

GIRL SCOUT COUNCIL OF THE NATION'S CAPITAL

57th ANNUAL MEETING

APRIL 13, 2019

MINUTES

The 57th Annual Meeting of Girl Scout Council of the Nation's Capital (the Council), was held on Saturday, April 13, 2019, at The National Conference Center in Leesburg, Virginia. The theme of the meeting was, "*Step Outdoors with Girl Scouts.*" The opening ceremony, which included the traditional parade of Association flags and the singing of the National Anthem, was carried out under the direction of two Girl Scouts.

Council President, Faye Fields, called the meeting to order at 9:40 AM and introduced the participants seated on the stage: Jane Storero, Secretary of the Board of Directors and Parliamentarian, and Lidia Soto-Harmon, Chief Executive Officer.

Members, participants and visitors were welcomed. Current and former Board members present were recognized.

Faye noted that in celebration of the theme, *Step Outside with Girl Scouts*, throughout the meeting three girls will share stories of the impact the outdoors and Girl Scouting has had on their lives.

CREDENTIALS REPORT

Girl Scout Seniors, Jurnie Brayboy and Trinity Wimpy, serving as chairs of the Credentials Committee, reported that as of 9:00 AM, 308 voting members of the Council were present and 127 of 140 Service Units were represented. The Credentials Committee verified that a quorum was present and that all were active members of the Girl Scout movement, 14 years of age and over, and registered through Girl Scouts Nation's Capital, fulfilling the requirements to conduct business as stated in the Bylaws.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion: On motion duly made and seconded, the agenda for the meeting was adopted.

ADOPTION OF RULES OF ORDER

Jane Storero read the Rules of Order for the meeting.

Motion: On motion duly made and seconded, the Rules of Order to govern the conduct of the meeting were adopted.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING 2018

Faye discussed the minutes of the April 21, 2018, Council Annual Meeting and asked for changes and/or additions.

Motion: Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the April 21, 2018, Annual Meeting were approved as posted on the Council’s website.

TREASURER’S REPORT – Judy Walter

In the absence of Treasurer Jeri Fellerman, Assistant Treasurer, Judy Walter, presented the report on the Council’s Financial Statements for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2018 (Fiscal Year 2018). A copy of the full report is attached as “Addendum I” and incorporated by reference in these minutes.

FORUM PRESENTATION – Harriett Thompson

Second Vice President, Harriett Thompson, led the discussion on the forums held in February 2019, along with fellow girl Board members, Mia Hagood and Julianna Grimson, who provided a summary of feedback received from members. Harriett noted that seven Forums, including one Teen Forum, took place throughout the region with over 200 members attending.

Discussion at Forums focused primarily on how to better educate our parents and volunteers about the Council’s entrepreneurship program and how to grow girl participation in the cookie program. Following a brief background about the Girl Scout Cookie Program, which included several ways girls can participate and the current participation rate, a number suggestions were presented. Some of the suggestions for educating parents included providing an emphasis on the programmatic aspects to the program, especially the five skills girls learn; engaging older girl troops in a mentorship program with younger girl troops; and allowing parents to be the key decision-maker in a girls’ participation.

For volunteers, it was suggested that the role of the cookie program be included in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, even as early as Basic Leadership training. Also, in addition to the training by service unit cookie managers, older girls could be involved in training troop committees. Other discussions included troop proceeds and rewards which were the biggest incentive for participation. There was an almost unanimous call to increase the troop proceeds for each box of cookies sold, and a call to revamp rewards to appeal to older and younger girls with alternative ideas for awards to include travel, camp credit, scholarship opportunities and internships.

At the end of the presentation, delegates were asked to select three focus areas that they thought would offer the best opportunity to grow participation in the cookie program.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT AND ELECTION – Sue Hansen

Faye noted that pursuant to Article 2, Section 6C of the Council Bylaws, since no information regarding nominations were provided to the Secretary before the annual meeting, no

nominations from the floor were received for this Annual Meeting. Faye then introduced Sue Hansen, Chair of the Nominating Committee and asked her to present the report.

