All District Delegate Meeting Notes
February 2013

Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson All District Delegate Meeting Minutes
Location: Pleasantville Office
February 4, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. by Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson (GSHH) board Vice President Erik Andersen.

Following the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance and the Girl Scout Promise, Erik introduced the board members present. He was followed by Pam Anderson, CEO of GSHH, who introduced the staff members in attendance.

In providing a council update, Pam offered highlights of 2012, most notably the fact that GSHH closed out the year (on September 30) with a girl membership of 32,330 and an adult membership of 15,110. Together, the membership total makes us the largest Girl Scout council in New York and 17th largest of 112 councils nationwide.

She expressed membership concerns, ranging from Daisies to alumnae, citing a slight drop-off at the Daisy, Brownie and 5th-grade levels. This was slightly balanced by growth in grades 6-12, which we hope continues.

It was a banner year for the higher awards, with 500 girls earning their Silver and 400 earning the Gold. GSHH ended the year in good financial condition with net revenue of $607,000. Pam pointed out that Annual Giving is an important component in GSHH being able to offer such things to our membership as camperships, financial assistance, and lifetime memberships for our Gold Award recipients.

Pam cited the three areas of focus throughout the Girl Scout movement nationwide: (1) growing membership at the K-5 levels; (2) within those same kevels, emphasizing Hispanic membership; and (3) expanding the series available for middle-school girls (engaging them in pathways other than troops). She concluded by announcing that GSHH's council charter was extended by GSUSA for three years.

Director of Volunteer Development Jamey Pratt briefly took the audience through the delegate profile process. All delegates' terms will end at the close of the 2013 Annual Meeting on April 20. Application forms and position descriptions are available on the GSHH website. Ideally, each service unit will have two delegates and two alternates.

Prompted by a question from the audience, Erik Andersen clarified that delegates, in conjunction with the board, deal with council policies rather than operational issues.

The delegate/membership updates section of the evening's agenda focused on topics discussed at the district delegate meetings last October and November. Delegates were to gather input from their service units.

Concerns brought forward included:

From Larchmont/Mamaroneck – There is confusion as to the changes made in the process for earning the Silver and Gold Awards. For awhile the wrong forms were posted on the website. The finding of a mentor (Silver) or assigning of a mentor (Gold) each girl candidate is confusing and the job description for mentors should be clarified.

Also, there are problems with on-line registration. Should service unit registrars be able to sign members onto the computer after the cut-off date?

Third, they felt that a more structured progression is necessary as leaders and girls work through the Journeys in any given membership year. The adult volunteers don't know what to do, which badges to earn, and so forth, and as a result, they're overwhelmed.

Fourth, it takes too long for service units to receive updated, accurate membership lists. When staff members used to attend the monthly service unit meetings, they were able to deliver these lists sooner.

From Scarsdale/Edgemont – A council representative is needed at the monthly service unit meetings.

From West Lakeland – To address some of the earlier-mentioned concerns, the speaker acknowledged that, yes, there had been a lot of changes to the Silver and Gold Awards processes but that GSHH had provided, for example, Silver mentor training for service unit-based mentors. As far as the Journeys information being overwhelming for leaders, she agreed, but offered to provide a simpler system she has devised, involving three levels of complexity, to help adults successfully implement Journeys. Depending on their size, she has dubbed her three condensed sets of program materials in, as she says, Starbuck's terms: tall, grande, and vente, and will gladly forward them to the council to be disseminated to anyone who requests them.

From West Nyack – They agreed that adults are indeed "beyond overwhelmed" with the volume of materials involved in Journeys. Plus, the components are expensive. The Journeys are too much like schoolwork and, as such, they take some of the fun and excitement out of Girl Scouting.

From DeForest – Camp Addisone Boyce had a "Journey to the Gold" camp session which was very useful in helping girls achieve their Gold Award. It was pointed out that Rock Hill will have a similar program this year.

From Cornwall – "Family giving" is an issue. If the council needs more money, raise the dues.
This was answered by Erik Andersen who explained that membership dues go directly to GSUSA. He reiterated the importance of Annual Giving. Potential funders ask if our membership supports the

council through financial donations. Supporting GSHH through Annual Giving is a tangible way of seeing how committed our families and volunteers are to Girl Scouting.

