

  
**girl scouts**  
greater los angeles  
cookie program

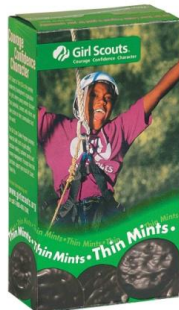
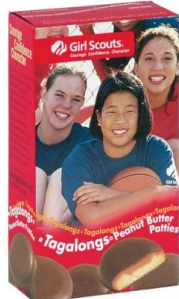
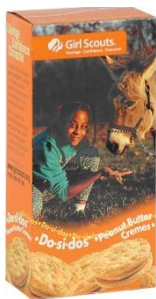


# Cookie Rookie

An introduction to Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles' Product Sales



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## Introduction to the Wonderful World of Product Sales

### *Behold the POWER of a Simple Cookie*

Welcome. The Girl Scout Cookie Program is the single largest financial literacy and business skills course for girls in the world. Millions of girls have enjoyed the Cookie Program before you. The experience is uniquely American. In the years to come, you and your girls will look back on the fun and excitement the Cookie Program brings to the troop experience. Read on to start your adventure.

The concept of a Girl Scout Cookie Program started in 1917 as a modest effort to raise funds for a service project by a single troop. Girls baked cookies in their own homes, and mothers volunteered as technical advisors. The cookies were then sold in the local high school cafeteria. Nearly 100 years later, almost everything has changed about the Cookie Program, but Girl Scouts are still learning critical skills and taking charge of their future by selling the beloved Girl Scout Cookie.

*Cookie Rookie* explains the basics of how the Cookie Program works and why Girl Scouts sell cookies. It will answer many questions and demystify the Cookie Program. First-time Troop Leaders and Troop Cookie Chairs are often intimidated by the perceived enormity of the Cookie Program process. Our hope is that by providing clear information the novice will have less apprehension and a better first-time Cookie Program experience. History shows that troops that truly enjoy the Cookie season sell far more and reap the rewards of much higher troop proceeds. Over the life of the troop, the cumulative benefit of successful Cookie (and Fall Product) Programs is visible in the girls who exit Girl Scouts as young adults. In addition, the product sale programs make amazing things possible for girls from troop outings to service projects to trips that make lifelong memories.

Troop Leaders and Troop Cookie Chairs are wonderful volunteers who put their heart into bringing the Girl Scout Leadership Experience to girls entrusted to them. Often they are as excited about joining Girl Scouts as girls. Many have never been a part of Girl Scouts as a girl. GSGLA has developed trainings to get new leaders organized and feeling confident in their new roles. Product Sales, however, is not year-round and is a very special program that is managed by a dedicated team of professionals outside the domain of our Membership, Program, and Adult Development Departments. Troop Cookie Chair trainings are normally conducted by the Service Unit Cookie Chair at a monthly meeting, usually in early January. Some SUCCs do a thorough job of training, while others may only give a cursory review of Cookies. *Cookie Rookie* will make you an educated student going into training. You will have a thorough overview of every aspect of the Cookie Program, and you will be prepared to ask good questions.

“...all I really wanted to do was to better my own best achievements...Yes, I wanted to sell...the most boxes of Girl Scout cookies; but more important, I wanted to sell more...cookies than I had the previous year. As I progressed through my career, the competitive spirit my mother had encouraged helped me through some very difficult days. And with each challenge, I concentrated upon competing with myself.”

Business icon and Girl Scout, Mary Kay Ash. From *Miracles Happen, The Life & Timeless Principles of the Founder of Mary Kay, Inc.*

## The Girl Scout Cookie Program

*It's a PROGRAM, Not a Sale*

The most frequent misconception about the Girl Scout Cookie Program is that it is an attempt to get cute kids to sell some over-priced item to make a profit. Many schools now endorse fundraisers at the beginning of the school year to supplement their budgets, but the Girl Scout Cookie Program is very different. Ours is a real PROGRAM that TEACHES life skills in the context of running a girl-led business. As the largest financial literacy program for girls in the country, the Girl Scout Cookie Program contains powerful components that no school fundraiser can match, including primed and willing consumers ready to support this generation of Girl Scouts. The Girl Scout Cookie Program has a proven history of developing young entrepreneurs who go on to make a difference in their lives and in their communities.

Today, GSUSA promotes the benefits by educating adults on the *5 Skills for Girls* that girls acquire by participating. Parents need to hear and understand these dynamic benefits. Girl Scouts teaches many wonderful qualities to maturing girls, but the Cookie Program uniquely boasts the *5 Skills for Girls*.



