

Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council Connections

The newsletter for past, present and future supporters
of Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council

Summer 2008

Volunteer Spotlight

Book Club's Contributions Support Girl Scouting

When many think of volunteering with Girl Scouts, they think of becoming a troop leader or "Cookie Mom." While there is a tremendous need for special people to fill these roles, there are many other ways to contribute and make a difference in the lives of girls.

Once upon a time, a group of prominent women formed a book club at Rice University. More than 30 years later, the group happened upon the Girl Scout building on the Southwest Freeway. It just so happens, the ladies were Girl Scouts with very fond memories. The group was only looking for a new place to meet and discuss their book selections, but instead fell in love with Girl Scouting again and decided to get involved.

"Many of us remember being Girl Scouts, ourselves. And all of those memories are very special and very positive," said Susanne Glasscock, book club member and GSSJC volunteer. "From camping to crafting to pen-paling – we laugh about our memories and remember our badges."

"We had a tour (of the building) and gained information about the Council, and decided we wanted to take action to further support GSSJC and invest in girls," said Cathy Wining-Thomas, another book club member. "I was on the board and Susie Glasscock and I are both Lifetime Emerald Circle Members." Emerald Circle inspires girls to aim for excellence through higher education - scholarships and recognition programs.

Soon after their visit, the ladies decided to support a troop on a regular basis, not as leaders but through contributions. While they are not troop leaders or "Cookie Moms," numerous girls have benefited from the group's support through the years.

"I really appreciate your donation. I wish you were there to see the smiles on our faces as we enjoyed every moment in our activities," wrote a girl in Troop #25127, in appreciation.

As a fourth generation Girl Scout, Wining-Thomas realizes the powerful impact of her Girl Scout days and the lessons she learned. "Without programs like Girl Scouts, I would not have realized my potential and the importance of serving others," she said. "My Girl Scout experience



Girls from Troop #25127 at Camp Agnes Arnold.

taught me that everyone is uniquely made for a purpose."

If you're a Girl Scout alum who wants to get involved with Girl Scouting again, contact Jennifer Ashley at 713-292-0346 or jashley@sjgs.org.

Urban Campout 2008 a Huge Success!

More than \$300,000 was raised on April 17 as nearly 400 Girl Scout supporters attended Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council's Urban Campout 2008 at Reliant Center. Proceeds from the event benefit much-needed community outreach programs for all girls, ages 5 to 17.

"Urban Campout was a huge success thanks to the support of our dedicated volunteers and generous sponsors," said Mary Vitek, GSSJC Chief Executive Officer. "Money raised will help us fulfill our mission of building girls of courage, confidence and character."

"Campers" were greeted at the event by Girl Scouts before joining the camp festivities. Reminiscent tunes rang across the room as Girl Scout staff and adult volunteers sang campfire songs while sitting in front of large, pitched tents. Guests also enjoyed Thin Mint martinis and traditional camp activities, like making paper flowers and creating sand art. They also participated in archery and bolo golf, rode Segways and roasted s'mores.

The evening's honorees were Brenda and Tom Koch, who also served as the night's surprise auctioneer, helping GSSJC raise nearly \$30,000

during the live auction. In addition, 28 Council service units generously donated an extensive collection of *His, Hers, Ours* and *Family/Kids* silent auction packages.

Save the Date!

Join us Friday, April 24, 2009, at the George R.

Brown Convention Center for Urban Campout 2009 as we salute Girl Scout volunteers! Honorary Chairs Betsy Kamin and Jackie Martin will honor E.C. "Bud" and Nancy Simpson.

Event highlights and sponsors are featured on the back page.



Event co-chairs Monica Maby King (far left) and Tami McGuire (far right) with honorees Tom and Brenda Koch at Urban Campout 2008.

A message from Urban Campout 2008 co-chairs Monica Maby King and Tami McGuire

As co-chairs of Urban Campout 2008, and Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council volunteers, we would like to thank each and every corporation and individual who contributed to this year's event and helped us raise more than \$300,000 for much-needed Girl Scouting programs. Proceeds from this year's event will allow GSSJC to impact the lives of nearly 20,000 girls in our community!