From Scarsdale – As far as Annual Giving is concerned, people don't understand what they're supporting. Parents feel dues support all Girl Scout activities. Make it clearer what they're contributing to.

In response, Erik Andersen explained that all of the Annual Giving materials had recently been re-done to explain as clearly as possible where they money goes and why it's so desperately needed.

From Chester – We need more advertising in local newspapers. Articles about Boy Scout Eagle Award recipients grab people's attention. Where are the stories about Gold Award recipients? People would donate more money if they read about Girl Scouts more often.

From Briarcliff – Leaders feel a total disconnect from council. They do not feel supported and do not get timely responses to questions.

The next segment of the meeting focused on strategic planning and was introduced by board member Sandy Nagler. She explained how the council's Strategic Task Force has as its mission to analyze GSHH's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). In doing so, they are reaching out to key stakeholders, including girls, parents, volunteers, and alumnae. The result will be a three-year plan focusing on what's most important for enabling GSHH to provide the best possible Girl Scout experience for all concerned. Thus far, the committee has identified three major emphases: membership engagement (increasing value to stakeholders), communications, and funding (diversifying and increasing public support).

She posed a question to be discussed by attendees at their various tables: "In what way might the experience of being a delegate be more valuable to you?"

After consideration by the table groups, the following reports and comments were presented:

- District meetings are a good idea.
- Resolve issues that are brought up.
- Maybe a delegates-only page can be added to the website and regularly updated.
- Delegate meetings are valuable because we can meet other people and gain other viewpoints. Plus, it enables us to relate more to "council".
- Feedback from the delegate meetings is sought by service units.
- The council has become too large and lost some of its familiarity.
- The use of a mechanism such as Survey Monkey before delegate meetings could give delegates a chance to put forth questions or respond to issues in advance.

- People need hands-on training, or at least practice, with the online registration system. Perhaps a computer or two could be set up at the various offices specifically for this purpose.
- Delegates come to the meeting with suggestions and complaints and rarely see results or improvement. Nothing changes – the same issues keep coming up.
- The job of the delegate is not clear. Whining about what needs to be fixed doesn't help and delegate meetings are not a helpful forum for operational complaints.

Further discussion included Erik Andersen saying that the board sees delegates as resources for making governance changes and that a pre-meeting survey of concerns would give the delegate meeting more structure. As Pam Anderson pointed out, "Girl Scouting is complicated."

Delegate Janice Paganelli proposed that volunteers fix things the "old-fashioned way" -- by themselves. The council has grown too large to deal with all the smaller details involved in the Girl Scout experience. Delegate Wilma Reid suggested delegates-only and leaders-only sections of the website which might be more constant, and direct, channels for communication.

The question was raised as to the fairness of a girl joining at the 10-12 grade high school level and earning the Gold Award while girls who've been members for years would see earning the Gold Award as the long-anticipated culmination of their Girl Scout years. Pam Anderson replied that there are many ways a girl can experience Girl Scouting. It's about individual girls. She stressed that GSHH remains committed to engaging older girls.

Erik Andersen asked the group about the best way for delegates to be involved for the remainder of their terms. Pam Anderson provided them with two options: (1) the opportunity to reconnect by way of a fillable form on the website, through which concerns and issues could be presented; and (2) an additional meeting in March. There was overwhelming support for the form.

In closing the meeting, council Treasurer Sandy Morrissey reiterated the value of Annual Giving and that a lot of things that have been suggested are good ideas, but GSHH just can afford them.

Following the singing of "Taps", the meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Havens

Jean Havens, Scribe

Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson All District Delegate Meeting – Minutes

Location: Poughkeepsie Galleria Mall, Poughkeepsie NY

February 7, 2013

Welcome and introduction from Jane Goldwasser – Meeting called to order at 7:05pm

Explanation of location change.

Promise and Law

Introduction of Board members Present

Pamela Anderson – CEO

Introduction of Staff

Membership Updates: 2012 Membership Year: Girls: 32,330 up from 32,174 Adult numbers remained flat.

2200 Adult volunteers trained, 1600 in required workshops and 600 in supporting workshops

Charter was extended by three (3) years until 2015

Membership concerns: There is a Daisy and Brownie drop-off. Probably due to the lack of recruitment of volunteers.