**Goal Setting** – Sounds simple, doesn't it? But it is so powerful! We emphasize goal setting at the girl, troop, service unit, and council level. Everyone needs goals in life to get where you want to go. Otherwise, how do you know when you've achieved anything? The fundamental goal to set is 'what Girl Scout activity do you want to do with your troop and how many boxes do you need to sell to make that happen?' This is supported by many interim goals. When a girl sets a goal and then makes a plan to achieve it, she learns that the goal can be anything she wants it to be.

*In Real Life:* When there is a school science project due on Monday, she will have the skills to budget her time towards its completion. She won't tell you Sunday night that there is a project due in the morning and needs to go to the store for supplies. Wouldn't it be nice to never be in that situation again?

**Decision Making** – As a girl-led experiential program, Girl Scouts empowers girls to make decisions on all their troop's activities. In order to achieve the girl and troop goals, many decisions need to be researched, pondered, and finalized. During the program, if a specific booth sale is successful, or not, or a presentation to a business owner is successful, or not, the girl finds herself at a new decision point. Girls find themselves making and reevaluating decisions constantly. She learns to appreciate good results, and more importantly, to adjust to disappointing results of her decisions. Decision-making skills will help her every day throughout her life.

*In Real Life:* As she evaluates career opportunities, she can more effectively process all the possibilities. She can research colleges and determine the criteria needed to help with college applications because she knows a complicated decision requires preparation and consideration.

**Money Management** – All of Girl Scouting is girl-led whereas they collectively determine what their Girl Scouting year will entail, and if they want to travel somewhere for their experience. As the girl gets older, travel becomes a more common goal. Younger girls typically take local troop trips together. All of these experiences cost money. Together with their adult leaders, the girls plot through a budget process to determine how much funding they will need, and then determine how many boxes will need to be sold. As girls develop the concepts around having to work to earn money for something they want, that is an important life skill.

*In Real Life:* Girls will appreciate the effort it takes to earn money the next time she asks for something because she knows that everything we want in life costs money and we have to work for it.

**People Skills** – Younger girls can be naturally shy with people they do not encounter regularly. Asking Grandma to support her Cookie Program may be easy, but what about a neighbor she hardly knows? At a booth sale, there can be an indifferent customer. Girls learn to read people’s expressions and body language and find ways to turn the situation into a positive. She can explain she is raising money to fund her Gold Award, and how that Gold Award will make a lasting improvement on her community. The customer will see they can make a direct impact on their community by supporting a girl in a small way.

*In Real Life:* An ability to work with and see other points of view will help her find the solution when there is a disagreement on her sports team. Businesses want employees who are persuasive, can get along with others, and build consensus.

**Business Ethics** – We can all share a bad customer service story that happened to us recently. We also know which businesses have lost our faith forever. Girls will learn first-hand how hard it can be to earn a customer and how easy it is to lose one. When a customer complains that a box is damaged, the girl knows to replace it without hesitation and with a smile. Friendly customer service when making sales and keeping promises to deliver product as the customer expects, teaches these basic business ethics.



*In Real Life:* Girls learn that if she doesn’t keep her commitments, there are consequences. She becomes a more responsible young adult in all kinds of situations. Her friends, classmates and teachers count on her and think of her as trustworthy. This will make her a natural leader as people gravitate towards her when looking to solve problems.

When a troop embraces the Cookie Program well, they follow the program materials provided, and utilize the marketing materials from council. The program curriculum can make troop meetings a breeze, as there is enough material to last the whole year. We strive hard to make the Cookie Program as clear and simple as possible even though there are so many moving parts. After years of experience, we have witnessed thousands of girls learn the *5 Skills for Girls* and have a blast at the same time. It is the consummate Girl Scout experience!

## Cookie Terminology

### *Words and Acronyms that Make you Go Hmmm?*

Girl Scouts has a unique language, and the Cookie Program is no exception. Here are some of the more common terms we use on a daily basis, but can be confusing until you know what we mean.

*ACH Debit* – an eBanking transfer from one bank account to another. ACH stands for Automatic Clearing House which is the federal system of sending funds electronically. Council gives instructions to our bank to ACH Debit the troop accounts and deposit funds into council’s bank account.

Allocations – a GreenBeans process at the end of the program that takes boxes that have been signed out to a troop, and gives credit for their sale to individual girls. When added to her Initial Order, this in turn determines the girl’s final sales quantity and her recognition level. If needed, allocating can also reassign financial responsibility for the cookies from the troop to the parent/guardian.