Sue reported on the work of the Nominating Committee including the process that led to this year's slate of nominees for the Board and Nominating Committee. Sue then thanked the members of the Nominating Committee for their work in putting together the slate of nominees. She noted that the slate of nominees is consistent with the Council's democratic principles and that of Girl Scouts of the USA.

Sue presented the following slate of nominees in the categories set forth below:

**For Members-at-Large of the Board of Directors, three-year term,
October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2022**

Mary Brady
Layne Diehl
Kathy Duda
Roland Hawthorne
Emily Lindsay
Natalie Ludaway
Mary Gay Sprague

**For Members-at-Large of the Board of Directors, one-year term, Teen Girls,
October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020**

Samia Alshammaa
Jessica Mense

**For Members of the Nominating Committee, three-year term,
October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2022**

Vicky Bailey
Berniece Collis
Jennifer Tapper

**Motion: **The slate of nominees for all positions and categories were
elected as presented by acclamation.****

RECOGNITION OF OUTGOING BOARD AND NOMINATING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Faye recognized the following individuals, whose terms will expire at the end of the fiscal year on September 30, 2019, for their service on the Board of Directors and the Nominating Committee.

From the Board of Directors

Kathy Albarado
Rosie Allen-Herring
Julianna Grimson
Mia Hagood

From the Nominating Committee

Sue Hansen
Emily Lindsay

INSTALLATION OF NEWLY ELECTED OFFICIALS

Faye conducted the installation of the newly elected members to the Board of Directors and the Nominating Committee. Current Board and Nominating Committee members were asked to join in the installation to reaffirm their commitment by reciting the oath. Faye thanked the newly elected members for their willingness to serve.

PRESIDENT’S REMARKS – Faye Fields

Faye thanked all the girls who shared incredible stories about the impact the outdoors and Girl Scouts has had on their lives. She commented on the many challenges that girls face today and the importance of Girl Scouts providing a safe space for them. Faye went on to note that the Girl Scout community in the Greater Washington Region is strong and our girls are receiving robust and wide-ranging Girl Scout experiences.

Faye reflected on the past year and talked about the Board’s effort in helping to strengthen the Council’s partnership with key corporations and foundations in the region to build a female pipeline of talent that will fuel the future of American ingenuity and business. She mentioned major construction projects at some of our camps that included renovation of the health center at Camp Potomac Woods, updating the water access at Camp White Rock, replacement of the deck at Camp Brighton Woods, and installation of the new wastewater treatment at Camp Winona.

Faye concluded her remarks by sharing some of the special events that are being organized for Council members, such as a council-wide excursion to Disney with approximately 300 Girl Scouts in May, the Girl Scout Expo on November 16, and a Camporee at Camp Aquasco in spring 2020. She also mentioned GSUSA’s 55th National Council Session that is scheduled for October 2020. Faye then thanked everyone for their unfaltering commitment to the success of Girl Scouts Nation’s Capital.

The full remarks of the President are attached as “Addendum II” and incorporated by reference in these minutes.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER’S REMARKS – Lidia Soto-Harmon

Lidia began her remarks by thanking the girls for sharing their stories. She commented on the challenge over the past year with marketplace competition and noted that the Council persisted by telling the Girl Scout story, and demonstrating not only the Girl Scout strength but

also showed a united purpose to make girls strong. Lidia mentioned that Girl Scouts was built on solid ground and that Juliette Gordon Low had a remarkable vision to encourage girls to be courageous, confident and strong, even before women could vote or own property in our country.

Lidia shared highlights of the Council's progress over the past year, which included girls enjoying the outdoors at Council camps, one Girl Scout creating the *Raise Your Hand* movement, and the expansion of the Council's STEM portfolio. Lidia also noted that 225 girls earned the Gold Award this year and will be recognized at the annual "In Your Honor" ceremony in May. At the ceremony, the Council will be launching a new campaign with the tagline, "Girls the World Needs," to elevate awareness of the Gold Award.

Lidia concluded her remarks by thanking everyone for supporting Girl Scouts and noted that when girls are surrounded by people, who believe their potential is limitless, they become fearless.

