



Girl Scouts Learn Life Lessons Through Annual Product Sales

By JANET ZELENAK,
DIRECTOR OF PRODUCT SALES

- The Girl Scout Cookie Program is the largest girl-based business activity in the world, teaching girls how to set goals, make decisions, manage money, learn people skills and develop business ethics.

The best way to evaluate the program's success is talk to those most closely involved with it – the girls, their parents and their troop leaders.

The Girl Scouts of the Jersey Shore reached out to its more than 1,700 fans on Facebook and asked two questions. Adults were asked, "What has your daughter learned (or how has she grown) through participation in the Girl Scout Cookie Sale?" They were also asked to present their daughters with the question,

"What is the most exciting part of the Girl Scout Cookie Sale?"

The answers show the Cookie Program is creating generations of young entrepreneurs with not only the courage to believe in themselves, but also the personal strength to do great things.

"All of our girls learn the meaning of setting goals and reaching for them," said Jennifer Mignone, leader of Beachwood Troop 202.



Gail Marshall, Troop 193's leader agreed. "All of the girls have learned budgeting and planning skills from the cookie sale," she said.

The cookie sale even gets young Girl Scouts interested in planning. "Reaching the goal we set," is the most exciting part of the sale for seven-year-old Mackenzie Langan from Troop 14.

"Goal setting can seem hard, but once you have a goal to focus on you can achieve anything," said Kelly Fitzpatrick, assistant leader of Troop 244 in Lacey Township. "Young girls always seem to look at the prizes and shoot for the biggest ones, never letting anyone tell them, 'You can't,' It's awesome to see it."

"Even though it seemed like

a lot of boxes to sell to reach their goal, they were able to not only reach it, but exceed it," said Deirdre Pape leader of Toms River Troop 97. "They also learned about budgeting, so they knew what they needed to sell to pay for their trips."

Every girl in Troop 97 knew what they were working toward. "We were selling enough cookies so we got to go to Build-A-Bear," said Pape's seven-year-old daughter Taylor.

Girls of all ages also set goals to go on trips. Teen Girl Scouts travel across the country and around the world, paying for their adventures with cookie sale proceeds, but younger girls enjoy special journeys as well.

Excitement came from "achiev-

ing our goal to earn enough money to go on fun trips," said Abigail Willmot, a seven-year-old from Troop 51.

Abigail's mother Samantha, who is also her troop leader, shared the excitement. "We went way beyond our goal last year and were able to not just go to the Adventure Aquarium and Camden Children's Garden, but also pay for our encampment at Camp Sacajawea," she said. "The girls were so excited.

"We also made sure that we

gave back with some of our earnings as well," she continued. "Last year we donated to the Jersey Shore Animal Shelter."

Helping your community, affording an activity you love and exceeding your goals are all lessons that last a lifetime. Girls just need the encouragement to know all three are possible.

"My daughter has learned that if you set a goal and stick with it, you can achieve it," said Diane Modri, whose daughter Cali belongs to Manahawkin Troop 421. "Selling cookies has given her confidence and she's more outgoing."

- To learn more about Girl Scout Cookie sales in Monmouth and Ocean counties, visit: jerseyshoregirlscoutcookies.com.
- To join the Girl Scouts of the Jersey Shore's Facebook page, visit girlscoutsjso.org/facebook.



The Girl Scouts of the Jersey Shore serve more than 16,000 girls between the ages of 5 and 17 with the help of 6,000 adult volunteers. Girl Scouts become strong women of courage, confidence and character through age-appropriate opportunities that help them develop into strong leaders. These activities allow girls to discover who they are, connect with their communities and take action to make the world a better place.

Girl Scout educational programs teach important, life-long skills and values. Whether taking part in games or activities, attending summer day camps, or participating in an after-school program, girls are challenged to try new things and learn about themselves.