Boothing – the process where girls sell their product to customers in a face-to-face transaction. Stereotypically, the booths are outside of grocery stores on weekends. Troops will booth based upon the motivation levels of their girls and in direct relationship to their goals. The average troop holds four booths, but many large troops will have dozens of booths over all weekends.

Boothing Chair – a service unit volunteer or council staff person who manages the relationship of host businesses who grant written permission for troops to booth on their private property.

Booth Scheduler – a GreenBeans function that allows troops to sign up for available booth sites and times. Very specific timelines determine when the Booth Scheduler is available to troops for this process and can change with each season.

Circle Sheet – a convenient form used during Initial Order delivery for easy troop pick up. It has 8 colored squares to count out the number of cases the troop should be picking up. Colored squares correspond to the cookie box color. Also known as a ‘bubble sheet.’

Club 500 FUNfest – a recognition event for girls who sell 500 or more boxes, and who are the exclusive invitees to a custom, unique, girl-only experience.

Cookie Entrepreneur Officer (CEO) - a girl in business for herself, learning valuable and transferrable life skills, while building self-confidence and having fun with her other troop members.



Cupboard – locations throughout GSGLA where cookies are warehoused and troops are able to pick up during designated days and hours.

Cookie Club – the only GSUSA-approved online marketing tool. Girls send emails to family and friends to market their cookie program and receive ‘promises’ to purchase in return.



Cookie Locater – a database of booths that have been chosen by a troop. The Locater is on our website during the Boothing period. Potential customers can type their ZIP code in, and the Locater will return all current and future active Booths within that ZIP code as. It is our best way to connect customers to the product.

Cupboard Manager - a volunteer or council staff person who manages the local cookie warehouse.

Elite 1000 – a recognition event for girls who sell 1000 or more boxes, and who are the exclusive invitees to a custom, unique, girl-only experience.

Gift of Caring – Council-wide troop service program where other partnering non-profits receive cookie donations toward their mission.

Girl Order Card – Customized form that is used primarily to take the girl's Initial Order. It contains information about the cookies for the customer and details of the recognition and incentive plans for girls.

GreenBeans – GSGLA's Internet-based product sales software used to track sales, inventory, booth sites, booth scheduling, recognitions, and girl and troop payments.

Incentive – a recognition item received by a girl, a troop, or a service unit for a specific sales goal

Initial Order – the first cookie orders that are turned in to council for service unit delivery. These are the very first cookies that will be delivered to customers.

Initial Order Delivery Site – a special location within each service unit where Initial Orders are sorted and distributed to troops. It has intrinsic qualities that make it a suitable staging area.

Little Brownie Bakers (LBB) – the GSGLA cookie bakery partner located in Louisville, KY. Only two bakeries produce all Girl Scout cookies in the USA. The other baker is ABC Bakers.

Opt out – Older girl troops (Cadette and above) can elect to waive the recognitions they would otherwise earn, and instead receive an additional \$.05 per box sold in proceeds. Opt out troops still receive all patches, Club 500 and Elite 1000 recognition events (if achieved), and are eligible for the Initial Order incentive (if offered).

Parent/Guardian Permission and Responsibility Agreement – form that parents or guardians sign to grant permission for their girl to participate in the Cookie Program, and accept financial responsibility for all cookies their girl sells.

Position Description and Agreement(s) – various written documents signed by SUCC, SUBC, SURC, SUCM, and TCC that defines their role and responsibilities to council for the cookie program.

Product Sales Administrator (PSA) – the council staff member who has primary responsibility for working with volunteers in her service center to deliver the Cookie Program. SUCCs work closely with the PSA on all operational needs.

Recognition – carefully screened and selected item received by girls for reaching a specific sales goal.

Round-Up – a GreenBeans process that rounds up the troop's Initial Order of each cookie variety into whole case increments. Initial Orders are only transacted in whole (12-box) cases.

