

Everything you need to know about USA Girl Scouts Overseas Cadette-Senior Troop 26

October, 2002

THE BASICS

WHEN WE MEET: Our troop meets once a month as a large group on Wednesday nights (generally the first Wednesday night of the month) from 6:00-8:00 PM at the American School of Kuwait, High School Room 204. The Cadettes, Seniors, and leadership teams usually each have an additional meeting each month, some are on Wednesday afternoons and evenings, but others may be at different times which are convenient for the leaders and girls. On the average, we expect that girls could have meetings 2-3 Wednesdays per month and have 1-2 weekend activities a month. In a few weeks we will put out a calendar of meetings and activities so that you will know what we are planning. The calendar will be changed during the year and we expect to have an updated calendar about once a month.

MEETING REQUIREMENTS: No meetings nor activities are required; at this time girls are allowed to attend whatever meetings and activities they wish. We just ask that they keep the Troop President (or other Troop Leadership team member) and leaders informed about which events they will attend and which they won't.

COMMUNICATION: Our main method of communication of information is by email, so it's important that the girls check their email several times each week and respond when asked to. If your daughter does not have email or can't access it, she should telephone the Corresponding Secretary to arrange for some way to get printouts of the emails or otherwise receive information.

GOVERNMENT OF THE TROOP: This troop is run by the girls and the adult "leaders" are actually advisors for their meetings and activities. The girls elect officers of their choosing periodically and the leaders "train" them to do their jobs. The girls then make the arrangements for most of the activities, do the shopping, plan what we'll do, do the emailing, make the phone calls, arrange for chaperones and transportation, etc.

It would often be quicker and easier for the adult leaders to do a lot of the planning, but the girls gain a great deal from the experiences. When things don't go perfectly, the girls learn by the experience and generally improve the next time. We try to be patient with their learning processes and we hope that you will be patient and understanding, too.

The leaders do plan a few activities and opportunities for the girls during the year, and we welcome parents to help us with this if they have something interesting to share. For example, we had the opportunity to visit Superstation Kuwait Radio Station last year and the leader who discovered this opportunity made the arrangements so that we could visit right away. We just had a field trip to the Tareq Rajab Museum to finish up requirements for an Interest Patch the girls had worked on last year as well.

ADMINISTRATION

REGISTRATION COSTS: Troop 26 collects annual dues of KD 5.000. This is normally done in September or when the girl joins. KD 2.700 is sent to GSUSA in New York for annual registration in the organization and KD 2.300 KD is retained by the LTC to operate activities for large groups of girls – principally a large Thinking Day activity in February, a campout in March and the Year End Gathering of girls in May. None of the money is retained by the troop.

MONEY EARNING ACTIVITIES: There are several formal money earning programs in which the girls participate during the year. The troop generally participates in Girl Scout calendar sales and sales at the AWL Bazaar to raise money for the troop. Unfortunately we are not allowed to sell official Girl Scout cookies here in Kuwait. We do sometimes hold bake sales of homemade cookies, though.

FUND RAISING: Girl Scouts here in Kuwait is also supported from donations by companies. If you know of a company which would like to help support our activities with donations of money or items for us to use, please let one of the leaders know.

ACTIVITY COSTS: Since we have a wide variety of ages and participation levels in our troop, we have the girls pay for some of the activities. While the troop has funds from the girls' money earning activities, "all-troop" activities will be financed by the troop. For activities for only part of the troop and for awards earned by girls and if we run short of funds later in the school year, there will be a fee for individual activities and awards. We will let you know the costs, which are payable in advance.

PERMISSION SLIPS: Whenever the troop meets outside of the normal meeting time and/or location, a permission slip is required. Normally, these need to be signed and turned in to a leader at the meeting or event.

HEALTH FORMS: At the beginning of the year, you were asked to fill out a Health History Form and Emergency Consent Form. We take these on every trip, so that should something happen to a girl, we will have all needed medical information at our fingertips. Adults who travel with the troop should also fill these forms out.

CIVIL ID COPIES: To visit many interesting places in Kuwait we must provide not only names of girls and adults attending, but their Kuwait Civil ID numbers and sometimes copies of the Civil IDs. We ask that you keep a current copy with the leaders and consider having your daughter carry a copy of her Civil ID in her wallet or purse as well.

PHOTO RELEASES: We publish a Kuwait Girl Scout calendar and sometimes post photos of our activities on our website (<http://usagskuwait.tripod.com>). The girls are not individually identified in these published photos (for their safety). We asked that you fill out the photo release form at registration so that we can use photos of your daughter this way. If you would prefer that she not be pictured in our calendar or website, please let us know.

