

Annual Meeting 2024

Chief Executive Officer, Kim R. Ford, Remarks

Are there any Girl Scouts in the House?!?!

First, I want to THANK Colleen for all that she's done for the Council in her tenure, and also over the past year.

I also want to THANK her and the team for their amazing onboarding these past couple of weeks. I truly appreciate the warm Girl Scout welcome!

I want to begin by saying, "Wow."

I am completely moved by the passion and commitment demonstrated by you—our volunteers— and the incredible achievements of our Girl Scouts.

Before we dive into our shared vision for the future, I want to take a moment to share a bit about my journey, one that's deeply rooted in a personal mission to help others achieve their dreams. Who is Kim R. Ford?

A Girl Scout, of course! I remember being a Brownie and selling cookies door-to-door throughout my neighborhood. This actually started

Well, I was a weird kid who knew exactly what I wanted to do— I wanted to go into the automotive industry and then into government and politics, and I did just that.

I began my career in the automotive industry before pursuing a master's degree in public administration. Later, I had the privilege of serving in the Obama administration administering the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which was the only economic package in that administration... \$787 billion dollars to save or create three million jobs.

And the reason why I brought this up is because that was the beginning of my career in economic and workforce development.

I went from the White House to The University of the District of Columbia, who at the time was building an independent community college.

To answer my grandmother who used to say, "Who leaves the White House to go to a junior college?"

Well, I did. And I did because I had the opportunity to achieve my dreams.

I said I wanted to go into the auto industry, then into government politics, and I did just that.

Since then, I've devoted my career to helping others achieve their dreams.

At UDC, I started out as the Director of College Readiness and Community Outreach and a year later became Dean of Workforce Development and Lifelong Learning, where I managed programs related to career and technical education. And I *absolutely* loved that role. To this day it still brings me so much joy.

After the college saw both financial success and tangible evidence of student growth!

I quit.

I quit, and I ran for Congress.

I ran against, then, a 28-year incumbent, now a 34-year incumbent... so no, I did not win.

I then had the opportunity to lead Martha's Table. I'm very proud of the work we did there, especially throughout difficult times like the pandemic.

After Martha's Table, I decided to take time for my well-being and travel.

Soon after, I received a life-changing call. I was in the adoption process for five years, and I finally got a call about a little girl.

And almost two years ago, I became a mom.

My daughter's name is Kenzie, and she has really changed my life.

Like I said earlier, professionally, I have always wanted to help others achieve their dream, and now as a mother—especially to a little girl—I'm now more than ever driven to make sure all the Kenzie's, the Mackenzie's, Abigail's, Valeries, y Yovana's, Anju's, and Tasha's.....every Girl Scout and future Girl Scouts have every opportunity to pursue their own aspirations.

And now to be able to empower our young leaders and continue to move our organization forward, alongside you all, is a great honor.

I will be out and about, meeting you, listening, learning, and hearing your ideas about this next phase for our Council. And I want to THANK all of the Associations, Service Units, and Troops who have already invited me to your events and celebrations – I look forward to being at everything I can.

As I learn, I think a couple of things are clear.

- 1) We are the Largest Council in both youth membership and adult membership
- 2) We are #1 in retail sales

- 3) We are the envy of other Councils, with 18 volunteer-led day and evening camps
- 4) We finished #2 in cookies sales

So, in most ways, we are the largest— and as we head into National Conventions in 2026, where we are the HOST Council, we are poised to be the STRONGEST.

We're going to do that through belonging and inclusion. Where Girl Scouts is the place you can be you—both for our girls and our adult volunteers.

We're going to listen to you and execute on what's important to YOU. You've already shared through the Forums and other mechanisms that we need to focus on Mental Health and Wellness, and we are going to do just that.

We're also going to support identifying, building, and connecting meaningful programs that engage, challenge, and excite our young leaders.

We're also going to listen and learn from communities who are not yet Girl Scouts or who have left the Movement to understand why – and to the extent that we have offerings and a culture that can support their success, we're going to welcome them and welcome them back.

We're going to continue to grow, both in numbers and in strength, ROOTED IN BELONGING

And then in 2026, we're going to host the largest, strongest, most welcoming Convention the Girl Scouts has ever seen! You hear that Noorain and Marcus?

As my daughter says: you see it?? You see it??

I see it and I hope, working together, we not only see it, but we make it a reality.

I love looking out at this amazing crowd! I'm a very visual person and I want to see images of this energy throughout the offices. So may I ask for a favor? Can you send me pictures of your Girl Scout activities, your volunteer moments, and your team— your Girl Scout moments.

I just met the Troop Leader from 21135 in the store on Thursday and she sent me this pic, and I want your pics. Shoot me an email with your fav memories in Girl Scouts and I will put it up.

I am SO excited! This is SO exciting, I really hope you feel what I feel. So again, I ask --- Are there any Girl Scouts in the House?!

Thank you all for your warm welcome, I look forward to getting to know you and hearing more from you in the days ahead. Thank you!