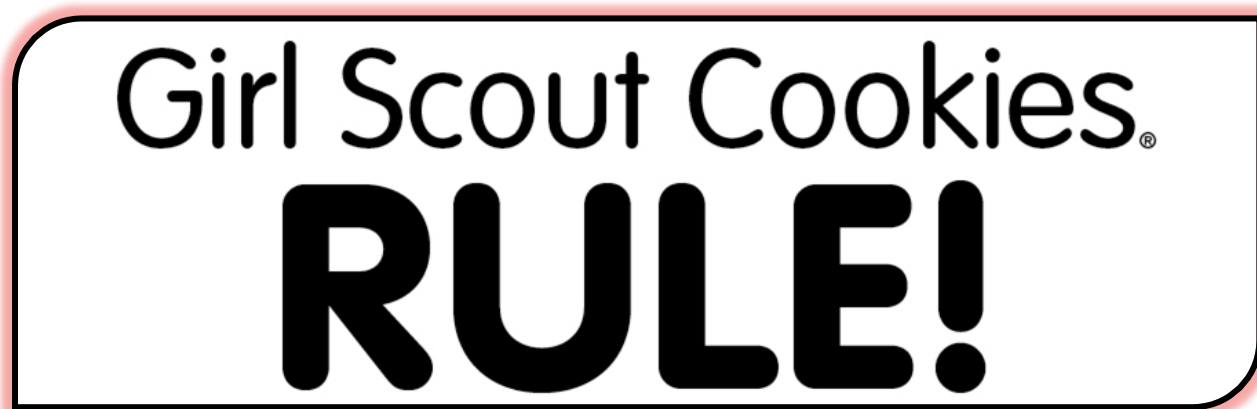
Service Unit (SU) – a geographic area set by council to create manageable groups of troops. Boundaries can be set by town lines, roadways, or other demarcation.

Service Unit Cookie Chair (SUCC) – a volunteer who coordinates the Cookie Program for the service unit. Chosen by the SUM, and appointed by council, this position recruits and trains Troop Cookie Chairs.

Troop Cookie Chair (TCC) – a volunteer who coordinates the Cookie Program at the troop level. Chosen by the Troop Leader, and appointed by council, this position trains girls and parents.

Troop Proceeds – these are monies earned by a troop on their total cookie sales, including opt out proceeds.

Troop to Troop Transfer – the flexibility to move cookies (and their financial responsibility) from one troop with an excess supply of cookies to another troop with a demand for those cookies. This can be very helpful at the end of the program when a troop would otherwise be left with excess inventory and few prospects to sell them. Troops working together to clean out stock and wrap up their program collectively is a source of pride and an example of Girl Scout sisterhood.



## Cookie Kick-Off

### *Let's Start Off on the Right Foot*

Since the Cookie Program is the single largest Girl Scout program of the year, it's only appropriate that it begins in traditional Girl Scout fashion – with a celebration! The kick-off, a GSGLA council-wide event, is meant to excite the girls and inspire them to reach their goals.

The Cookie Kick-off is divided into a few major focuses.

1. Troop and vendor booths feature tons of hands-on activities for girls, many of which link to earned recognitions, such as try-its or badges. Older girl troops host booths that allow younger Girl Scouts to see some of the experiences they have gained because of their involvement in Girl Scouts. Here you can also learn about any new cookies for the year and see the girl recognitions for the very first time!
2. Cookie University is the best place to learn some new marketing techniques. Several classes are held on specific topics that change throughout the day. Be sure to check the curriculum and sign up for the class or two that most interests you. Cookie U is also geared to help girls with their specific marketing plans. GSGLA Marketing and Communications staff and Little Brownie Bakers representatives are on hand to answer your questions and fine-tune your sales plan. Some classes at Cookie U are designed for the parent or Troop Leader. We can help you motivate the girls as well as answer your questions.
3. Have a blast! Kick-off is meant to be fun and interactive for the girl. There are lots of things to see and do. A special Girl Scout Shop is created to showcase all the distinctive cookie merchandise for the year. Here's your chance to get the custom designed annual Cookie Kick-off T-shirt among other cookie-themed items. In past years there has been a rock-climbing wall, an older girl pavilion just for Cadettes



and older, and lots of cute live animals to learn about. Each year changes, but it is always centered on giving the girls a fun and fantastic day. It's simply the best way to kick-off each girl's individual cookie season.

We highly recommend that at least two girls from every troop plan to attend Cookie Kick-Off. Often, entire troops attend together as a troop event. There's something new to learn and experience every year, and the girls can at least bring back their stories and inspiration to the other troop members. Data shows that girls who attend Cookie Kick-Off sell 50 more boxes than those that do not attend. Cookie Kick-Off motivates, educates, and inspires girls to set and attain their highest goals!

## Pre-Program Actions & Requirements

### *Volunteering, Trainings, and Paperwork*

The Cookie Program, like all of Girl Scouts, is an amazing network of passionate volunteers and a professional staff and who come together for the benefit of thousands of girls. GSGLA's participation rate is over 90% and nearly 30,000 girls enjoy the fun, excitement and rewards of the Cookie Program. Mobilizing this army of people takes time, talent and hard work.