GIRL SCOUT ITEMS

UNIFORMS AND ATTIRE: There is only one "required" uniform item in Girl Scouting, and that's the Girl Scout pin (provided to new girls by the troop at a ceremony in the fall). However, for formal activities where we are representing USAGSO to the public, to other Girl Guide/Scout organizations and for some events with younger girls, we require that girls wear a Girl Scout uniform shirt or blouse, a vest and matching slacks or skirt. These items can be purchased from our store representative, Adrienne Bean (534-1517). Sometimes we carry fabric so that slacks or skirts that are appropriate for your daughter can be tailored. We have a handout which shows item placement on Girl Scout uniform vests, if you would like one.

For regular meetings at the school, girls may wear casual clothing.

For trips to private homes, the Texaco camp, Camp Doha, etc. girls may wear casual clothing appropriate to the activity.

For field trips and events outside the school, we recommend that they wear uniforms, but they may dress "conservatively" instead. By conservative, we mean conservative by US standards - they must wear loose fitting slacks or skirts that cover the knees and loose fitting blouses that are cut fairly high at the neck, and do not show any "midriff" nor the shoulders. We ask that girls dress this way because they are representing USA Girl Scouts when we are out in public, not just their own families.

BOOKS: In addition, Girls are encouraged, but not required, to buy both the Cadette-Senior Interest Project Book and the age-level appropriate Girl Scout Handbook, if they are interested in earning awards of any type. We don't use these books at every meeting, and the girls can get any information they need from a friend; however, we do not intend to make Xerox copies of pages for the girls to use. Each book is around 3 KD in price, and all are well-written. Even girls who don't enjoy reading will enjoy these books. The books also include pictures of how items are to be worn on the Girl Scout uniform.

CADETTE AND SENIOR GIRL SCOUT AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

CADETTE AGE LEVEL: 12-14 years old or US grades 6-9. This is one area that "overlaps" age groups to serve different areas of the country or different girl needs. 6th graders can be either Juniors or Cadettes and 9th graders can be either Cadettes or Seniors. (In our LTC most 6th graders stay Juniors because the Cadette program requires much more independence, which can be difficult to manage in Kuwait.) The school set up also affects the level in

Girl Scouts. In some school systems Junior High starts with 7th grade and goes through 9th grade. Often High School starts in 9th grade so many of the girls go to Seniors at that time. In other places Middle school can be 6-7&8th grade so Cadettes might start a year earlier then.

SENIOR AGE LEVEL: 14-18 years old or grades 9-12. (Again the Cadette/Senior age level overlaps at the 9th grade level.)

CADETTE GIRL SCOUT AWARDS

- membership star - one received for each year of membership. At the Cadette level the disk behind the star is white.
- Interest Project Patches (IPP) - The earned "badges" at the Cadette and Senior level. They are designed to "enable girls to explore new skills or improve upon the skills they already have." There are 66 of them in the GSUSA book and several others offered by individual councils in the US. Each IPP requires that 7 requirements out of 12-13 be met. They are NOT easy to earn!!
- From Dreams to Reality Patch - a career exploration recognition. "To earn this patch, girls must complete a series of activities ranging from readings and interviews to shadowing people at their jobs." It also lets girls "investigate jobs that have not traditionally been held by women."
- Cadette Girl Scout Leadership Award (Silver Torch) - To earn this the girl must learn about leadership and work in two or more settings as a leader (earning a total of at least 25 hours of "leadership" time). Each leadership experience must be at least 3 hours to count towards this award.
- Cadette Girl Scout Challenge - To earn this recognition the girl must complete a five-step process to learn more about themselves and expand their experiences. The five areas are:
 1. Knowing Myself Better
 2. Relating to Others Better
 3. Developing Values for Living
 4. Contributing to Your Community
 5. Knowing About Girl Scouting
- Community Service Bars - There are two types of Community Service Bars available for Cadettes: The Cadette Girl Scout Community Service Bar and the Community Service Bar for Contributions to Girl Scouting. Earning the Community Service Bar involves a two-step process:

Step 1. "A girl must select an organization she wished to help. The organization must then supply the girl with at least four hours of training. Both the organization and the training process must be approved by the local council.

Step 2. "The girl must make a commitment of a minimum of 25 hours of service" to the organization that trained her.