The full remarks of the Chief Executive Officer are attached as "Addendum III" and incorporated by reference in these minutes.

RECOGNITION OF ADULT VOLUNTEERS – Sue Hansen

Sue Hansen, Chair of Adult Recognition Panel, presided over the recognitions of the Council's adult volunteers, who make Girl Scouting possible. Keeping in line with the theme of the meeting "*Step Outdoors with Girl Scouts*", the honorees were recognized as look out, move out, camp out, and adventure out. Judith Lockerson and Tina Capps each received the Knox Award for their outstanding work with girls and adults in their service units.

NEXT MEETING AND ADJOURNMENT

Faye thanked everyone for attending the Annual Meeting and announced that the next Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, April 25, 2020, at The National Conference Center in Leesburg, Virginia.

There being no further business, the 57th Annual Meeting of Girl Scout Council of the Nation's Capital was adjourned at 12:05 PM.

Jane Storero
Secretary of the Board

TREASURER'S REPORT
JUDY WALTER

Good Morning, Girl Scouts!

I am here to report on the financial condition of Girl Scout Council of the Nation's Capital. I will present an overview of the audited financial statements from the previous year, talk about our current financial state, and give you a preview of our financial future.

As a reminder, our fiscal year ends on September 30th, so the first financial information is for the year ended September 30, 2018.

The Council's audit was prepared by the CPA firm, Aronson, LLC. Their report, along with the Council's financial statements, was posted online for delegate review prior to this meeting and is still available on the Council's website. I am pleased to report that Aronson has stated that the Council's financial statements, "present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Council in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America." The audit was reviewed by the Council's Audit Advisory Committee, chaired by Tamara Vineyard and the Governance Advisory Committee, chaired by Mary Karen Wills, and was approved by the Board of Directors at their February meeting.

Today, I will review the Council's Statement of Position and Statement of Activities for fiscal year 2018.

TOTAL ASSETS

The Statement of Position, which includes our Assets and Liabilities, is a snapshot as of September 30th. For the fiscal year ended September 30, 2018, our total assets were \$23.2 million. As you see on the slide, the Council's assets are divided into three categories:

- Current Assets include our cash, accounts receivable, shop inventory, prepaid expenses, and deposits;
- Net Property & Equipment make up our Fixed Asset category; and
- Investments comprise the final asset category.

Their relative percentages are shown on the next slide.

Our Investments are the largest category of assets and they include our Endowments and our Operating Reserve. Our Operating Reserve now represents seven months of expenses and is a sign of the financial stability of our Council. This means we have resources available in case of financial setbacks. It has been the board's goal to reach this level of financial security over the last five years and we are thrilled to have reached this point.

On the other side of our balance sheet we have Liabilities.

Current liabilities are the Council's debts or obligations that are due within one year, these appear on our balance sheet as accounts payable, payroll liabilities, and other shorter term obligations. Our long term liabilities are the Council's debts or obligations that are due in future years that is, beyond one year. These obligations appear on our balance sheet as Deferred Rent, Capital Lease expenses, and Notes Payable.

What remains after the Liabilities are deducted from Total Assets, are the Council's Net Assets, which have three categories.

- Unrestricted Net Assets have no restrictions which means the Council can use the funds for any purpose, any time.
- Temporarily Restricted Net Assets comprise contributions received or promised that carry a donor imposed restriction as to **when** (a time restriction) or for **what purpose** (a purpose restriction) the funds can be used.
- We also have ten Permanently Restricted Funds that comprise our Endowments. These funds have donor specified, long-term restrictions on how the funds can be used.

Next, we are moving from a snapshot to a moving picture. I'm going to discuss our Statement of Activities, which represents the Revenue inflows and the Expense outflows over the entire fiscal year. This slide shows our Revenue sources which include Girl Scout Product Program proceeds, camping and other program fees; as well as donations from individual donors, corporations and foundations.

The first two lines, Product Program and Girl Scout Shop, combine for Net Sales of more than \$12.7 million in fiscal year 2018. These two revenue sources increased by 5.2% last year due to continued growth in the Girl Scout Product programs and another strong year for our Girl Scout Shops. We are so grateful to our volunteers for their energy, dedication and support of our Product programs.

