



May 11, 2020

Dear Girl Scout Volunteers, Members and Supporters,

For the past eight weeks, we have all faced a great deal of uncertainty and unease as our country has been battling the COVID-19 crisis. Coping with the challenges of social distancing, remote schooling and working remotely or outside of the home has brought a new meaning to the words multi-tasking. In addition, we have all been saddened by the loss of life for so many, and for some the loss of employment.

At the same time, the staff at Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson has been working remotely to recreate program activities for girls and to honor our commitment to Girl Scout volunteers and families. We have spent countless hours researching how we might be able to carry on safely with a summer camp program in a whole different manner.

Girl Scout Camp is a unique program experience; it's a community designed for girls who share the Girl Scout sisterhood together with a team of staff, many of whom attended camp themselves. The summer Girl Scout camp environment allows girls to enjoy the out of doors, play together and laugh together. Camp is a community based on hugs, pats on the back, high fives, and helping each other. The very essence of camp is incompatible with the strict form of social distancing, which at this time, is our only weapon in fighting COVID-19.

The safety and health of our campers is, and always has been, of utmost importance. It is with great sadness and heavy hearts that the leadership staff, in consultation with the Board of Directors and the Camp Directors, has made the difficult decision to cancel this year's GSHH resident and day camps.

Safety is our highest concern

In making this difficult decision, we have kept in close contact with the American Camp Association, the Association of Camp Nursing, experts in public health, both national and county Department of Health (DOH) offices, the recommendations and guidelines of the state of New York, sister councils in our region, and Girl Scouts of the USA.

Due to the high volume of campers we serve, the frequency at which new campers arrive and depart, and the communal nature of camp, with shared dining, sleeping, and bathroom facilities, we cannot adequately ensure camper and staff health and safety this summer.

It's a heartbreaking decision for girls and staff alike, but we believe this is the right decision to

protect our Girl Scout community.

Staying connected and engaged with girls

Since stay-at-home orders began, Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson has been there to support girls and families with resources and virtual programs, keeping them engaged, entertained, and valued. Our offerings have evolved and continue evolving to meet girl and family needs. We offer online programs for earning badges; we have challenges and resources for exploring the world through a virtual lens, activities on how to support your community, and opportunities for girls to connect with other Girl Scouts as they earn badges together.

Providing support

The staff at Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson in partnership with Girl Scouts of the USA is focusing its energy on developing exceptional outdoor programming. We want every girl to have the opportunity to create her own outdoor adventure.

We also know well that sharing this news with campers is not easy. To help, Girl Scouts of the USA has an [article for parents and guardians](#) to help guide them through the process of sharing disappointing news with their girls.

You can help

Over the next few weeks, we will be sending another communication announcing the details of various summer program activities. Please know that our camp directors and program team are working as promptly as possible to create a one of a kind summer experience.

Although deposits are normally nonrefundable, out of our commitment to support our Girl Scout families during this time we made the decision to fully refund deposits as well as all camp fees.

However, COVID-19 has significantly impacted Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Inc.'s financial outlook. Please consider making a donation to Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson. Your donation will help support our virtual summer program experience as well as our beautiful camp properties. Upkeep of camp properties is needed year-round, beyond the summer months, to ensure properties are well-maintained and ready to welcome campers every summer.

[Donate to GSHH](#)

We know that we often find our way to camp because we are looking for something more, perhaps simplicity, friendship, discovery, nature, or mentors. We know when we've found it because we feel inspired, confident, and ready to grow. Now, we're being called upon to shape that space together in our homes, in our neighborhoods, and across the globe. Imagine what we can learn. Imagine what we will create together.

Thank you for being part of this incredible Girl Scout community.

Yours in Girl Scouting,



Marie Reger
CEO
Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Inc.



Hada Reed
COO