



TIP SHEET FOR COUNCILS

This groundbreaking research comes at a pivotal time in Girl Scouts of the USA's history. It will serve as a vital resource on youth, girls, and leadership, and provide councils and volunteers with an understanding of the importance of promoting leadership among girls of all ages. This original study explores girls' and boys' definitions of leadership, their perceptions and attitudes about leadership and leadership behaviors, and what they need to perceive themselves as leaders today and in the future.

This study can be used as a launching point for building membership, donors, and alliances with internal and external audiences. The following strategies are recommendations to guide Girl Scout councils in these tasks. If you have any questions or need assistance, contact Michelle Tompkins at 212-852-5074.

SHARE STUDY WITH COUNCIL STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

- *Share the study with council staff, volunteers, and girls.* Prominently feature findings from the study in council newsletters, list-serves, etc. Ask girls from your council if they have reactions to the study they would like to share with the council.
- *Host a series of brown bag lunches with council staff and volunteers.* Discuss how the key findings outlined in the study impact girls in your area and how staff and volunteers go about working with girls. Invite girls to share their ideas.
- *Interact with other departments.* Ask people in your program department to keep you in the loop regarding what is going on with girls in your area. What community service projects are the girls working on? How can you tie Girl Scout activities to leadership?

SHARE STUDY WITH COMMUNITY LEADERS AND PARTNERS

- *Distribute the study to key community leaders and other partners.* Talk about ways for adults in your community to contribute to cultivating leadership qualities in girls.
- *Host a town hall meeting.* Discuss research and community solutions to the issues girls are raising.
- *Continually identify ways to showcase and distribute the study.* For instance, consider local conferences, community meetings, the media, etc.
- *Distribute Web information about the study to local schools.* Offer the GSUSA link to the study with a quick introduction to all schools in your area—from pre-K and grammar schools all the way up to local colleges and universities. Every place of learning can benefit from knowing what girls say about leadership.

WORK WITH STATE LEGISLATURES, GOVERNORS, AND KEY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

- *Identify opportunities to participate in the legislative process.* Opportunities include supporting legislation focused on youth leadership; introducing legislation giving girls opportunities to sit on advisory boards and commissions related to youth; and testifying before the state legislature on important legislative matters related to youth.
- *Distribute the study to state and local legislators.* This might include the governor, key executive agencies, and state advisory bodies related to youth issues, possibly as part of a state advocacy day. Identify opportunities to contribute to the work of legislative committees or to collaborate with government agencies.

GIRL ADVOCACY

- *Find ways for girls to add their voices to the dialogues.* Focus on leadership development and other issues girls care about in the state legislature, their communities, and schools. One idea is to hold a youth speak-out for girls to talk about leadership.
- *Encourage girls to use the study as a tool when selecting community service projects.* It is an excellent reference for the Girl Scout Silver and Gold awards.
- *Ask girls to plan an advocacy project.* Such a project should address a concern that is relevant to their neighborhood, home, or school. They should identify an issue; decide on a project to address the issue; build an action plan; and take action to address the issue.
- *Ensure that girls are involved in all of these activities.*

THE MEDIA

- *Continue to reach out to the news media.* Request editorial board meetings with local newspapers to discuss the study's findings and girl leadership development.
- *Monitor media outlets.* Stories related to the issues raised in the study may appear in local newspaper articles, radio broadcasts, and television news reports. You can respond to these stories by writing letters or asking girls to write op-eds and letters to the editors.
- *Use local council/area newsletters as a way to reach target audiences.* Ask related organizations if they will run articles in their own newsletters.
- *Make the study relevant to your local community.* Celebrate the girls in your community—make them the focus of the story and use the study as the foundation.

Source: *Change It Up! What Girls Say About Redefining Leadership* (2008)