



## **Annual Meeting: April 8, 2017**

Remarks from the President

Faye Fields, President of the Board of Directors

Wow, weren't our **G.I.R.L.** speakers incredible? Let's give them another hand.

You know, one of the great things about our program is that you don't stop being a G.I.R.L. once you're an adult.

I would like each of you to spend a few minutes to reflect on a time you have demonstrated what it means to be a G.I.R.L. Once you've thought about your answer, please share with your neighbors and compare answers.

Thank you all. We invite you to share your G.I.R.L. stories with us by visiting our website and taking our G.I.R.L. survey.

I am a proud Girl Scout alumna, and like you, I'm also a G.I.R.L.

Selling cookies as a girl helped me become a **go-getter**, giving me the confidence I'd later need to break into the government contracting field. It's a job that requires **innovative** solutions to tough problems, and a resilient attitude.

Girl Scouting also gave me courage that would one day help me **take a risk** and start my own business.

And, as a mentor at Girl Scout Camp CEO, I've had the opportunity to **lead** by example and become a role model to teen girls, just as my troop leader was to me.

Today, it's an honor to be able to give back to the organization that gave so much to me.

Before I begin my report, I wanted to take a moment to thank you for re-electing me as your board president. Over the past **three** years, it has been my privilege to serve this organization that I love. Following in the footsteps of former presidents, I took on the mantle to support our volunteers, grow girl membership, deliver programs that girls desire, and create a culture of philanthropy in this Council.

I'm delighted to have the opportunity to continue this important work over the next three years, and I sincerely appreciate your vote of confidence in me.

One of the ways we can ensure that Girl Scouting remains strong in our region is by taking a critical look at the strategic direction of our Council. This year, it was time to undergo a refresh of our strategic learning process. We're calling it a "refresh" because we believe much of the work done in **2013** remains relevant today.

I was honored to work with a dedicated team of **53** volunteers, board members and staff to begin this process. We delved into the data, and looked at best practices across the Girl Scout community and from industry leaders. And we asked ourselves, how can we position our organization for success over the next **four** years?

Then we dove in. The strategic learning process includes four phases: **learn, focus, align**, and **execute**.

So far, we have completed the first two phases, learn and focus. I want to share some early insights from our work that will be used to build our corporate goals for the next **four** years.

Our first area of focus may sound like common sense, but it still holds true: When our volunteers and leaders have the **support** they need to deliver great programs, girls have a better experience in Girl Scouting, and our membership grows.

Through our strategic learning, we've discovered that we must prepare ourselves for a new generation of parents. Millennials are digital natives who want information instantly. We also know they want to give back and are eager to recruit friends to our program.

Next, providing members with a better experience requires that we focus on **delivering high-quality programs**.

We found that regardless of their age, girls say **fun** and **friendships** are the top reasons why they stay in Girl Scouting.

Makes sense, right?

We were pleased to discover that our program delivery strategy is aligned with that of GSUSA's four new program pillars: STEM, entrepreneurship, outdoors and life skills.

However, we recognize there are opportunities for improvement.

For example, we've learned girls want more robust STEM programming and have a strong interest in the outdoors. We also

found that our girls and leaders in grades **six** through **nine** need more resources. So we have some work to do!

For the first time in our strategic learning process, we looked at leveraging our Council **properties**. We quickly discovered that before we can develop a long-term strategy, more work needs to be done to establish benchmarks on how our members currently use our camps. Let me assure you that this is a priority. *Our camps are this Council's jewels!*

And for our final area of focus, we considered how to more effectively **raise funds to invest** in this Movement. While exploring best practices, we learned that our most important current and potential donors are those who are closest to our Girl Scout Council—you!

Moving forward, we will use these findings to guide the direction of our Council over the next **four** years. At our March board meeting, I appointed an ad hoc Corporate Goals Committee to

formulate recommendations for our corporate goals, which will be reviewed by the Board of Directors this summer. As we prepare for this new strategic direction, we will also revisit our Council's bylaws to ensure best practices for governance.

Now, let's take a look at last year's development efforts.

Research shows that women have a greater capacity to give than ever before. I am proud of the way we have grown major giving in this Council. Last year, Major Gifts raised **\$325,000**— from 36 individual donors.

As we celebrate **20** years of the Juliette Low Legacy Society, there is no better time to invest in the future of Girl Scouting than now. I invite you to join by making a planned gift. If you are a member of the Juliette Low Legacy Society, please stand to be recognized.

We also have a number of Inspirational Donors who are changing the philanthropic landscape of this Council. These donors have

given **\$50,000** or more to Girl Scouts Nation's Capital to date, and their names are listed on the screens. Thank you so much for your gift.

We truly appreciate the amazing generosity demonstrated by our members—and every dollar counts. SHARE Your Love of Girl Scouting, our annual giving campaign for friends and family, continues to be a crucial part of our fundraising efforts. This year, **5** Associations and **27** Service Units have reached their SHARE goal. Congratulations!

Last year, we raised **\$799,000** for SHARE, helping us deliver nearly **\$504,000** in specific financial assistance to families in need. This makes me very proud of our Council!

Looking ahead, we are gearing up for the 54<sup>th</sup> National Convention and National Council Session, where we'll unleash the power of **G.I.R.L.** On October **4-8**, we'll head to Columbus,



Ohio, to gather with hundreds of Girl Scouts from across the country, and work together to chart the future of the Girl Scout movement.

As we heard earlier in the Forum report, Girl Scouts of the USA asked every Council to consider what we want Girl Scouting to look like in **2020**. Well, we've got answers from our members, and we're headed to Columbus with a purpose: to make our Council's voice heard.

Earlier today, we elected delegates to represent that voice. In addition to the business meeting, we're calling **all** girls to join us in Columbus for a weekend of celebration.

Please visit our Convention table to get more information.

Here's one more way you can make your voice heard: This month, GSUSA is conducting a national survey to get your feedback to improve girl programs. Because your feedback is

critical, I want to remind you to respond to the **Girl Scout Voices Count** email that went out to parents, girls and volunteers on **April 3**. I highly encourage you to participate.

I want to close by thanking you, our valued members, for your commitment to the success of this Council. I am motivated by the desire to ensure that every girl has the opportunity to become a healthy and productive woman who can be a leader in her own life. Because of you, girls feel supported and are able to face whatever challenges come their way.

I know you understand the power of every G.I.R.L. So let's work together to lift up girls. Let's instill in our girls the confidence they need to reach their full potential. Let's make sure **every** girl has the chance to take the lead like a Girl Scout.

With that, I would like to hand it over to your CEO, **Lidia Soto-Harmon**, for an update on Council operations.