GSGLA is divided into geographic regions, and then by service units at the local level. Each service unit has a Service Unit Manager (SUM), a volunteer position, who has responsibility for the troops in her jurisdiction. For the Cookie (and Fall Product) Program, the service unit provides a Service Unit Cookie Chair (SUCC), or Fall Product Chair (SUFPC). This volunteer is charged with overseeing the entire Cookie or Fall Product Program in their area. She may recruit volunteers for other roles, although for smaller service units the SUCC may fulfill all roles:

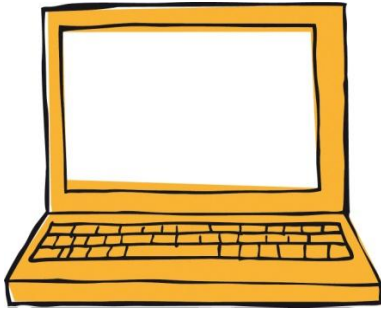
- SUBC – Service Unit Boothing Chair cultivates relationships and takes care of booth site details
- SUDC – Service Unit Delivery Chair locates the delivery site, assigns troops to a schedule to pick up, and coordinates operations for Initial Order delivery
- SUCM –Service Unit Cupboard Manager is responsible for operating a local cupboard. She will fill troop reservations in GreenBeans, and work with council to keep appropriate quantities on hand. SUCMs will sometimes house the cupboard at their home, if appropriate, and recruit others to work the cupboard.
- SURC – Service Unit Recognitions Chair distributes girl recognitions after the program

By dividing the work among different volunteers, the SUCC can preserve her ability to manage well. Delegating specific tasks also can make those functions work better for the troop, and that in turns makes for a better Cookie Program experience for all.

## GreenBeans

*The Software that Makes Your Life Easier!*

GSGLA has developed its own Internet-based proprietary software to manage all aspects of the Cookie and Fall Product Programs. The GreenBeans system tracks all product, amount due, and payments. It accounts for each parent's financial responsibility to the troop and also the troop's financial responsibility to council.



GreenBeans access is given to each troop following their training and completion of the required paperwork. The Troop Cookie Chair will create her troop, add girls, place an Initial Order, schedule booths and reserve additional product. Full financial accounting is built in so that troops know exactly what is owed by each girl, and Troop Cookie Chairs can record payments and see balances owed. Girl recognitions are computed within GreenBeans, and troops know exactly which girl has earned what recognitions to make distribution easy!

The council produces a written manual and a video series that are used to train troops on how to use GreenBeans. Some offices also offer in-person trainings. Product Sales Administrators are always available for questions. While it takes a little training to learn GreenBeans, once volunteers learn it, they love how it completely manages their Cookie Program.

## Product Sales for Daisy Level Girls

*Never Underestimate the Effect of Being Cute*

Daisies are permitted to participate in Product Sales, but with additional limitations and safeguards. All of the information provided in *Cookie Rookie* is applicable; however, some common sense rules are here:



1. Overall, parents or guardians will assist to a greater degree. Five- and six-year-old girls should not be approaching strangers, for example, unless in a supervised booth sale environment.
2. Daisies do not handle money at all. Adults hold all funds. Daisies can explain what cookie is their favorite and why, but the adult closes the sale.
3. Daisies should not booth for more than an hour at a time. Their attention span is shorter, and they get tired faster than Brownies and above. Daisy troops who sign up for booths need to coordinate amongst themselves how to cover a 4-hour booth shift.
4. Adult to girl ratios are higher for younger girls.

Your Service Unit Cookie Chair may train on additional safeguards. Nothing, however, will replace the parent or guardian's personal sense of what their girl should or should not do.

## Initial Orders & Deliveries

### *It's Time to Flex Your Strategy*

Girl order cards are distributed to the girls just as soon as the troop's participation in the Cookie Program is recorded and confirmed. The order card is a tool for selling as well as an order form to record customer information and purchases. As a selling tool, the girl order card has a back panel that lists the official recognitions offered by council. The girl should record her personal goal as a commitment to herself. When selling, the public frequently engages the girl in conversation about what she is working toward. The girl has the recognitions at her fingertips to show what she will receive and explain what her troop will do with the proceeds. The girl order card lists the varieties of cookies available, their package weights, and descriptions. Girls should be familiar with the basic characteristics of each cookie to answer the consumer's questions, but also to encourage customers to try other flavors.

The start date of the sale is well publicized, and is printed right on the girl order card. Girls must never sell before the start date under any circumstances and will be penalized by losing part of their Initial Order troop proceeds.