Focus on volunteer penetration and recruitment of adults other than just parents. Need to build up volunteer base.

Slight roll off 5th grade girls – Girls decide to do other activities.

Growth of 6-12th grade girls – we have seen some growth in older girl levels due to a more focused approach on leadership opportunities.

400 girls received the Gold Award this past year. We expect to award 100 girls with their Gold Award this year. About 500 received their Silver award.

We had a good financial year. We were successful in exceeding our budget.

2012:

$167K of financial assistance to membership and $35k in camp scholarships. $35K paid for lifetime membership for Gold Award recipients. We expect to fund another $35k in lifetime memberships this year

Movement: Strategies for growth in K-5 troops with the troop pathway as the most important.

Looking to grow the Hispanic segment – important area of growth.

Middle School Series and episodic opportunities see growth. (6 week programs)

Delegate Update: Jane Goldwasser

Two topics/Any new news

1. Communication overall
2. Improved participation
3. Customer Service-Communication

Pawling – (Nancy H.) Influx of Hispanics into community. Need bilingual resources for cookies, Annual Giving and forms. Need information for parents/troops/ girls

Tioronda: (Sue P.) Not a user-friendly phone system. Have concerns with missing registration forms. No information, council staff not listed correctly in rosters. She had concerns about journeys being too expensive and the work being too similar to school work. Changes in the Cookie sale, booth sales process ask for cases to be paid upfront poses a challenge to girls.

Fishkill – (Ann D.) They have a large SU with many new leaders. Getting everyone trained is an issue. Many sessions are cancelled, how do they know who gets trained or if they've completed start up training. Can someone email out about that?

Nanuet/Rockland (Marie)

Was concerned with phone calls. Asked about registrations. Membership keeps calling while our checks are cashed and our girls don't show up in system. There is a 2 month lag time, what is the process if they don't show up. It's difficult with cookies coming. EBUDDE – When cookies are entered the system rounds up to cases. It's forcing people to pay for more cases. Gift of Caring and Operation Cookie Drop are a challenge. There are 2 columns on paper that are confusing when you get to upload on Ebudde. There is only one column online and it causes confusion in order.

Rondout Valley (Teresa A.)

Also has concerns about the registration lag. Why is there a difference with paper or online. Too much confusion. Had positive feedback with cookie credits. Wanted Camp Wendy to be kept open. (CEO redirected and corrected the misinformation that was sent out by a volunteer)

Pam Anderson responded to the info sent out about Camp Wendy. It was incorrect. Camp Wendy is not closing. Not being sold. She had a conversation with the volunteer. We are holding Girl Fest 2013 there. The museum is open. We have camporee/community camping scheduled. We will create a survey: ask if a 2 week summer program could be of interest, # of families using the facility. Maybe have more activities next summer. CEO reminded that NY State regulates camp and we must be mindful because the Health Dept does get involved when something is called a "camp" and is not just a program.

Arlington (No Name)

Camp Ludington is falling apart. It is in a bad state. It is our only local camp for the Dutchess/Putnam area.

New Oaks (Laura U.)

Registration online is helpful. Thank you for the monthly reports. It helps volunteer compare what may be submitted.

Camp Wendy: SU had requested the use of the facility. What is the process for reserving? Its unclear and have not heard back. Its holding up their event and has caused problems with the scheduling of other events.

Pine Bush (Danielle)

Receipts for registration are an issue for parents and volunteers in the shop. They are not asking for or receiving receipts when they drop off registration. Welcome message goes on and on. Getting information from three different staff members is difficult. You email someone and another responds. Don't know who the point person is. Concern with Birchwood camp/property.

Spackenkill (Tina W.)

TD Bank is still an issue. Had a $2000 check that did not clear. Bank did not indicate a longer hold. She wrote checks on her amount that was not clear. She thought the hold was 24 hours and turned out to be a week. Wrote a check to West Point. Pat Dingman is doing a good job.

Bank still charges fees but they do get reversed.

Registration is an issue. Daisy troop example… two bundles submitted with payment. One bundle is ok and the other has yet to show up. Half are not registered for cookies. Grateful for monthly reporting to help compare. Would like a list of emails.

Tioronda (Carmen J.)

