

Creating girls of character for 100 years

By KENNETH R. CERINI

Girl Scouts USA celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2012, and the Girl Scouts of Nassau County is not far behind. Founded in 1917, GSNC has been building girls of courage, confidence and character to help make the world a better place. GSNC helps provide young girls with programs and experiences they can carry with them throughout their lifetime. Whether they're cultivating their passions or participating in sunrise ceremonies, GSNC stands at the dawn of a new century of girl scouting.

"We continue to be an evolving organization that keeps our ear to the pulse of what girls and volunteers need," said Donna Ceravolo, executive director of GSNC. "As girls change, as society changes, as the community changes and develops we remain dedicated to being current, relevant and fun."

What is something people don't know about GSNC? People don't know how involved we are in financial literacy. People see our iconic and delicious cookies and don't realize that the cookies teach girls how to set goals, make decisions, manage money, how to get along with both their peers and the public and to practice business ethics. In addition, we're heavily involved in critical issues facing girls such as cyber bullying, body image, relational aggression, etc. Our staff and volunteers are true experts in the realm of these critical issues, and we're happy to provide services to the public and young women throughout the community.

What new programs are underway for 2012? The Girl Scouts Leadership Experience has been developed into three curriculums appropriate for each level of girl scouting. The programs give girls opportunities to discover



DONNA CERAVOLO: Girl Scout Cookies teach financial literacy, goal-setting and business ethics.

more about themselves and the world around them, and to connect with other girls, adults and ideas. The hope is that they will then take action to help make the world a better place.

When people hear 'Girl Scouts,' they immediately think 'cookies.' How does that impact the GSNC? The cookies are merely a vehicle to help teach girls responsibility,

build skills and teach financial literacy. We want people to understand that cookies are one of the many ways we support the community. Because of the Girl Scout Cookie program no girl is ever turned away because she cannot afford Girl Scouts. The money generated makes Girl Scouts one of the most affordable youth training commodities in the country.

How does GSNC work with the community at large? We have several programs that work with many facets of the community. Our chorus is very well-known – we have performed all over the metropolitan area and were the voice of the Dove commercials several years ago during the Super Bowl. Our Media Girls unit works with the media to arrange interviews, answer questions, do photo opportunities, etc. We have programs dedicated to art and career preparation. Whatever our girls are seeking, we try to provide to help meet their needs.

Organization Girl Scouts of Nassau County

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Website www.gsnc.org

Year Founded 1917

Paid Staff 59

Annual Budget \$5.5 million

Fundraised Budget \$458,250

Program Service Percentage 79 percent

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