Tami McGuire, Co-chair



Monica Maby King, Co-chair

As the premier leadership organization for girls, Girl Scouts is committed to helping girls discover themselves, connect with others and take action to make the world a better place. Events like Urban Campout ensure Girl Scouting is made available through community outreach programs to every girl, regardless of her circumstances. The connections she forms with other girls and caring adults will

make a difference in her life. Because of the leadership skills she has learned, she will take action to make the world a better place for all of us.

Thank you for helping so many girls learn to become effective leaders, which in turn will make a difference in all of our lives.

King is a volunteer member of the GSSJC Board of Directors. McGuire is a member of the Development Committee.

What's New

Become a Girl Scout volunteer!

Are you an adult with a passion for: Science, Technology, Engineering or Math? If so, we need you!

The Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council S.T.E.M. Committee is seeking people to join the group. We welcome S.T.E.M. professionals (think topics like chemistry, geology, engineering, computers, robotics and so on) and closet fans.

Members help plan and run events, brainstorm potential partners, work with Girl Planning Boards and remind girls that Science is Fun!

Interested individuals should contact Julie Deeter at 713-292-0203 or jdeeter@sjgs.org.

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Nature Center Opens at Girl Scout Camp

Four-thousand square foot facility offers window to nature, outdoors

Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council (GSSJC) celebrated the highly anticipated opening of its nature center at Camp Agnes Arnold in Conroe with a ribbon cutting ceremony on Saturday, April 12. At more than 4,000 square feet, the center will provide programs for more than 4,300 girls annually, helping them learn about nature and the environment, and encouraging them to interact in more meaningful ways with their surroundings.



GSSJC board chair Mary McIntire, board member Mary Jo Poindexter, Junior Girl Scout Rachel Glasser and CEO Mary Vitek at the nature center ribbon-cutting ceremony on April 12 at Camp Agnes Arnold.

“After three years of planning and construction, Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council is happy to see the hard work of its staff and volunteers turn a dream into a nature-inspired reality for the benefit of its girl members,” said Bob Spaeth, director of facilities. The nature center was one of several projects made possible by GSSJC’s successful 2006 capital campaign, which raised \$11.3 million.

Members, staff and supporters joined Girl Scout CEO Mary Vitek and board chair Mary McIntire for the festivities, where Brownie Girl Scout Rachel Glasser had the honor of cutting the green ribbon. Immediately following the well-attended opening, guests embarked on a self-guided tour of the beautifully crafted facility.

Complete with a workroom, classroom and exhibit hall, as well as overnight accommodations for two naturalists, the nature center sits amidst beautiful campgrounds – just yards away from Shadow Lake’s shore - and serves as the anchor for a nature trail that encircles the lake.

“We are eternally grateful to our donors and supporters for making this nature center a reality,” said Vitek. “This would not have been possible without them.”

Girl Scouting Beyond Bars

Girl Scout Troop #7173 holds troop meetings at a rather unconventional location – the Lucile Plane State Jail in Dayton, Texas. The troop is part of a program called Girl Scouts Beyond Bars, a Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council (GSSJC) community outreach program designed to help incarcerated mothers foster healthy, lasting relationships with their daughters.



A mother and her daughter engage in arts n’ crafts during a troop meeting at the Lucile Plane State Jail as part of the Girl Scouts Beyond Bars program.

GSSJC began the program in 1996. Currently, there are eight girls, ages 5 to 17, in the program. The number often changes as mothers are released or transferred from the facility. The troop meets every other Saturday, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Funding helps provide transportation to the facilities for the girls, who meet at the Girl Scout center and commute as a group.

Together with their mothers, girls engage in traditional troop activities like singing and practicing Girl Scout installment, rededication and flag ceremonies. Like any other troop, the girls brainstorm, plan their meetings, work on service projects, and learn about other cultures and the history of Girl Scouting.

Volunteers play an essential role in the program’s delivery.

When GSSJC launched the program, inmates were asked to apply if interested. The response was overwhelming. To participate, mothers must be evaluated on a disciplinary level and undergo an interview with jail officials. Participation is considered a privilege by mothers, who are eager to reconnect and bond with their daughters. Some mothers see their daughters for the first time in months, even years, through the program.

