

PARTNERING WITH GIRLS IN EVENTS

Girl-planned events are possible!

If your service unit volunteers feel girls are not capable of planning and running events, ask your VDM (council staff member) to put you in touch with service units that do hold successful girl-led events. If the adults hold them back by underestimating their abilities, the girls are missing out on one of the truly unique opportunities available to them in Girl Scouting, to partner with adults to learn skills (rather than being taught things by adults). At Girl Scouts everything centers around the girl; activities are girl led, which gives girls the opportunity to learn by doing in a cooperative learning environment.

Start out simple and build

If the girls have not had the opportunity to learn planning and organizational skills, start them out with some of these tasks:

- Choosing basic themes
- Developing rules of conduct
- Performing flag ceremonies
- Teaching songs, games, crafts, etc.
- Teaching ceremonies or skills
- Planning songs, skits, and ceremonies
- Serving as program aides or assistants
- Serving on the committee in an advisory role
- Taking on some simpler committee tasks

As the girls gain experience you can partner with them as individuals, small teams or whole troops to have them take on certain event committee responsibilities. Like most other skills, girls will learn best by tackling simple events first and graduating to more complex ones. By partnering with caring adults who are willing to take the time to pass on planning, decision-making, and organizational skills to girls, they'll be running events in no time.

TIPS FOR TRUE PARTNERSHIP

Empower the girls:

- At the first meeting, ask all members to share their skills with the group. What are they good at? What do they enjoy doing? This is an affirming exercise.
- Provide an opportunity for the girls to get to know each other by starting with an ice-breaker.
- Encourage the group to make a team/group agreement so decision-making can be fair.
- Provide a structured process for brainstorming ideas. If the girls do not speak up, solicit their ideas. Also, remember to give them time to respond when you ask questions.
- Ensure that each girl is assigned a meaningful job. Give the girls the opportunity to do the job.



- Provide girls with planning templates or checklists to assist them in thinking through what needs to be done, how, by whom, etc.
- Have each committee member brainstorm a list of their responsibilities, and have them discuss their list with the full committee for suggestions.
- Have the committee develop timeline checkpoints for each task. Check in with committee members according to the checkpoints agreed upon.

MORE TIPS FOR A TRUE PARTNERSHIP

- Make sure there is ample time in the timeline to allow for a few hiccups, especially if the girls are inexperienced.
- Communicate with each girl about what role they'd like you to take. Would they prefer you to leave them alone or contact them regularly?
- If girls have problems or appear "stuck", ask a series of questions so that they have the opportunity to figure things out for themselves, rather than immediately supplying solutions. "How do you think we could handle that?" "What do you think should be done?" "Can you think of someone who might know how to do that?" "What would be a good next step?"
- Adult and girl members alike should give full reports regularly of their progress so that everyone understands how their responsibilities fit into the whole picture.
- Adults should be very forthcoming about what they've done, how they did it, why they chose to do it that way, what obstacles they encountered, how they overcame the obstacles, etc.
- Adults should model the behavior of asking for suggestions and help, talking openly about mistakes or problems, etc.
- Whenever possible, ask girls their opinions when making decisions or solving problems. Their creativity will inspire you!
- Be sure to provide lots of positive recognition for accomplishments—give credit whenever committee members have performed a task well (publicly if possible!)
- Make sure that the adult participants understand the roles the girls have at the event. When a girl directs them at the event the adult participant needs to know the girl is not acting as a participant but as part of the event staff.
- Some events have actually given the girl event volunteers an identifier that makes it easier for the adult participants to spot them as staff.
- Communicate what behavior at the event is expected of each girl volunteer. Will they be working in pairs?
- Allow time at the event for the girl volunteers to express concerns and problems that may have arisen during the event.
- At the end of the event make sure to include the girl volunteers in the evaluations. They want to know how they did and it will be helpful for them as they do more events in the future.
- Girls may mentor younger girls. Older girls may earn leadership hours to help them earn awards such as; Leader in Action, Program Aide, Volunteer in Training, and Counselor in Training. Check the Girls Guide to Girl Scouting to learn more about these awards.

