has helped with her daughter Jasmin's troop since 2014. My niece, Jasmin, has bridged to adult and continues her Girl Scout journey as a Lifetime Member.

What I remember most about my younger years in Girl Scouting is the time spent camping—whether camping with my troop, attending the Big Camporee at Darien Lake in the late 1980s, or time spent at Camp Glengarra. I especially remember the two-week Canoe Island trip where we had to dig our latrines! I think that camping as a Girl Scout has had a significant impact on my life, probably why I enjoy doing it so much!

Scout Timeline

olly Pelzer, Lifetime Member

When I rejoined our Movement as a volunteer, I was told, "Girl Scouts don't go camping anymore." After hearing this disappointing news, I investigated the matter and realized our community didn't know we still had council camp properties. So, I started a troop that loves camping and when I took over the SU, brought it back for all to enjoy!

As a facilitator, I ensure all leaders work toward their overnight and camp training. Our SU now has a successful annual Camporee for our Girl Scouts to enjoy. I've also brought some council-run camp events to the valley, including Taste of Camp and Twilight Camp. I love to promote our council programming every chance I get. Although I enjoy camping, it's important to recognize that not everyone does! So, as a volunteer and with the help of my Girl Scout sisters, we bring all sorts of other events to our youth members.



As an adult, I've realized that much of what I do now was what I learned through Girl Scouting when I was young. If I can make just one Girl Scout say, "This is the best day ever," I feel accomplished!

I believe in the Girl Scout mission and that it gives our youth a reason to shine, belong and empower themselves. I have seen Girl Scouts make friends with other kids they may not have made otherwise. I've also seen the quiet ones who sit back, come out of their shell and shine bright.

Supporting Girl Scouts is a way to encourage our youth to be ambitious, learn something new, enhance something they already know and see their futures.

As a dedicated Lifetime Member, I hope to continue collaborating with the council and my local SUs to provide training and events for youth and volunteers in the Mohawk Valley.



March 15 & 16: Juliette: Our Remarkable Founder (Binghamton, N.Y.)

At this two-day event, more than 100 Girl Scout youth and adult members joined with community members to celebrate Girl Scouts' Founder Juliette Gordon Low. Our special guests included Juliette's great-niece, Margaret Seiler, and acclaimed author Stacy A. Cordery, a professor of history at Iowa State University who wrote a book at our "Daisy." Many lasting Girl Scout memories were created that weekend!



April: Volunteer Appreciation Dinners (across council)

This spring we celebrated and awarded council volunteers for their accomplishments during MY24. We also honored our Hall of Fame inductee, Diane Bootie from North Brookfield, N.Y. Diane became a volunteer 43 years ago when her daughter wished to join our Movement. At the time, there wasn't a local troop, so Diane stepped up and became the leader. Since then, she has held various roles, including troop leader, SUM, recruiter, trainer and Product Program Coordinator. Diane has been part of our History & Archives Committee for many years, working to preserve our council's rich history. She also played an instrumental role in revamping our Honoring Our Heritage Patch Program last fall. Congratulations, Diane!



October 17: Open House & Museum Grand Opening (Maine, N.Y.)

Council members and our community were invited to an open house at our Maine Service Center and the grand opening of our new council museum.



Mid-October: Campfire Connections II (Delhi, N.Y.)

Girl Scout alums are welcome to come together and connect at this relaxing outdoor event. (Note: event date is TBD and weather-dependent—remember, we'll be outdoors!)



November 2: Friendship Tea (Syracuse, N.Y.)

Join us for a delightful afternoon hosted by our Advancement team! Get out your hats and gloves; this is an exclusive gathering for all members! Connect, enjoy delicious tea and treats, and make a fun craft. Don't miss out on this special opportunity to make new friends! (Please note that seating is limited.)



Member Year 2024 at a Glance

April 23: Open House (Syracuse, N.Y.)

We welcomed community members to our Syracuse Service Center and GSNYPENN Store to get to know our staff and learn more about our mission. We had a great turnout, and it was a pleasure to share our space with old and new friends and neighbors.



April 25: Cookies Untapped (Syracuse, N.Y.)

At Fair Deli Craft Beer in Syracuse, 30 Girl Scout alums joined us for Girl Scout Cookie and beer/wine pairings and enjoyed some adult-only time! It was a great event for staff and alums to relax, reconnect and have fun.



July 14: Boilermaker 15K (Utica, N.Y.)

Our council was a bib sponsor for this world-renowned annual road race held in our footprint. Four staff and one Board member braved the heat and ran to support our Gold Award Scholarships! GSNYPENN runners included Katie MacIntyre, Christina Verratti, Rebecca Nolan, Grace Nassar and Ginger Van Allen.



August: Camp Beyond (Deposit, N.Y.)