Earning the Community Service Bar for Contributions to Girl Scouting involves only step 2, as your training as a Girl Scout counts towards step 1.
- Cadette Girl Scout Program Aide - "This is a two-phase process. A pin is earned after the girl has undergone the training" (approximately 10 hours). A patch is earned after a girl has spent a total of 25 hours in service as a Cadette Girl Scout Program Aide." A girl must be going into 7th grade or older in order to qualify for this award.
- Religious Recognitions - several different Religions have different requirements for different Scouting awards.
- The Girl Scout Silver Award - the highest award available at the Cadette level. There are five requirements that must be met to qualify for the Silver Award.
 1. Earn three IPPs related to the project the girl wants to do for the Silver Award.
 2. Earn either the From Dreams to Reality patch or the Careers Exploration IPP.

3. Earn either the Cadette Girl Scout Leadership Award or the Leadership IPP.
4. Earn the Cadette Girl Scout Challenge.
5. Design and carry out a Girl Scout Silver Award project. This project from planning to execution, should take at least 30 hours to complete.

- Ten Year Pin - a special recognition when a girl has been in Girl Scouting for 10 years.
- Bridge to Seniors - To earn this patch the girl must do the required bridging activities.

SENIOR GIRL SCOUT AWARDS

- membership stars - one awarded for each year in Scouting. At the Senior level the disk behind the star is red.
- Interest Project Patches (IPP) - same as for Cadette Girl Scouts.
- Senior Girl Scout Community Service Bar - same as Cadette Girl Scouts except the Senior Community Service Bar replaces the Cadette Community Service Bar. The training and service must be done as a Senior Girl Scout. The Community Service Bar for Contributions to Girl Scouting may also be earned, if not completed as a Cadette.
- Senior Girl Scout Program Aide - training is the same as Cadette Girl Scout Program Aide. If the girl has completed the training as a Cadette she only needs a 2 hour "update" training, if available. After being trained she is eligible for the Senior Girl Scout Program Aide Pin. After 25 hours of service she is eligible for the Senior Girl Scout Program Aide Patch. Senior Girl Scout Program Aides are given more responsibility than Cadette Girl Scout Program Aides and can help with long-term projects.
- Leader-in-Training (LIT) Pin and Patch - A girl must have completed the 9th grade before being able to earn her LIT. This is a two-step process. Once the girl has completed the required LIT training course, she is entitled to receive the LIT pin. The course is usually a one or two day training teaching girls how to lead groups. The girl is then assigned to a troop for a certain amount of time (5 to 8 months) with a "mentor" (leader). After she has completed her service she can receive the LIT patch.
- Counselor-in-Training (CIT) - This project offers older Girl Scouts the opportunity to work with children in the out-of-doors. The girl must have completed the tenth grade before becoming a CIT. CIT training includes an outdoor group leadership course while interning as a counselor in a Girl Scout camp.
- Counselor-in-Training II (CITII) - Once a girl has completed one year as a CIT she may specialize in a certain area (high adventure, horse instructor, nature, art, administration, maintenance, etc) and earn her CITII pin.
- Senior Girl Scout Troop Assistant (SGSTA) - To earn this pin the girl must have completed a LIT project, have completed the tenth grade, and be able to make a full-year commitment to a troop. She acts as an assistant leader, but can NOT take the place of an adult (there must be the required number of adults present for meetings and outings.)
- Apprentice Trainers - Senior Girl Scouts who have completed an LIT may take the required training and become an Apprentice Trainer and teach others about a special area.
- Senior Girl Scout Leadership Award (Gold Torch) - Girls learn or review what they have already learned about leadership and give 30 hours in two or more leadership roles.
- The Career Exploration Pin - Girls must do in-depth career exploration to earn this pin. The requirements include reading about careers, writing a résumé and completing one of the following options:
 - Option 1. Plan a Career Fair
 - Option 2. Plan a Trip to Explore Careers
 - Option 3. Carry Out a Career Internship
 - Option 4. Get a Paying Job
 - Option 5. Start Your Own Business

- The Senior Girl Scout Challenge - Girls put the Girl Scout Promise and Law into action. To earn this pin the girl has to complete activities in the following areas:
 1. Developing Your Potential
 2. Relating to Others
 3. Developing Values for Living
 4. Contributing to Society
 5. Helping Others Know About Girl Scouting
- Religious Recognitions - same as Cadette Girl Scouts
- Ten Year Pin - same as Cadette Girl Scout
- The Girl Scout Gold Award - This is the highest award available in Girl Scouting. It has five requirements which must be completed while the girl is a Senior Girl Scout. The requirements are:
 1. Earn four IPPs on topics related to the Gold Award Project. (These can NOT be earned as a Cadette, they must be earned completely as a Senior.)
 2. Earn the Career Exploration Pin
 3. Earn the Senior Girl Scout Leadership Award.
 4. Earn the Senior Girl Scout Challenge.
 5. Plan and implement a Girl Scout Gold Award project that requires at least 50 hours of work.