Girls usually engage their first customers right away: Mom & Dad. These are great early attempts for easy sales and learning experiences before they venture farther out into the world. Self-confidence is one of the most reported qualities that adults gained as girls who participated in the Cookie Program. Overcoming the innate fear of asking a stranger to help you achieve a goal can be a singular life-changing skill. Girls will use their order card as a tool to show potential customers exactly what they are offering. For younger girls who have never done this, the order card is an essential tool to get them going. Customers should complete a line on the order card for all of their preferred choices. Initial Orders from the girl order card are submitted via GreenBeans and will be reviewed at the Service Unit level. Troops are also able to add additional quantities in anticipation of sales not yet received at the time of the cutoff, but for which the troop wants additional inventory on hand as soon as possible. Troops are encouraged to plan proactively, but also be careful not to overestimate.

About two weeks after the start, Initial Orders are due to the troop. We recommend that the girl make a copy of her order card for the Troop Cookie Chair (TCC), or email her order in, so that she retains the card to continue selling. The TCC enters each girl order into GreenBeans by the due date and time. Council then rolls up all orders at the service unit level to place the order with the bakery at a council level. Your Service Unit Delivery Chair makes arrangements to schedule your troop's delivery about two weeks later.

Council-wide, the Initial Order represents about 2/3 of the entire product volume and is about 2.5 million boxes delivered over only a couple of days. It's a huge logistical plan that works very well when thoughtfully planned. More specific details will be provided during troop training.

Troops pick up their Initial Order cookies at the specified date and time. Girls pick up their cookies from the TCC at a prearranged time and are then ready to fulfill their Initial Order customers' orders and collect payment. Girls never collect payment at the time of an order, but only at delivery. (Gift of Caring is the only exception).

## Cookie Cupboards

### *Show Me the Cookies!!!*

A cookie cupboard is the method of cookie distribution after Initial Orders have been delivered. Some are large trailer-based cupboards at council service or program centers. Other cupboards are smaller and run by specially trained volunteers out of their homes or at the delivery agent's business.

As booting approaches, the cupboards are opened and staffed for troops to pick up product. Each troop should have placed an initial booth order as part of their Initial Order. For most troops, booting is a marathon and they want to get as much product delivered up front, so there is less to pick up on their own. Remember that all product delivered to or picked up by a troop is non-returnable and has been purchased by the troop. Note that some troops are at the cupboard 2-3 times per week.

Through GreenBeans, troops are able to place reservations for their additional pickups. This helps the council monitor inventory and demand by flavor to ensure the cupboards are stocked properly in advance of pickups.



## Boothing

### *The Public Face of the Cookie Program*

Troops that actively booth will achieve far greater success in the *5 Skills for Girls* than troops that booth only on opening weekend, or not at all. Boothing requires greater strategic thinking, planning and customer service skills. Interaction with the public produces a much more well-rounded experience than simply selling to family and friends.



Each service unit has a dedicated volunteer whose job is to build relationships in the community with businesses. The generosity and partnership of these businesses provides venues for boothing. The booth sites, dates, and times are entered in GreenBeans for selection at the designated time by troops. Boothing dates are set by council, but each hosting business has the right to determine exactly when and where the booths can be established. Keep in mind that host businesses are first and foremost operating their business and are focused on servicing their customers as best as they can. GSGLA booths are secondary and must never interfere with the operations of the host business.

There are specific boothing rules and proper etiquette that apply to all GSGLA booths. Some Service Units also provide guidelines, but they cannot change council policy. Troops are trained on these before the Cookie Program starts. Host businesses can set additional criteria aside from date and time. Sometimes they have a preference on exactly where the booth is setup or that girls must be in full uniform. These criteria are listed in the GreenBeans Booth Scheduler so that troops know what they can expect if they choose these booths.

The GreenBeans Booth Scheduler is a fantastic tool to empower troops to set their booth choices at their convenience. All booth opportunities are listed in GreenBeans before the Initial Order is due. At a predetermined schedule, troops can log in and select their 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, etc. choice. There are some limitations on quantity and which booths can be chosen first, but these are minor. The best feature is convenience. When the Booth Scheduler is open, troops can add booths, or edit prior choices, all on their own.



The Booth Scheduler feeds data directly out to our Cookie Locator. The Cookie Locator is a website that allows the public to search for available booths via ZIP code. GSGLA is committed to marketing your booths and connecting customers with a booth. The single most common phone inquiry that council receives is “where are the booths?” Again, the public wants to support the girls’ efforts, but that can be harder than it should be at times. The Cookie Locator’s effectiveness is directly related to the accuracy of the Booth Scheduler. Only booths that have an assigned troop will appear in the Cookie Locator. For that reason, if a troop cannot fulfill its booth commitment, the troop must delete itself from that booth in the Booth Scheduler for two reasons. First it also deletes the booth from the Cookie Locator and the public will not see it as an opportunity to make a purchase, and second, the booth becomes available to other troops who can take advantage of the booth slot.