The third Revenue line, Camping and Other program fees, was \$1.9 million, up 5.3% from last year due to an increase in the number of girls attending Sleep Away camp. The next three lines comprise our Contribution Revenue, which includes corporate, foundations, and business, Annual Giving campaigns, and our donations released from restrictions totaling \$2.3 million for fiscal year 2018. Our final revenue line includes Investment earnings and Other Income. For fiscal year 2018, Revenues from all these categories totaled \$17.9 million. The revenue breakdown by category can be seen on the screen.

This clearly shows that the largest source of revenue comes from our Cookie and Fall Product Programs.

EXPENSES

Now I will highlight the Council's expenses, our financial outflows, for fiscal year 2018. The first line under expenses is the most important.

- Program services are the costs associated with providing direct service to girls and adults, which totaled nearly \$12.9 million in fiscal year 2018. The Council was able to maintain the same level of expense spending as the previous year for programs directly serving our members and benefitting our communities.
- Supporting services are the expenses associated with Council management, general administrative functions, and fundraising. These expenses totaled \$2.6 million.

Our total financial outflows for fiscal year 2018 were \$15.5 million.

We are proud to hold true to our values of putting the "girl" first in Girl Scouting, which is clearly shown on this slide. When you compare monies spent on program costs versus overhead costs, 83 cents of every \$1.00 in Council expenses goes to Program Services – directly serving our girls and supporting their leaders. Once again, we have far exceeded the industry benchmark of spending 70 cents of every \$1.00 on Program Services.

If you have specific questions about the financial statements, please contact our Chief Financial Officer, Laura Bassett for more information. Laura, will you please stand. This concludes the report on the fiscal year 2018 audit.

FISCAL YEAR 2019

Now let's talk briefly about how we are doing in our current fiscal year.

Operating Revenue through February 2019 is \$13.9 million. This revenue represents approximately 84% of our budgeted operating revenue for the fiscal year. The revenue was generated from this year's Fall Product Program, SHARE, and the Cookie Program.

As you can see in the next slide, through the incredible efforts by our girls, their families, and our volunteers, the Cookie Program sold 4.55 million boxes of cookies, slightly less than 1% lower than 2018's record breaking year. 755,000 boxes were sold through the Council's digital cookie channel, a whopping 44% increase over last year. Our per girl average rose to 123 boxes, but this success also indicates that girl participation in the Cookie Program declined again in 2018. 2.91% or 1,113 fewer girls participated in this year's Cookie Program compared to the previous year. We are concerned about the growing number of girls who are missing the opportunity to benefit from this amazing Girl Scout program. This continuing decline prompted this year's Forum question. You will hear more about that later today, so let's get back to the financial presentation.

Operating Expenses as of the end of February 2019 were \$5.4 million, which is 34.5% of the budgeted expenses for the year. We are in a strong financial position as we begin our Summer Camp season.

Our revenues and expenses at this point in the year are in line with expectations when compared to the fiscal year operating budget. Council management continues to monitor expenses closely. Operationally, we expect to achieve each of our income targets and stay within spending projections for the year.

Let's leap to our financial future. In 2020, our Cookie price will increase by \$1.00 a box. This is the first price increase in ten years! The price increase will cover growing costs and will provide higher proceeds to our Girl Scout troops. Every troop will benefit from the increase and we expect overall troop proceeds to rise more than \$1,000,000. Details of the new proceeds schedules will be shared at the August kickoff.

This concludes the report on the current financial condition of Girl Scout Council of the Nation's Capital.

Thank you. The report will be filed as presented.

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

FAYE FIELDS

Thank you for another great Annual Meeting. I hope you enjoyed our theme: *Step Outdoors with Girl Scouts*, and the wonderful Girl Scout camp stories.

We know that girls face many challenges, and it is important to provide a safe space just for girls. I am proud to say that the Girl Scout community in the Greater Washington Region is strong, and our girls are receiving robust and wide-ranging Girl Scout experiences.