The first four requirements must be completed before the Gold Award project is started. The Gold Award project must be submitted and approved by the local council before it is started.

- Bridge to Adult Pin - complete the required Bridging activities.

OTHER ACTIVITIES RELATED TO CADETTE/SENIOR GIRL SCOUTS:

- Wider Opportunities (Wider Ops) - Opportunities for Cadettes or Seniors to attend activities with Girl Scouts from other areas of the country or the world.

National Wider Ops take place in different areas of the USA dealing with different topics. The girls learn to fill out applications, obtain references, and to be interviewed by adults selected by our LTC when applying for Wider Ops. We feel this is excellent preparation for future employment. The forms are then forwarded to Girl Scouts in New York which checks them and sends them on to the Wider Op they have selected. Each event is limited to a certain number of participants and has different requirements.

There are also some International Wider Ops which take place in other countries. Application for these events is similar to National Wider Ops, but the girls are often more experienced in Girl Scouting and older.

- Training week in Germany – North Atlantic Girl Scouts – Girls 14 and older may apply along with the adults from Kuwait to attend a 5 day conference in Germany for training. Girls (or their parents) will have to pay for most of the trip but a small amount of financial help may be available from the LTC, if desired.
- Training sessions at Edith Macy Conference Center in New York. Girls (and adults) attending official GSUSA events or training sessions at Edith Macy Conference Center receive the Macy Lamp Pin.
- Trips with the troop – Girls in these age levels often wish to plan and carry out long distance trips. The girls need your support for these types of activities. Sometimes they wish to travel to such places as Girl Guide/Scout facilities in London, Switzerland or India. If the girls are interested in such a trip this year, we will send home more information about it.

Our troop philosophy is that we will not have awards be the “be all, end all” of our program, but rather, they give us a guide to things we can learn about as a troop and an outline of what to teach.

Some scouts are very motivated by awards, and if this is the case, they are welcome to earn these on their own outside the troop. Those in certain classes or programs outside school often participate in arts, music, sports, or

other programs that are directly linked to awards requirements. If this is the case with your Girl Scout, she simply needs to tell one of the leaders/advisors what she has done to meet the requirements and we will help her to write these things up.

For earning any award in Girl Scouts, your daughter will need to complete paperwork and sometimes she may need to bring in examples or photos of what she has accomplished and we'll give her the credit. We emphasize organization and each girl keeping her own careful awards records. As we mentioned before, though, earning awards is an optional part of the program. Some girls are not particularly interested in this or don't have time to work on many awards.

If girls miss a meeting where award work is done, we will try to help them make it up later, but that can't always be done. Often girls will have to work on requirements on their own. We will do our best to keep everyone posted when they're missing something in plenty of time for a Court of Awards ceremony, but girls will need to contact one of the leaders in charge of awards to check on which requirements have been completed and recorded in our troop records.

PATCHES: Patches commemorate an activity we did, and normally signify just participation in the event. This can be participation in calendar sales, Thinking Day, a trip to a special event, or camping. Patches always go on the back of the vest/sash.

COURT OF AWARDS: Troop 26 normally plans to hold one Courts of Awards ceremony near the end of the school year. These are special times when our Girl Scouts are formally recognized for their accomplishments and any other awards. These are family events and the chance for your daughter to shine. We normally have the girls plan these ceremonies themselves, which adds even more enjoyment to the evening. Sometimes we give the actual awards to the girls earlier, so that they can add them to their vest and display them.

PROGRAM

PROGRAM: As scouts grow older, we try to shift more and more of the planning and ideas from adults to girls. This still requires some adult idea input, but once the scouts seize upon the idea, we encourage them to be active participants in the planning.

LEADERSHIP: We want the girls to take responsibility more and more for running the troop. Girls will be given leadership jobs within the troop – everything from attendance taking to Troop President. Sometimes this requires parental aid, and feel free to call a leader whenever you find your scout has a job that you don't understand.

TRIPS: We try to do some activities on weekends. There are normally 3-4 sleepover weekends and 1 –2 camping trips a year, and another 4-5 one-day trips per year.

A note on participation: There are no awards for "100% attendance" in this troop. Rather, we try to offer lots of different opportunities with the knowledge that family, school work, religion, soccer, ballet, sickness, etc., etc. will always impact someone in the troop, and we can't always arrange the timing to meet the schedules of 25 girls. We don't want anyone to ever feel pressured that attendance is mandatory. Girl Scouts must first and foremost always be something fun that your daughter WANTS to do.

