

GIRL SCOUTS AND HEALTHY LIVING

HEALTHY LIVING

Peer pressure, body image, bad grades, boys . . . it can be a lot for a girl to manage, and it can take a toll on her sense of well-being. Every girl deserves to live a happy, healthy life in which she feels comfortable in her own skin, confident in her choices, and capable of fulfilling her dreams. That's what's at the heart of the Girl Scouts' focus on Healthy Living.

Being healthy doesn't just happen. It requires knowledge of and a commitment to making healthy choices. Through fun- and fact-filled books, interaction with friends, and a bevy of innovative activities, girls gain access to information on everyday health challenges like stress, nutrition, substance abuse, diet, relationships, and more. Girl Scouting provides girls with age-appropriate settings to turn knowledge into experience, and then turns those experiences into healthy habits for life.

TACKLING THE TOUGH ISSUES

The Girl Scout Research Institute (GSRI) is keeping a close eye on the issues affecting girls. Through tracking trends and original research, the GSRI knows that girls' health is threatened by a number of factors, from bullying and eating disorders to drugs, physical abuse, and violence. Working with the Office of National Drug Control Policy, Girl Scouts developed **In the Zone: Living Drug Free**, a series of books for Girl Scouts from ages 5 to 17 that encourages girls to explore positive, drug-free options for living happy and healthy "in the zone."

Girl Scouts' *P.A.V.E. the Way* (Project Anti-Violence Education) seeks to call attention to and prevent violence among girls through funding from the U.S. Department of Justice. By focusing on conflict resolution, anger management, and respect, *P.A.V.E.* is making a difference in girls' ability to avoid and defuse confrontations.

One of the biggest threats to girls' health is low self-esteem. It can lead to stress and depression, and can contribute to risky behaviors like substance abuse and eating disorders. **uniquely ME!**, an innovative Girl Scout project, tackles self-esteem head on. Developed in partnership with Unilever and available through the Dove Self-Esteem Fund, **uniquely ME!** gives girls ages 8–17 a hip tween and teen experience with hands-on activities and online tips and encouragement. It helps them develop their unique strengths by emphasizing healthy choices and overall physical activity.



GIRL SCOUTING IN ACTION

Fitness is essential to girls' health. Physical inactivity is a major factor in the rise of obesity among children. The good news is that physical exercise not only leads to weight loss, but can also significantly enhance a girl's feelings about her body image and self-confidence. That's something Girl Scout founder Juliette Gordon Low knew nearly a century ago. In 1913, she offered badges in swimming, cycling, and horsemanship.

Today, staying fit is still strongly encouraged. The **GirlSports** program features a sports-readiness kit for five- to eight-year-olds, including basics like throwing and batting. It also offers *Fit&Fun* for girls ages 8 to 11. In addition, more advanced activities are available that inspire girls to get fit and stay fit for life. *Weighing In: Helping Girls Be Healthy Today, Healthy Tomorrow* addresses these issues and makes recommendations for staying fit and strong.

Perhaps the best example of Girl Scouting in action is when a girl takes the ball and runs with it, as did one STUDIO 2B_{SM} teenage Girl Scout who loves athletics but noticed that many students with disabilities in her school weren't participating. She designed a new fitness curriculum for her high school that would include all students. That's the Girl Scout spirit.

Whether they're working to earn awards like the Stay Healthy Try-It or talking with advisors about the issues that affect their lives, Girl Scouts are building the skills they need for healthful living—mind, body, and spirit.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Two Health and Wellness badges/awards are:

- High on Life, a badge earned by girls ages 8 to 11. Girls participate in activities that educate them on positive alternatives to drugs.
- GAME FACE, a patch project that inspires participation in sports and fitness. It celebrates the power and pride of athleticism, competition, and winning, and features profiles of women athletes.

For a closer look at the Girl Scouts' Healthy Living activities, call your local Girl Scout council or Customer Service at 1-800-221-6707 to order a copy of our resources on the subject, which include:

- *uniquely ME! Inside and Out*
- *In the Zone: Living Drug Free* booklets
- *Girl Scouts Against Smoking*, age-appropriate booklets on smoking risks and making positive choices
- *Strong Bones, Strong Girls*

PRESS INQUIRIES

With hundreds of Girl Scout councils around the country, there are always interesting stories to tell. If you'd like to learn more about the healthy choices girls are making, contact your local Girl Scout council or the Communications Department at Girl Scouts of the USA at 1-800-GSUSA4U or media@girlscouts.org.

Girl Scouts of the USA is the preeminent organization for girls and has more than 3.8 million girl and adult members. Girl Scouting fosters values, social awareness, and self-esteem in girls while also teaching them critical life skills for future success. It's a very special girls-only place where girls discover the fun, friendship, and power of girls growing together. The organization strives to serve girls in every part of the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. To learn more about volunteering, partnership, or Girl Scout news, visit us on the Web at www.girlscouts.org.