I may be standing here alone, but I realize that along with me is a very committed and talented team of volunteers: adult educators, board members, cookie managers, SHARE volunteers, troop leaders, welcome specialist, service unit managers, troop organizers, high adventure outdoor facilitators and more.

April is volunteer appreciation month, but I want you to know that we appreciate our volunteers year-round. To thank adults with 10 or more years (including years as a girl) of volunteer service at Girl Scouts for their dedication to our Movement, Girl Scouts of the USA is offering a limited-time opportunity to renew in April— National Volunteer Month— as lifetime members at a discounted rate of \$200.

You heard the treasurer's report from Judy Walter, I'd like to dig a little deeper. This council is strong because of the generous corporations and foundations that support us. This council is great because our members give both their time and treasure to deliver the best Girl Scout experience. And this council does amazing work because this staff believes passionately in the Girl Scout mission.

Girl Scouts Nation's Capital is recognized as the best leadership organization for girls. Corporations and foundations in this region grasp the value of partnering with Girl Scouts, to build a female pipeline of talent that will fuel the future of American ingenuity and business. We are forming strategic, multi-year partnerships with corporations to foster employee engagement and fund the Girl Scout leadership experience.

As we continue our work to close the gender gap in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), this year we secured major funding from Hewlett Packard Enterprises (HPE) to engage Girl Scouts in cybersecurity. This partnership has been nothing short of stupendous. Girl Scout juniors have access to a new plugged-in cybersecurity patch program and game. They are learning how to safely navigate the internet and protect their identity. Girl Scouts Nation's Capital garnered tremendous industry accolades in the media for our effort. In such a digital age, I am at ease knowing that Girl Scouts are ahead of the game and prepared for leadership roles in STEM.

The Truth Initiative continues to support our environmental program and for a second year, have provided major funding for our innovative patch program, Earth Defender. Truth is focused on eliminating smoking in this generation, and they are getting this message across by demonstrating the impact smoking has on our environment. Girl Scouts at camp have earned the Earth Defender patch and capes—but most importantly they've learned the devastation cigarettes have on our forests and waterways. The program, patches and capes are now being rolled out at service unit encampments this spring.

Major Gift contributions from individuals, along with our dedicated camp volunteers, have pooled their resources to fund major construction projects at our camps. Because of these investments the health center at Potomac Woods has been renovated; water access at White Rock has been updated; the deck at Brighton Woods main lodge has been replaced; and we've installed new waste water treatment at Winona. All of this, in addition to maintaining some of the most beautiful outdoor spaces in this region. The next time you are at one of our camps, check out these cool rope tying stations and new directional signs. They point to the next Girl Scout camp. It's 125 miles to Camp Potomac Woods from May Flather!

To ensure the legacy of Girl Scouting in this region, we encourage you to join the Juliette Gordon Low Legacy Society. You can recognize these members by the purple ribbon on their name tag. If you are a member, please stand. The easiest way to join is by making this Council a partial beneficiary of your 401K or Thrift Savings Plan.

We value every contribution, from a Daisy troop's SHARE donation to Oprah Winfrey's \$25,000 check to support Raise Your Hand. Our friends and family giving campaign, SHARE, is a crucial part of our fundraising efforts. To date, SHARE has raised over \$500,000, and this is essential as our Council will be giving over \$700,000 in financial assistance this year, to ensure that every girl can fully participate in Girl Scouting.

Because of strong financial support, Girl Scouting in the Greater Washington Region works. I am excited to share with you some of the special events we have organized just for our members.

- Girl Scouts are headed to Disney next month for a special council-wide excursion. About 300 Girl Scouts will explore Disney while earning Girl Scout badges. Girls have selected one of five STEM or Leadership educational programs. They will complete badge or Journey activities covering STEM topics like, physics, gravity and motion, animal sciences and wildlife conservation. Disney also offers our older Girl Scouts the opportunity to participate in their award-winning leadership of Excellence program.
- On November 16th we are hosting the Girl Scout Expo at the Dulles Expo Center. All 100,000 square feet of the facility will be filled with fun activities for the entire Girl Scout family!