Is there a directory of staff? Who does what? What person handles what job? Assignments Directory . CEO responded that we could do a better job while there is a contact list. Would address the issue in the next Currents. Membership numbers are going down in Tioronda and they can no longer circulate flyers in schools.

Jamey Pratt, Director of Volunteer Development, reported on the election of delegates, spoke about election, process,& paperwork. Term dates and annual meeting. Each SU is entitled to 2 delegates. Trainings will be provided and offered via conference and webinar.

Jamey and Hada Reed, COO, also reported on no pre-printed forms. Yes you can use paper forms. It's a hybrid year but we are moving to online registration. We will have extended hours to help volunteers and parents and we will do a better job of communicating the stop date.

Delegate asked for a better interface with the input of registration. User IDs for parents and child are cumbersome. Jamey addressed question with to go to Troop Management that would better the experience. Troop leader could take care of most issues through online management.

Delegate wanted an automated email to troop leader that a parent or child had registered. Interim solution was to print page.

Strategic Task Force

As reported by Fay Casatuta (Board Member):

The Board had a ½ day retreat. This is a Board appointed task force. Development of a 3 year strategic plan.

A SWOT analysis was performed. Tasked with identifying and laying out a plan to develop a high performing council with 3 areas of focus and Identification of Stakeholders. Area of focus included membership engagement, communication, and funding.

Facilitated Discussion (Pam Anderson)

Two questions to address and discuss:

How do you increase the value of membership to the stakeholder?

What are the ways delegates experience can be more valuable to you?

Report out:

New Oaks (Ruth Ann C.) Board/SU Link. Likes to know what is going on. Seeing the whole picture. Bringing back information and having leaders appreciate that. Keeping troops and graduating seniors involved.

Spackenkill (Colleen) Training needs to be enhanced to really make the delegate experience of real value. Dutchess used to do an annual training. Perhaps a form can go out to Delegates to prompt them to discuss items at SUs and get feedback. Include hot topics that council needs feedback.

Brewster (Mary S.) Has been a delegate for a long time. Would like to see a way to entice leaders to be delegates. Have input on growing the council. Would like to be proactive on issues instead of reactive…giving them the opportunity to have input to some decisions.

Rondout Valley (Mary R.): Engaging delegates with meetings with skype/teleconference. Leaders live in very rural areas at times. Paying for gas, bringing the meetings to them would be good. Delegates need to feel like the information is making a difference and they are valuable. Leaders are in the trenches and need to be heard to make a change.

Hyde Park (Nancy P.) Concerns about delegates being heard. Would like the agenda ahead of time. Would like the annual meeting info ahead of time. Email far in advance to know what is being discussed, upcoming dates, and updates.

How do we know our Board members are attending the meetings? Is there a Delegate area on the website? Where is Annual Meeting held? TBD location and the date is April 20, 2013 as published on council calendar and communicated back in September.

Arlington/Fishkill/Pawling: Acknowledged that all the people bring their talents relating to their community to the table. She would like to see more networking opportunities. Maybe people

moving around in their roles for growth, seeing another aspect of our governance. Suggested retreat for delegates. Email addresses shared among delegates?

Asked how or who shared meeting notes for the Board? J. Goldwasser addressed the questions – Meeting notes, reports and delegate info always an important item discussed by the Board. It is on every agenda. Feb 27 is the next meeting (teleconference) for the Board and they would receive the minutes of items discussed.

One delegate asked about Leader Appreciation? Is there publicity? How is the information going to families? How do they get the messaging? It is a bit obnoxious for the leader to notify the parents or families about Leader Appreciation Day.

Solution: Emailing, Currents and use Facebook.

Paula – What about lifetime members? How do we track them? We are lost in the system. Is there a record? From previous councils? Can they be pulled together into one spot.

P. Anderson answer: There are records nationally. We are diligently working to pull together all the information for all the legacy councils. We will be using Pulse and doing a physical mailing to all members. (Lifetime members and Gold Awardees) We have about 7 years of historical data. Working with GSUSA to gather the information.

The council sends a letter to all graduating girls. The letter is signed by Pam and Jane offering a special price on their Lifetime Membership. Mary Benes reminded that it is only sent to graduating girls and sometimes 11 graders forget to register. GSHH will only pay the membership after they graduate if they are Gold Award recipients after they graduate. Some who complete their project early forget to register in their Sr. year of high school. Please remind them to register for their last year if that is the case.

