



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
CONTACT: Linda Lauderdale
Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi
Marketing and Grants Manager
601-693-2903 (o)
601-918-3957 (c)
llauderdale@gsgms.org

IT'S GIRL SCOUT COOKIE TIME!

Local Scouts Kick Off Annual Sale, Learning Business Skills and Giving Back

JACKSON, MS – January 10, 2012 – It's that time of the year again, when America's leading entrepreneurial, educational program for girls – the Girl Scout Cookie Sale – gets off to a delicious start. Beginning Saturday, January 21, local Girl Scouts will be knocking on doors, calling on local businesses and reaching out to community members, inviting them to indulge their sweet tooth and support local Girl Scouts.

Cookie Rally Gets Things Started

Area Girl Scouts will kick off the sale with giant Cookie Rally celebrations in Jackson, Meridian, Hattiesburg, Vicksburg and Gulfport..

During the rallies, young cookie entrepreneurs from local Girl Scout troops will engage in fun activities designed to help them set goals, polish their sales pitch, teach them some creative marketing techniques, and ensure that they know the safety rules of the cookie sale.

A Learning Experience

When Girl Scouts participate in the annual cookie program, they are part of the largest girl-led business in the country, generating more than \$700 million for girls and communities

nationwide, making it the premier business and economic literacy training program for girls in the United States. All cookie proceeds stay in the local communities, helping to support program activities, maintain camp facilities, provide training opportunities for local volunteers and fund camp scholarships for girls. **Plus, a portion of the sale of every box of cookies goes directly to the local troops.**

The cookie sale is more than a yearly money-earner for troops. It is a unique and valuable way for girls to learn business skills, people skills, teamwork, money smarts, business ethics and financial goal setting. Many of today's most successful women have credited their early business skills to the Girl Scout Cookie program.

“Since its inception nearly 100 years ago, the Girl Scout Cookie Program has empowered generations of girls by teaching them skills for life and business and by growing their self-confidence and independence,” said Becky Traweek, Chief Executive Officer, Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi. “The Girl Scout Cookie Program may only last a few months of the year, but through it the girls learn skills that will benefit them for a lifetime.”

The girls set individual sales goals and earn recognition items such as Girl Scout Cookie “Dough,” which they can use to help pay for Girl Scout summer camp, program events, uniforms and more. Each Girl Scout troop also sets goals and earns proceeds, which they use to fund learning activities, field trips and service projects.

Girl Scouts Give Back

The Girl Scout Cookie Program also encourages girls to give back to their communities. Many Girl Scout troops participate in the Gift of Caring program. Through this program, those who may want to support the Girl Scouts but may not want to take their cookies home can purchase cookies that will be donated to local military, emergency service providers and charitable organizations adopted by local Girl Scout troops.

In addition, troops are encouraged to designate some of their cookie proceeds to fund a community service project to be planned and carried out by the girls.

New 100th Anniversary Cookie Joins Traditional Favorites

A new cookie has been added to the lineup of familiar favorites this year. *Savannah Smiles* is a cool, crisp lemon wedge cookie, packaged in a commemorative box to celebrate the founding of Girl Scouting by Juliette Low 100 years ago in Savannah, Georgia.

In addition to the new *Savannah Smiles* cookie, the eight cookie varieties this year include the traditional favorites of *Samoas*, *Trefoils*, *Thin Mints*, *Do-Si-Dos*, and *Tagalongs* as well as the newer *Dulce de Leche*, and *Thank U Berry Munch*. This year's Girl Scout Cookie varieties will again contain zero grams of trans fat per serving. The *Dulce de Leche*, *Trefoil* and *Thank U Berry Munch* varieties contain no hydrogenated oil, and four of the cookies – Trefoils, Samoas, Thin Mints and Thank U Berry Munch – are nut-free. The price of the cookies is \$3.50 per box.

Sale Dates

Girl Scouts throughout the area will be knocking on doors and taking orders beginning Saturday, January 21. Delivery of cookies will begin February 28, and Girl Scout troops will be hosting Girl Scout Cookie booths at local merchants from March 3 through March 24.

If no one contacts you to place an order for Girl Scout cookies, call the Hattiesburg Girl Scout office at 601-582-1455 or visit Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi online at www.gsgms.org and click on the Cookie Locator button.

Girl Scouting is about building strong leaders, and Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi is the preeminent leadership development organization for girls in kindergarten through twelfth grade in Mississippi. In partnership with 3,000 committed adult volunteers, GSGMS serves nearly 9,000 girls in 45 counties in south and central Mississippi, helping them to develop qualities that will serve them throughout their lives, like strong values, a social conscience, and conviction about their own potential and self-worth. For more information on how to join, volunteer, reconnect, or donate to Girl Scouts, call 800-898-4475 or visit www.gsgms.org.

Founded in 1912, Girl Scouts of the USA is the preeminent leadership experience for girls and is the leading authority on girls' healthy development. Girl Scouts builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. The three-million-member organization serves girls from every corner of the United States and its territories. Girl Scouts of the USA also serves American girls and their classmates attending American or international schools overseas in 90 countries.

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