- In the spring of 2020, Girl Scout Cadettes and higher can grab their tents, hiking boots, canteens and sleeping bags and join us for a Camporee at Camp Aquasco. I promise there will be lots of high adventure activities and Girl Scout traditions!
- Then, get ready because in October 2020, Girl Scouts of the USA is holding the 55th National Council Session and Convention in Orlando, Florida. In addition to our delegation, we hope you will join us at this mega event which will provide attendees with unforgettable experiences and inspiration. How many of you have attended a National Council Session before?

I am excited about all the opportunities coming down the pike. I want to thank you all for your unfaltering commitment to the success of Girl Scouts Nation's Capital. Because of you, girls feel supported, can take risks and face whatever challenges come their way.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REMARKS
LIDIA SOTO-HARMON

Thank you, Faye and thank you to all of our amazing Girl Scout presenters today. It's been an incredible year for Girl Scouts Nation's Capital. We have seen marketplace competition in this market, but nevertheless we persisted! We have told our story loud and proud, demonstrating not only our strength, but also a united purpose to make girls strong.

Girl Scouts was built on solid ground. Juliette Gordon Low had a remarkable vision: to encourage girls to be courageous, confident and strong, even before women could vote or own property in our own country. Thanks to all of you, we have kept her vision alive. Our uniforms, badges and age levels have evolved over the years, but what has remained constant in Girl Scouts – are the skills mastered, service hours completed, and the leadership acquired. Our Movement is even more important today. We are helping girls secure a fulfilling future by embracing what girls care about today. Let me share some highlights from this year.

Despite the myth that girls don't camp, or the stereotype that women don't appreciate the outdoors, we know that thousands of girls are Stepping Outdoors with Girl Scouts: 47,467 to be exact! Our Girl Scout families utilize our eight magnificent camp properties.

Stop and think, how many other youth serving organizations have eight camp properties in the Greater Washington region alone?

In addition to troop camping, this summer over 4,000 girls will be attending Sleep Away camp and over 3,500 girls will go to our Day and Evening camps, run by amazing volunteers. That is because camping is in our DNA.

Can you repeat that with me? Camping is in our DNA!

We know that girls thrive in the outdoors. One of Juliette Gordon Low's first acquisition, after founding Girl Scouts was to buy Cloudlands, later renamed Camp Juliette Low in the northwest corner of Georgia. Because in the outdoors girls discover they can solve problems and overcome challenges. They learn to become better team players and build social bonds. They can explore their passions, dream big and become leaders like our Girl Scouts speakers today - Bailey, Carmen and Jaylah. The opportunity to try new things is at every turn, so taking risks becomes the norm. Even if they fail, they do so fearlessly.

Just this past summer, I thought it important to get outside my comfort zone and step outdoors like our Girl Scouts do at camp. I decided to be a part of the real Girl Scout story. My journey took me to two of our Girl Scout high adventure camps.

I climbed 30 feet in the air to the highest point of our high adventure ropes course at Camp White Rock, and then took the deep plunge into a dark, muddy, cave with campers at Camp May Flather. Yes, both activities required a helmet and safety gear. I took a leap of faith, and was astonished by how much these outdoor adventures taught me. Above all it taught me to be fearless.

This year, we added an additional position to our camping services department, a high adventure specialist. Her charge is to help Girl Scout troops explore high adventure activities. She is increasing our resources to include more high adventure volunteers and streamlining the process so that more troops can zip line across our high adventure ropes course, throw a tomahawk with precision and navigate the Aquia Creek in a kayak.

Because camping is in our DNA!

My goal is to ensure that we remain the best leadership organization for girls. That means keeping the G.I.R.L. in scouting (go-getters, innovators, risk takers and leaders). Because who runs this organization—GIRLS!

Girls like Alice Paul Tapper who has inspired Girl Scouts, young and old, to not be intimidated, but to be bold and brave and Raise Your Hand. Alice observed that girls in her class were shying away from raising their hands or volunteering for school activities. She brought the issue to her Girl Scout troop, and they all agreed, Girl Scouts should have a patch for that.

