

Partnering With Youth on Events

Youth-led events are possible!

If your service unit is unsure where to begin with CSA-led events, ask your council staff member to connect you with another service unit which holds successful youth-led events. Don't underestimate their abilities! Partnering with adults to learn skills (rather than being taught things by adults) is a unique opportunity available in Girl Scouts.

Start out simple and build

If the Girl Scouts have not had the opportunity to learn planning and organizational skills, start them out with simple tasks:

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

As they gain experience, you can partner with the Girl Scouts as individuals, small teams, or whole troops to provide the opportunity for them to take on event committee responsibilities.

Tackling simple tasks first and graduating to more complex ones will enable the Girl Scouts to learn by doing. Partnering with caring adults who are willing to take the time to allow them to develop their skills progressively will empower them to start running events in no time!

Creating a partnership

Empower the Girl Scouts:

- 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 which will also help them to determine how best to deploy their team members.
- Provide opportunities for the group to get to know one another with team building icebreakers.
- Encourage the group to make a team/group agreement so that decision making can be fair.
- Provide a structured process for brainstorming ideas. If they do not speak up, solicit their ideas. Remember to give them time to respond when you ask questions!
- Ensure that each Girl Scout is assigned a meaningful job and give them the opportunity to do their job!
- Provide the team 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 discuss their lists with the full committee for suggestions.
- Suggest that they develop timeline checkpoints for each task so they can check in with you and each other to keep on track and accountable.



Tips for a True Partnership

- Make sure there is ample time in the timeline to allow for a few hiccups, especially if the Girl Scouts are inexperienced.
- Communicate with each Girl Scout about the role they'd like you to take. Would they prefer that you leave them alone, or check in regularly?
- If they are having problems or appear to be struggling to move forward, ask questions instead of providing answers. How do you think we should handle this? Can you think of someone who might know how to do this? What would be a good next step?
- Adult and youth members alike should give full reports of their progress so that everyone understands how their responsibilities fit into the big picture.
- Adults should be forthcoming about what they've done, how they did it, any obstacles they encountered and how they overcame them etc.
- Adults should model the behavior of asking for help and suggestions, talking openly about mistakes and problems etc.
- Whenever possible, ask the Girl Scouts their opinions when making decisions or solving problems. Their creativity will inspire you!
- Make sure the adult participants understand the roles the youth have at the event. When a Girl Scout directs them at the event, the adult participant needs to know that they are acting as a member of event staff.
- Communicate the behavior that is expected of each youth volunteer at the event.
- Consider providing youth event volunteers with a t-shirt or other identifier that makes it easier for adult participants to spot them as staff.
- Allow time at the event for the Girl Scouts to express any concerns or problems that may have arisen during the event.
- At the end of the event, make sure to include the youth volunteers in the evaluations. Their feedback is important and the evaluation process will help them as they plan more events in the future.



- Older Girl Scouts may mentor the younger ones - leadership hours can help them to earn awards such as; Leader in Action, Program Aide, Volunteer in Training, Service to Scouting, and/or other leadership awards available through school.
- Be sure to provide lots of positive recognition for accomplishments - give credit whenever committee members have performed a task well (publicly if possible!)