“Just because I made a mistake doesn’t mean I have to stop being a mom,” said one of the participants.

Like their daughters, the ladies of Troop #7173 also share a common bond. They were also separated from their mothers due to incarceration. Their hope is that through GSBB, the cycle can be broken so their girls can lead happy, productive lives and avoid the same fate. In the United States, an estimated 1.5 million to 2 million children have a parent in prison. Research shows these children are at greater risk of suffering the same fate than those without incarcerated parents.

Girl Scouts Beyond Bars is a GSSJC community outreach program made possible by proceeds from Urban Campout and the generous support of JPMorgan Chase, this year’s sponsor.

“Education is the key to helping young people succeed in life and work. At JPMorgan Chase, we support educational initiatives such as the Beyond Bars program with the Girl Scouts because it inspires girls and their mothers to succeed together. This single act can hopefully, also inspire these young girls to complete their education and pursue higher-education opportunities,” said David Lopez, vice president, National Community Relations.

JPMorgan Chase & Co. is a leading global financial services firm with operations in more than 60 countries. The firm is a leader in investment banking, financial services for consumers, small business and commercial banking, financial transaction processing, asset and wealth management, and private equity.

For more information on Girl Scout community outreach programs, contact Claudia McCabe at 713-292-0277 or cmccabe@sjgs.org.

In the News



Congratulations to Bette Lehmborg, secretary of the GSSJC Gold Award Committee, and relationship manager for Northern Trust Bank, who was recently profiled by The Texas State Bar. Lehmborg is a practicing lawyer, specializing in trust and estate planning.



GSSJC President Mary B. McIntire was the proud recipient of the 2008 Mayor’s Volunteer Houston award. She was also honored with an award from the President’s Council on Service and Civic Participation.



Joanne Williams, Girl Scout volunteer for more than 27 years, earned GSSJC’s Lifetime Achievement Award for her extensive history and commitment to Girl Scouting.



GSSJC volunteer Kay Craig was nominated for the 2008 Mayor’s Volunteer Houston award, and received a certificate of appreciation for her volunteer work.



Heather Garcia received the Ervan Chew Award for her contributions and demonstrated commitment to pluralism.

Corporate Support Brings Girl Scouting to At-Risk Girls

El Paso Corporation is a supporter of Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council since 2000. It has contributed more than \$100,000 in support of community outreach initiatives, like the Girl Scout activity center at Woodview Elementary School in the Spring Branch Independent School District.

Girl Scout activity centers bring traditional Girl Scout experiences to girls in low-income areas where it is often difficult to recruit adult volunteers. As part of the program, Girl Scout staff act as troop leaders and meet with the girls during or after school. Girls work on badges and service projects, and learn valuable communication, problem-solving and conflict resolution skills.

“Girl Scouts teaches important life lessons and we are proud to support programs like these activity centers, which allow girls to experience Girl Scouting who might not otherwise have the opportunity,” said Gloria Moritz, Community Relations manager for El Paso Corporation, who spent time with more than 30 girls during a visit to Woodview.

Activity centers serve 2,000 girls annually at approximately 25 elementary schools across the greater Houston area. To find out more about supporting community outreach programs like this, contact Marilyn Knight, Development Director, at 713-292-0207 or mknight@sjgs.org.

El Paso Corporation is a major provider of natural gas and related energy products. For more than 75 years, it has funded initiatives that strengthen the communities where their employees live, work and volunteer in the following focus areas: civic and community, education, and health and human services.



Gloria Moritz, community relations manager for El Paso Corporate Foundation visits the Girl Scout Activity Center at Woodview Elementary School.

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Please note: Names and organizations listed in this newsletter reflect donations received March 1 -May 31, 2008. Great care has been exercised to ensure the proper recognition of our donors. If an error or omission does occur, we apologize and hope you will bring it to our attention. Please address all corrections to Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council, 713-292-0282 or mrathers@gssjc.org.