Campers joined us for two weeks of Camp Beyond hosted at Amahami. This was our third year providing a summer camp experience and safe space for LGBTQ+ youth.



August: Fall Kick-Offs (across council)

Our Membership Support team hosted nine regional events to prepare and excite our volunteers for MY25. At each location, our membership staff was joined by other council employees, the members of our Senior Leadership team hosted a Listening Tour, several of our Community Partners stopped in to share their programming and experiences with our volunteers and our Retail team-hosted Pop-Up Shops to purchase Girl Scout merchandise.



September 19: Women of Distinction (Binghamton, N.Y.)

We honored Girl Scout alum and Broome County native Mary O'Malley-Trumble as our 2024 Woman of Distinction and were joined by 200 guests to celebrate her at this annual breakfast event at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Binghamton. Revenue raised through this event supports our council's Gold Award Scholarship Program.



September 20: Mohawk Valley Gives (Oneida County)

GSNYPENN participated in a virtual day of giving with fellow Oneida County organizations. To prepare, our Marketing team worked with Girl Scouts from our Media Team to record a video explaining how donations help them travel, try new things, earn badges and more. Through the community's generous support, we raised more than \$2,000 for council programming!



See Yourself in Member Year 2025

Operation Green Socks, 2025 GSNYPENN Wall Calendar & Alum E-Newsletter

Donations made to Operation Green Socks provide funding to support our senior alums and those in nursing homes. They receive a visit from Girl Scout staff and volunteers complete with their very own beautifully packaged pair of green socks. Reach out to Jennifer Phillips, Director of Advancement, at jphillips@gsnypenn.org to hear more about how you can support our "green" initiative. You can also donate \$15 and receive our beautiful one-of-a-kind 2025 GSNYPENN Wall Calendar; all proceeds raised support Operation Green Socks. Contact Jennifer to learn more about upcoming events and receive our monthly alum e-newsletter.



GSNYPENN Press Shop Celebrates First Anniversary

Thanks for your support as we've grown and reached our goals! The GSNYPENN Press Shop serves our members and the public by creating custom apparel that's both designed and made in-house. All proceeds from our "products with a purpose" go back to support our council and mission. We can create custom apparel, stickers, decals, drinkware, bags, hats, notebooks and more. We're now an approved Collegiate Licensing Company (CLC) and authorized vendor for Syracuse University! (Products for internal staff/departmental use; not for public sale.) Please share with any SU employees in your life and be sure to visit our new webpage at gsnypenn.org/pressshop.



SPECIAL INCENTIVE FOR ALUMS:

Receive a 10% discount on your first GSNYPENN Press Shop order! Say you saw this printed in The Lowdown! To place an order, contact Ray Mulno, Director of Retail Operations, at rmulno@gsnypenn.org, 315.288.6477 or scan this QR Code!



Trips & Travel

Girl Scout Adventure Recaps

May 10-11: Journey to the Falls (Niagara, N.Y.)

Our Daisies, Brownies, Juniors, their families and council staff visited the Aquarium of Niagara, boarded the Maid of the Mist, took an up close and personal tour of the falls, ate dinner at Rainforest Café and spent a day at the Buffalo Zoo. It was a fun-filled weekend!



May 17-19: Witchy Weekend (Salem & Boston, Mass.)

Our Cadettes, Seniors, Ambassadors, their families and council staff learned about the Salem Witch Trials, took a walking tour, hopped aboard a Duck Boat, visited Quincy Market and explored Boston.



July 10-18: The Galapagos (Ecuador & Galapagos Islands)

Cadettes, Seniors, Ambassadors and their families joined select council staff to explore the culture of Ecuador and the rich archipelago of the Galapagos. We snorkeled with sharks and sea turtles, saw tortoises in the wild and at the breeding center, observed blue-footed boobies and Galapagos penguins and interacted with more sea lions than we could count! We also visited dormant volcanoes and a waterfall, swam at the beaches, hiked, toured historical landmarks, salsa-danced, had fantastic meals and experienced the phenomena of the Equatorial Line. It was an adventure of a lifetime!



Upcoming Girl Scout Destinations

Do you have a Girl Scout, or know one who might be interested in these trips? Learn more below and at gsnypenn.org/travel.

December 13-14: Rockin' Around NYC (New York, N.Y.)

35 youth spots open to Juniors, Cadettes, Seniors, Ambassadors
Enjoy a matinee performance of the Rockettes and explore Manhattan!



February 15-21: Winter Wanderer (Quebec, Canada)

20 youth spots open to Cadettes, Seniors, Ambassadors
This is a GSUSA Destination open to council members. Stay at a winter wonderland resort, visit an ice castle, learn about the Huron-Wendat people through interactive experiences, ice skate through the forest and sleep inside a wolf habitat!