What about Lifetime Membership Cards? Contact GSUSA. It is not managed by GSHH. Regular membership cards can be printed via the Leader's account.

As recorded by Guadalupe Salinas 2.7.13 Dutchess County – Poughkeepsie Galleria Community Room.

Response to Property Questions at the Delegate Meeting, February 7, 2013

The questions posed were regarding our camp properties, therefore it should be explained that GSHH operates five camp properties, all with different amenities. Prior to realignment, there were varying degrees of deferred maintenance at some of the camps as well as varying degrees of utilization. Since realignment, utilization figures have been maintained and the camps are now made ready to open based on seasonal conditions (chance of snow and/or deep freeze), and demand. The maintenance of the property, once opened, is managed based on the scheduled use. Repairs that have safety implications in the parts of the camp(s) being used always receive top priority, but it is important to note that while a camp might be open for use, some parts of the camp might be currently rested, and not available for use.

The questions asked at the Delegate meeting in Poughkeepsie on February 7th were about Camp Ludington and Camp Birch Ridge. **Camp Ludington** is a camp that has historically had very little utilization—due in large part to the lack of flush toilets and electricity in the tent units.

The camp was designed to accommodate 210 campers that were housed in five tent units. The utilization showed that seldom were there requests for 100 people at one time, with most of the requests being for one or two units; therefore two tent units that needed extensive platform repairs were rested (not set up and not available for use). We are still able to accommodate the majority of Girl Scout requests for the camp, and the camp is rented to an environmental organization for the month of July for their summer camp program. The fee they pay helps offset some of the costs to operate the camp. Other than the two resting units, the camp is maintained as described above, with the grass mowed when use is expected. The camp is inspected annually by the Dutchess County Health Department, to insure it is a safe and appropriate camp for people to use.

Birch Ridge is also a camp that historically has been used by small sized groups. This camp was not designed to accommodate large numbers, with three platform tents, 7 lean-tos, a yurt and a lodge. The camp has been the object of some vandalism over the past few years, and has experienced some damage as a result of some storms. In most instances, repairs were made and the camp was made safe for use. The electrical service to the yurt and the small tent unit, however, has failed, and one of the lean-tos was ruined when a tree fell on it. The remaining lean-tos, tents and lodge can more than accommodate the groups that want to use the camp. People who will be using the tent unit are told to bring lanterns for illumination in that unit; the yurt cannot be used for sleeping, as there is only one means of egress. Nothing in this camp has been rested; the maintenance of the camp is managed as described above. This camp has been rented by a Live Action Role Playing group for several weekends during the season for the past few years. As in the case of Camp Ludington, the fee helps to offset some of the expenses associated with operating the camp. Also, the Orange County Health Department annually inspects the camp and issues GSHH a permit to operate a campground.

Cookie Process Update

Subject: Clarification of Gift of Caring and Operation Cookie Drop Process

To : SU and Troop Cookie Chairs & Leaders,

This year you will see two options for Gift of Caring cookies in eBudde. One is a column labeled "OpDrp" and the other a column labeled "GOC". A troop can decide if it wishes to use the "OpDrp" column, the "GOC" column or a combination of the two. Here is how:

I. Cookies listed in the "**OpDrp**" column will be "virtual", which means you will not ever have possession of these cookies. Girls and troops are charged for these cookies and receive credit for them. The cookies will be delivered directly from the warehouse to the load-in event at Valhalla on June 1st. This option is especially good for troops that receive large monetary donations from organizations to purchase Op Drop cookies.

II. Cookies listed in the "**GOC**" column can be either for your own troop's gift of caring project or for Operation Cookie Drop or **both**. Girls and troops are charged for these cookies and receive credit for them. These orders are filled with surplus cookies from initial order and from booth sales. If you choose this option, but are unable to attend the Valhalla load-in event on June 1st, there will be instructions in eBudde about how to get your cookies to Valhalla.

Patches - Girls with orders in either of these columns will receive a GOC patch and this will be calculated by eBudde.

Need more information? We are offering a webinar on the use of the "GOC" and "OpDrp" columns to further clarify. Details including date(s), time(s) and call-in number will be sent out via eBudde as soon as the webinar is finalized.