Only in a girl-led organization, could a ten-year old create a movement. Today, 13,000 girls and women have taken the Raise Your Hand pledge and purchased the patch. Raise Your Hand catapulted Girl Scouts to the national stage. Alice appeared on the Ellen Show, Today Show, CNN, and where it all started, Fox channel 5.

Alice is here today, signing her book, *Raise Your Hand*. Generously, Alice donated \$25,000, her book advance to our Council. She also secured for our Council a \$25,000 donation from Oprah to help us enhance our Raise Your Hand movement. And then on Ellen, oh Ellen was not going to be outdone by Oprah. So, she said to Alice she would also make a huge donation. And she did...she gave Alice a check for twenty-five thousand and one dollars (\$25,001) to support Girl Scouts Nation's Capital Raise Your Hand. Alice you are in the room, can you stand so we can all say thank you!

Alice shows us that we can take girls from being shy to being fearless. And, it is with that same veracity, that Girl Scouts aims to close the gender gap in STEM, leadership and entrepreneurship. Because we know that the world benefits from the work of women inventors, scientist, designers, artists and leaders.

Our Cookie program just came to a close, and as Judy reported earlier, Girl Scouts sold 4.55 million boxes of Girl Scout Cookies. In the process girls grew in confidence, sharpened their math and marketing skills and learned how to run a business.

The largest number of Gold Award Girl Scouts in a decade, 225 girls earned the Gold Award, the highest achievement in Girl Scouts. Thanks to our former board president, Diane Tipton, this year, we are launching at the “In Your Honor” ceremony in May, a major campaign to elevate awareness of the Gold Award.

When girls build vegetable gardens to help feed their communities, when girls organize anti-bullying clubs to ensure that no child with a disability feels left out, when girls write legislation to protect our environment, we know that these girls-- these Gold Award Girl Scouts-- are GIRLS THE WORLD NEEDS! That’s our new campaign, Gold Award Girl Scouts, Girls the World Needs.

I am proud of Girl Scouts’ legacy of women leaders including the record number of women just elected to Congress. Seventy-nine (79) of the 131 female members of this Congress (60%) are all Girl Scout alums. We know that all the women Secretaries of States, and almost every female astronaut who has flown in outer space were Girl Scouts – ALL FEARLESS.

But if we are to carry out the legacy of Juliette Gordon Low and her expectation for ‘girls In Savannah, all of America and the world,’ it’s important that we recruit and retain our members.

We continue to be the largest Girl Scout council in the nation, with 87,254 girl and adult members. Today, we begin early bird.

Last year, we retained 70 percent of our girl and adult members. That is one of the highest retention rates in the nation. In fact, girls who participate in troops, and are supported by service units, have an even higher retention of 77 percent. Much credit goes to our dedicated volunteers for delivering incredible Girl Scout experiences.

At this meeting last year, I asked each of you to commit to asking every girl and potential adult in your area to be part of this amazing Girl Scout journey. To support this, we created a new Fill Your Troop patch. Along with other initiatives and your support, we have done an incredible job of recruiting new girls. Let’s make sure we continue extending membership opportunities to every girl.

And on that note, can I hear our membership bells? At our August Kickoff, we awarded Association 51, Ashgrove West the bell for the largest increase in the number of girls registered—185, with every service unit exceeding goal. And for largest percentage increase in girls registered –three associations tied: Association 11, Calvert County; Association 40, D.C. East; and Association 14, Shenandoah Region. They all realized a five percent increase in girls. Let’s hear those bells.

I want to thank each of you for supporting Girl Scouts. When girls are surrounded by people who believe their potential is limitless they become fearless!

It starts with one girl and grows exponentially stronger with every girl we reach. One girl like Girl Scout Brownie Madison Wilkinson who performed at Peoples Congregational's 50th anniversary of Girl Scouting. She touched my heart, and I'd like her to share the song she wrote for all of you today. [Madison sings her song]

Thank you, Madison, and thank you all again. With every girl we reach, our movement grows stronger.