## Finances

### *How to Safeguard the Money*

All troops must have a checking account that is opened in the troop’s name and in the council’s federal tax ID number. This is one of the first things new troops must complete, and is absolutely essential for Product Sale participation. All payments to council are processed via an electronic ACH Debit. This online banking tool is very effective at tracking payments, and is of utmost convenience to troops and service units. Troops must complete the *ACH Debit Authorization* form and attach a voided troop check for each product sale. The invitation to logon to GreenBeans is predicated on receiving this paperwork.

Council processes two debits for each troop. The first debit represents 50% of the troop’s amount owed to council as of the Initial Order. This is computed by taking the troops gross sales through Initial Order, less troop proceeds, less opt-out proceeds, and dividing by two. The first ACH Debit is processed approximately two weeks after delivery of the Initial Orders, which gives the troop plenty of time to deliver product to girls, and for the girls to deliver to customers, collect payment and remit to the troop.

The second and final ACH debit is processed approximately ten days after the end of the program. At this time, the full balance owed to council is collected. Total sales, less total troop proceeds, less opt out proceeds, and less the first ACH debit compute the current balance due.

Sometimes troops have trouble collecting from girls and their parents, and troops may modify the debit amount, if needed, by contacting their PSA. Other issues concerning



payment can be a customer's NSF (non-sufficient fund) check. Please know that GSGLA has a national reputation of excellent payment procedures and collection efforts. Council can assist you at every opportunity to prevent cash management issues. Girls should be remitting funds to troops promptly and frequently. Likewise, troops should be depositing into their troop bank accounts promptly and frequently.

Variation from this golden rule is the foundation for trouble down the road. Adults are responsible for safeguarding the sale proceeds and should be teaching young girls common sense rules for handling cash. Adults should safeguard large (\$20+) bills, and the cash box at booths should contain only a reasonable amount to make change. Sadly, we have seen rare incidents where a troop's cash box can disappear along with all funds. Troops are still responsible for payment to council even under unfortunate circumstances. This is an example of what real businesses have to deal with, even if it is one of life's hardest lessons.

## Recognitions, Incentives & the GSGLA Signature Events

### *Time to Celebrate the Girls' Successes*

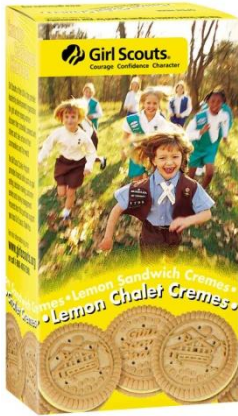
Recognitions are one of the more popular aspects of the Cookie Program. Girls are very excited to see the items that are featured each year. Incentives are rewards for a targeted audience if they achieve specific performance goals. GSGLA produces two Signature Events as part of the overall recognition structure. Club 500 FUNfest and the Elite 1000 are all-girl events that are very special. A great amount of planning and thought goes into their content. GSGLA is proud of these girl events, and their popularity grows each year.

Recognitions are done quite differently at GSGLA than at most councils across the US. Each cookie baker produces a line of recognitions in keeping with that year's theme from which the council can choose and place at the levels it selects. The convenience of having the bakery pre-select items can be a big time-saver for councils. GSGLA, however, has a different view in that generic bakery items may have mass appeal in some parts of the country, but sometimes just don't fit the way we would like in Los Angeles. GSGLA does its own shopping at large expos, conducts research, and develops relationships with suppliers.



In late June to July, GSGLA puts a survey out to the entire membership where girls and their parents can vote on what items appeal best that year. In addition, GSGLA holds focus groups that provide valuable insight into new trends for both girls and parents. What appeals to younger girls does not necessarily appeal to older girls. The data from the voting is used to narrow down the field to about 25 items. Council product sales staff makes the final decision.

Recognition levels are the pre-set number of boxes a girl must sell in order to receive the item listed. GSGLA's recognitions are cumulative. Girls receive all recognitions up to the top selling quantity – not just the highest award. Recognition levels currently range from 12 to 3,000 boxes.



Older girl troops are allowed to 'opt out' of the recognition plan and instead receive an additional \$.05 per box in troop proceeds. Older girls (Cadettes, Seniors & Ambassadors) are usually on different paths than the younger set. Some have large, faraway trips planned around the world. Others are planning their Silver and Gold Award projects which can require additional funding. At the same time, older girls may have outgrown the recognition items (no matter HOW cool they may be) and simply would rather have more money for their troop activities or travel. To opt out or not is a girl decision (not an adult decision) that affects the whole troop. Individual girls cannot opt out which makes it important for the girls to discuss it as a group and make the best decision for the troop as a whole.