PARENT SUPPORT

We can't do it without the help of many. Here are the areas we always welcome help:

- Drivers/Field Trip chaperones (must have a seatbelt for each passenger)
- Parents (Mom or sister or aunt) willing to camp overnight with us or chaperone at sleepovers
- Parents to help plan special events such as Thinking Day, our planned Songfest, or Sports Days for all of the troops in Kuwait (about 100 girls)
- Parents with expertise in a specific badge area who could teach it (Car Care? Home Repair? Pet Care? Science or Engineering? Architecture? Crafts? Other hobbies? Cultural Activities?)

Please feel free to stay for meetings and let me know if you're ready to be put to work! What talents do you have that can help make this a better program for your daughter?

Some Troop 26 Policies - *updated 1-Oct-2002*

Summary of policies:

- 1 – Parents must personally see and talk with a leader when dropping off their daughter at a meeting or event.
- 2 – Girls must have written permission to attend anything other than our regular Wednesday meetings at ASK.
- 3 – Girls must sign up for all events and field trips in advance and by the deadline. Any fees must be fully paid in advance by deadlines.
- 4 - Girls must be picked up promptly after meetings and events.
- 5 – Attendance at meetings is encouraged, but not required. Girls with conflicts may arrange to come late and/or leave early.
- 6 – We use only email for regular communication. If you need to find something out, email or call on the phone and ask.

Details of policies:

Parent drop off and pick up of Girl Scouts

We DO NOT recommend that you simply drop off your daughter at the high school gate of ASK and drive away. It is much better to walk with your daughter to the place where we are meeting and have a quick talk with one of the leaders. There are several reasons for this including making sure your daughter is safe, that you know when the event is over, that the proper paperwork has been turned in and fees paid, that you and your daughter are both aware of the event timing, that your daughter has brought all of the appropriate equipment or supplies and is dressed appropriately, etc.

Permission Slips

Written permission from parents is required for every gathering, field trip or meeting that is not at ASK on a Wednesday. We have a lot of girls now and will no longer be able to wait for girls to locate their parents and obtain written permission that has been forgotten. Girls who show up at events without written permission from their parents will be asked to call their parents and arrange to be picked up and taken home. They will be left at ASK if a field trip or other outing is planned.

Signing up for Events and trips in advance

In order to plan for drivers, food, and materials needed for events and trips, we need your daughter to commit to each event in advance. To insure that she is signed up to attend, she must call or email the event chairman for our troop (a girl who is in charge of the event – not a leader) or sign up at a meeting. If there are any fees for the event, she must have paid the chairman or the troop treasurer by the deadline. If she is not signed up and/or has not paid by the deadline, the girl may not participate in the event. We assume that girls are NOT participating in a meeting or event unless the girl tells us otherwise. We will enforce this policy. Please help us to teach the girls responsibility by adhering to it as well. If a minimum signup is not obtained by the deadline, the leaders reserve the right to cancel the meeting or event.

Promptness in dropping off and picking up your daughter

The leaders are all volunteers. Please don't abuse our time by dropping your daughters off exceptionally early nor picking them up late. Out of courtesy, the leaders will wait as long as 15 minutes after the scheduled end of an event or meeting for parents to pick up their daughters. After that time, the leaders will either leave your daughter at the ASK high school gate or take her home with them (your choice - please fill out one of the forms)

Meeting attendance encouraged, but not required

We encourage the girls to attend the once-a-month regular meetings (the girls chose this timing themselves) as we have little time to meet for regular business and planning. These meetings are generally the 1st Wednesday of each month. A calendar is being planned and will be distributed to all girls shortly. If a girl has other conflicting activities, she may come late and/or leave early from meetings but should arrange this in advance.

Girls are responsible for finding out about meetings and events themselves

We have no regular plans for any leaders nor girls to make phone calls nor distribute information to girls about changes or updates in plans, meetings, new events, etc. We do have regular email communication, however. Girls must call the troop President or a leader to find out about Girl Scout events or send them an email. We are not going to call and tell each girl what is going on, they need to take on the responsibility of finding out for themselves or missing the event.

Girl Scout Troop 26 Policies

I have read and understand the current policies regarding permission slips, signing up for events, attending meetings and events, and parent drop-off and pick-up for events.

Signature of Girl Scout

Date

Signature of parent

Date

After Event Pick-Up Choice

I understand that after an event a leader may stay up to 15 minutes late and then I would like the leader to do the following with my daughter:

_____ Please have the leader take my daughter home with her. I will arrange to pick her up as soon as I am able to from the leader.

OR

_____ Please have the leader leave my daughter at the ASK high school gate with the school guards. (I understand that for events and trips which do not end at ASK that this option will not be possible and that one of the leaders will instead, take my daughter home with her.)

Signature of parent

Date