Retirement Assets Make Ideal Charitable Bequests

If a significant portion of your estate is your retirement plan - your 401(k), 403 (b), IRA, Keogh, etc. - it is important to realize the Internal Revenue Service will impose income tax on any balance paid to a non-spouse beneficiary. This tax is in addition to the estate tax that may be imposed on the account if it meets certain thresholds - any amount more than \$2 million in 2008.

To avoid double taxation, you can name Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council (GSSJC) as the beneficiary of your retirement plan, and gift other assets not subject to income taxes to your heirs. Girl Scouts won't pay income tax on its distribution and your heirs will receive their share of your estate without the burden of extra taxes. In addition, your gift will qualify you for membership in the Juliette Gordon Low Society, which honors individuals who have provided for the Council's future.

For more information on planned giving options to GSSJC or membership in the Juliette Gordon Low Society, contact Marilyn Knight, Development Director, at 713-292-0207 or mknight@sjgs.org.

This information is not intended as legal, tax or investment advice. It is highly recommended that prospective donors consult with their own tax or legal advisors prior to making a planned gift.

Our legal name and address:

Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council
3110 Southwest Freeway
Houston, Texas 77098

Federal Identification Number: 74-6001254

Donor Profile – Marguerite Woung-Chapman

Never too late to be a Girl Scout...

Although Marguerite N. Woung-Chapman was not a Girl Scout growing up, she recognized the value of the organization and made sure her daughter, Jordan Bingham, was immersed in Girl Scout green during her formative years. Today, she, herself, is a proud Girl Scout who serves on GSSJC's Development Committee and Board of Directors.

"This is an organization that is completely geared toward providing life lessons, at each stage of a young girl's life, through a safe, nurturing and non-judgmental environment – something that was sorely lacking when I was growing up," said Woung-Chapman.

As a parent, Woung-Chapman credits Girl Scouting with enhancing her relationship with her daughter. "Girl Scouts helped me discuss topics with her that I think most mothers struggle to discuss frankly with their daughters, including the biological and physical changes that come with puberty and how to address bullying," she said.

In addition, Girl Scouting has enabled Woung-Chapman, who is vice-president, corporate secretary and chief governance officer for El Paso Corporation, to leverage her business savvy. "I helped my daughter with the cookie campaign and we still refer to the Cookie Sale as the spark for her entrepreneurial spirit," she said.

Despite her busy schedule, Woung-Chapman is a steadfast Girl Scout advocate. As a highly respected volunteer with a philanthropic commitment to Girl Scouting, Woung-Chapman encourages the community to contribute financially to Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council to help ensure programming and resources are available for all girls.

"Girl Scouts is always striving to ensure that they remain relevant to the next generation of girls. For such a large international organization, Girl Scouts is an extraordinarily transparent agency where you can see your money at work in your own community," she said. "This organization completely lacks complacency."



It costs \$217 per Girl Scout to make Girl Scouting a reality at Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council.



Leadership for a Lifetime is Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council's annual giving campaign. GSSJC is one of the oldest charities in southeast Texas and we rely on the generosity of our community for continued operating support. To find out more about supporting your Council contact Jennifer Ashley at 713-292-0346 or jashley@sjgs.org.



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(Clockwise) Guests have fun making sand art at Urban Campout 2008. Tom Koch test drives a Segway! Terry Lea Elizondo looks on as Stacy Lieder entertains guests with campfire songs.



Thank you! More than 30 employees of Hughes Christensen, a division of Baker Hughes, rolled up their sleeves on May 13 to help paint and clear overgrowth at Camp Agnes Arnold as part of United Way of Montgomery County's Days of Caring.

Dates to Remember

GSSJC Open House
Sept. 6
GSSJC Building- 3110 Southwest Freeway
For more information on upcoming events visit www.gssjc.org



Kathy Tamer (second from left) presents a check on behalf of United Space Alliance to (from left to right) GSSJC's Jo Monday, senior Program director, Girl Scout Rachel Glasser, Linda Pau, Program director, and CEO Mary Vitek.



GSSJC volunteer Stacy Methvin (right) presents a check to GSSJC President Mary B. McIntire (left) and CEO Mary Vitek (center) at the Spring Council Meeting on behalf of Shell.