GreenBeans will compute the recognitions earned for each girl automatically. However, the TCC must allocate boxes accurately to be sure each girl receives her correct recognitions. This step is completed after the end of the program as part of the final wrap up of money and cookies.

Girl recognitions are ordered in early April for delivery around May 1<sup>st</sup>. The council has contracted with its suppliers for specific quantities six months earlier, but sometimes the quantities needed vary from our best estimates, which can delay custom items.

The two GSGLA signature events are planned months in advance and both are strictly "girl-only." Club 500 FUNfest is on a large scale with currently 800 girls. Elite 1000 is more exclusive by its nature with currently 125 girls reaching this achievement. Any girl who has reached these sales levels and has attended either event is extremely motivated to repeat it the following year (with her friends). These event recognitions are that good.

## Gift of Caring

### *Community Service is at the Heart of Girl Scouts*

A major learning component of Girl Scouts is that of community service. Girls learn the value of helping others and putting their time and effort back into the communities to truly make a difference in the lives of others. These service projects will instill the value of serving others that will continue into adulthood. The public is keenly aware of the valuable services that Girl Scouts brings to their communities and are eager to support.

COOKIES 4 a change

Through the Cookie Program, girls offer the public the opportunity to purchase cookies for someone else in need of a smile that the box brings. The girl accepts a monetary donation from the customer and counts it as a sale. The customer does not purchase an actual box that the girl has on hand. Gift of Caring (GOC) sales are virtual boxes and are not physical at this time. Donations toward GOC cookies are put toward the council-wide Gift of Caring program. Currently, GSGLA collects nearly 90,000 boxes per year for donation to its GOC partners. GOC is the definition of a “win-win” situation. The general public donates a product toward a large-scale service project and also helps funds the troop’s more personal service projects in the future. Troops keep their proceeds on all boxes sold, including GOC.

## “Great cookies for a great cause”

The largest share of GOC cookies goes to organizations such as Operation Gratitude, the USO, and the LA Regional Food Bank that supplies other food banks throughout LA County. Operation Gratitude sends care packages to military personnel deployed overseas to provide a taste of home. The public is eager to support the GOC partners as much as the girls themselves.

GOC cookies are recorded in GreenBeans as sales. Council will then place an additional order for thousands of cases of cookies that are drop shipped directly to the GOC partners. Understandably, girls and volunteers want to be a part of the delivery. The tangible aspect of being there makes an important impression. Council is able to arrange for these opportunities on a limited scale. Troops are encouraged to donate leftover cookies to their favorite or local food pantry. However, these cookies are NOT counted towards GOC.

Girls are trained to ask every customer for ONE Gift of Caring box in addition to their own personal purchase. This method keeps the service to others concept active in the girls’ minds. They learn how such a simple step can reap huge benefits for others. It is the perfect vehicle to grow their sales and to exceed their personal goals.



## Summary

### *Cookies and Beyond...*

The annual Girl Scout Cookie Program is the single most public aspect of Girl Scouting. The general public has a cursory understanding of what it's all about, but mostly they cannot wait to get their allotment of delicious, exclusive treats. Girl Scouts OWNS the cookie market nationwide during the Cookie Program. Keebler, Nabisco, and Pepperidge Farms all see their sales drop sharply when our product is available. But as we have learned over the years, it's NOT just a box of cookies. Cookies represent the myriad of opportunities that girls will have as a result of their participation in the Cookie Program.

Troop Proceeds will fund the small scale activities of a troop on a monthly basis, including community service projects, troop supplies, and field trips. It will also fund the larger troop activities like travel that will create memories of a lifetime. Girls are rightly proud of their accomplishments and know that their experiences from Girl Scouting have set them on a better life journey. The Girl Scout Cookie Program not only funds all of these possibilities, it teaches fundamental, tangible life skills that stay with her forever.

The Product Sales Department is passionate about its work. We work year round to develop and implement the best Cookie (and Fall Product) Program we can imagine. Collectively, we have nearly 50 years of Girl Scouting experience as staff (much more as parents of Girl Scouts and as former Troop Leaders), and we are supported by one of the most creative Marketing, Branding, and Communications staff in the country. All of this is to support the girl and her dreams for the future.

Our hope is that *Cookie Rookie* has made the Girl Scout Cookie Program easier to understand and that you are energized for your first Cookie Program. Please let us know if you have any questions and what we can do to be of service.

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