April 12-19: Panda & Presidential Parade (Washington, D.C. & Virginia)

35 youth spots* open to Cadettes, Seniors, Ambassadors
(and Girl Scouts earning a 2025 cookie reward trip*)

Explore museums and monuments in Washington, D.C., see pandas and more at the Smithsonian Zoo, tour the White House and U.S. Capitol, visit the homes of George Washington and Andrew Jackson, step back in time at Williamsburg and spend a night at Skyland Lodge in Shenandoah National Park!

(*This trip is also a reward for GSNYPENN Girl Scouts who sell 3,000+ boxes of cookies during our 2025 program.)



Help Our Girl Scouts See the World

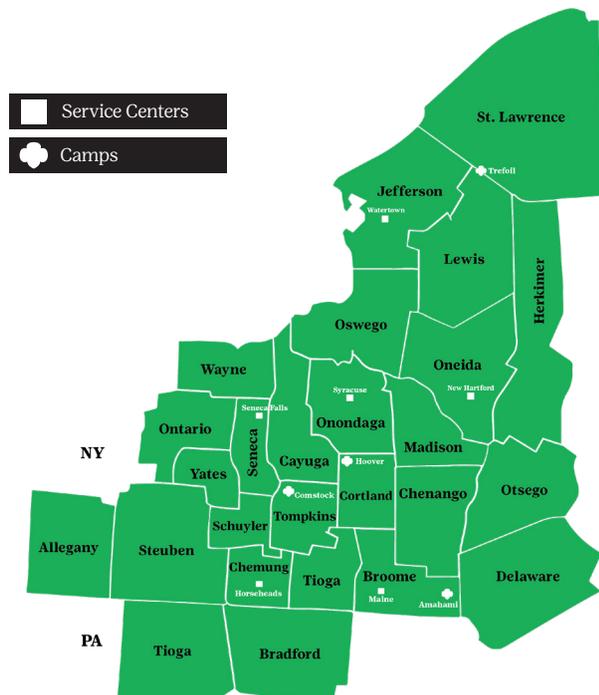
If you would like your donation to support our Travel program, you can make that designation by adding a note, "Travel," on the remittance envelope enclosed in this issue.

About Our Council

Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways is chartered by Girl Scouts of the USA to administer the Girl Scout program in 24 counties of New York and two in Pennsylvania. We're the preeminent leadership development organization for girls. We offer every girl a chance to practice a lifetime of leadership, adventure and success. We are dedicated to serving our council membership. Your support stays local and gives girls across our region the opportunity to take part in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

Visit gsnypenn.org/locations for complete information on our Service Centers, Stores and hours of operation.

- ✉ info@gsnypenn.org
- 📘 facebook.com/gsnypenn
- 📷 instagram.com/gsnypenn
- 📺 youtube.com/girlscoutsofnypennpathways
- ☎ 1.800.943.4414 or 315.698.9400



Building girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place.

LOOK INSIDE!

- Alum Spotlight
- GSNYPENN Highlights: MY24
- Trips & Travel
- Staff Spotlight

Staff Spotlight

Meet Maureen Hayden: Membership Support Manager

Girl Scouts has been an integral part of my life. I began as an adult volunteer in my daughter's troop, serving as a leader, and then became a Service Unit Manager. In March 2008, I joined the GSNYPENN staff as a Field Director. I've been married for 41 years and have four amazing children. When I think about the Girl Scouting experience, the first thing that comes to mind is adventure. Learning about new topics, visiting amazing places, camping, sharing, boondoggle, working on projects, singing songs, sisterhood, flag ceremonies and making a difference in the lives of others. Most of all, I've had the privilege to watch our youth lead and flourish into amazing people all while gaining confidence in themselves. Our Girl Scouts bring joy and laughter whether they are starting a campfire, helping with a community project or hiking a trail. The impact of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience is far-reaching and long-lasting. It brings fond memories and simply warms the heart. I can't wait to see what amazing things our Girl Scouts will accomplish as they become our future leaders in this world!



Juliette Gordon Low Society

Have you made a planned gift to Girl Scouts to become part of this national society? Please let us know so we can honor you with this beautiful pin! If you haven't, it's easy. You can leave any amount or percent of your life insurance or estate to Girl Scouts—a small bequest can make a huge difference for our Girl Scouts' future!



Did You Know?

In 2018, GSUSA and Dianne Belk, Founding Chair of the Juliette Gordon Low National Society, raised a challenge for each council across the nation to acquire four planned gifts. In return, each council would receive a planned gift of \$10,000 from Dianne Belk and Lawrence Calder. GSNYPENN accepted and met this challenge!

We hope you'll consider making a gift and joining the society! Contact JoAnne to discuss your options. Membership ensures you remain connected to GSNYPENN now and in the future.