



What's Happening

A Seasonal Newsletter from the World Foundation
for Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, Inc.

June 2026

Updates from the Board

Welcome to new directors
Khayriyyah MuhammadSmith
and Ann Donley!

Our **February grant process** awarded **\$1,788,184 to WAGGGS** and **\$100,000 to GSUSA**. **THANKS !!** to you, our amazing donors and supporters for enabling our shared missions.

Our **Impact Report** for the '25 fiscal year highlights key elements of our collective investments in girls as global leaders.

A **Communications task group** is refining our strategy and materials, working on a tool kit and developing promotional materials to support our shared work.

A **Business Needs task group** is analyzing our current capacity and emerging needs to best serve our members and donors in the future.

Amazing volunteers are planning fun, engaging activities for **GS Unite in DC in July**. *If you are there, please join us for informal connection on Thursday, July 23 7:30-9:30 at the Marriott Residence Inn Terrace!*

THANKS to all of you for your continuing support of World Centres, WAGGGS initiatives, GSUSA global strategies and USAGSO—you are changing lives and building the next generation of global citizens.

This March, a delegation of Girl Scouts went to New York City for the 70th United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. Global funding helped support this opportunity for these Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador Girl Scouts to learn, advocate, and promote awareness of gender issues around the world.

GSUSA hosted a special event in the Ford Foundation building with a panel discussing lessons from the week and what it means to be a Global Citizen. **Senior Girl Scouts Raina** (Girl Scouts of Gulfcoast Florida) and **Vandya** (Girl Scouts of Central Texas) moderated the event, posing questions to

Ambassador Girl Scout Ellie (Girl Scouts of Black Diamond), **Miffy of Girl Scouts of Taiwan**, **Farah Salim Eck** (Managing Director of the United Nations Association of the USA), **Sarah Keating** (VP Girl Scout Experience and Program Delivery, GSUSA), and **Leah**

Lizarondo (VP Global Network of Vital Voices Global Partnership). World Foundation Board Alumna Laura Robert-Rivera was an adult volunteer, and Treasurer Ellen Petrino and Program Coordinator Valerie Pierpoint attended the event.



A reception followed the panel discussion and featured an Amplification project for the new Global Citizen badge from GSUSA. The delegates earn their badge by using their experience to educate 100+ other people, who in turn earn the badge as participants. The World Foundation is a proud supporter of this project.



While in New York, the Girl Scout delegates were also invited onto the set of Good Morning America to share their stories and the power of Girl Scouts. You can view that segment here:

[Video Girl Scouts join United Nations panel on social justice - ABC News](#)



Friends of Nuestra Cabaña

In a time when everything seems chaotic and challenging, we bring you good news: the monarch butterfly population increased this year!

Nuestra Cabaña has always had a focus on the natural environment, and the butterfly sessions are one of the highlights again and again. As a regular annual



program, participants attend this session and visit the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve to see millions, perhaps billions, of butterflies as they emerge from their chrysalises. The experience is magical.

The World Wildlife Fund annually produces a report that measures the area of forest where monarchs establish their colonies in the Mexican Biosphere. This geographic measurement serves as a scientifically robust indicator of butterfly population status. During the 2025-2026 overwintering season, scientists found monarchs occupied 7.24 acres of forest, compared to 4.42 acres during the previous winter— indicating a 64% increase of monarchs during this period!

However, 30 years ago, monarch butterflies covered nearly 45 acres of forest during hibernation. The population has been in decline for a number of years, spurning conservation actions throughout the North American migration route. In Mexico, specifically, communities and the government have promoted sustainability campaigns that focus on educating land-owners on the negative impacts of deforestation on butterfly populations. The work has paid off: the loss of natural habitat has slowed since previous years as well. Similarly, Nuestra Cabaña focuses on environmental education as a key aspect of their programming.

If you'd like to see the butterflies for yourself, you can attend the "Natural Mexico: Monarch Butterflies 2026"

program at Nuestra Cabaña on December 3-10, 2026. This session spends two nights in Valle de Bravo, where you will visit the monarch sanctuary and experience the phenomenon yourself. Other excursions and Nuestra Cabaña/WAGGGS programming will be part of the experience. Not to mention, the average temperature in Cuernavaca in December is mid to high 70 degrees!

Former Friends of Nuestra Cabaña President, Patty Cook, shared a picture of her most recent butterfly experience and noted, "I have a gazillion butterfly photos but this one spoke to me. The solitary monarch on a tree that should be home to many." If trends continue, Patty's next trip to see the butterflies may be very different indeed.



Friends of Sangam

On any given day at Sangam, you'll hear different languages in the same conversation, see cultures meet in the simplest moments, and find connections forming in ways you didn't expect.

What starts as strangers from different parts of the world quickly become family with shared laughter, shared spaces, and a sense of belonging that feels like home. This is what everyday life looks like at Sangam.

If you've been thinking about it, join a session and become part of the Sangam's international family. You will experience learning and personal growth, global friendships, and creativity. Beyond Sangam's gates you will experience the true spirit of traditional Indian hospitality from afternoon tea, to dressing in colorful saris or punjabi, taking part in various cultural activities, and exploring the local neighborhood and city of Pune.

Sangam's Community Partners

Sangam is affiliated with more than twenty organizations, which work in a number of fields: medicine, education, environmental sustainability, women's empowerment, and more.

During events, participants visit Sangam's Community Partners, and are given the chance to witness community leadership and

advocacy in action, while participating in dialogue with the partner organizations and the children, women, and men they assist.

Maher Ashram is one of Sangam's community partners is rooted in unconditional love and a deep commitment to social justice, Maher works at the heart of India's most vulnerable communities. From shelter homes for destitute women, children, men, and the elderly to



outreach programs in rural villages and slums, Maher addresses the root causes of violence and despair not just the symptoms.

Their work spans education, health, economic empowerment, and environmental sustainability, always guided by one unshakeable belief: that every human being, regardless of caste, gender, religion, or background, deserves dignity, happiness, and a decent life.

In a world that too often divides, Maher walks toward wholeness with everyone, together. And that is something Sangam deeply believes in, too.

Individuals who apply for the "Tare" 4-to-10-week program at Sangam spend four days a week at Maher where they use their skills to make a difference in the lives of many people. They spend the other days learning about the culture of Pune and India and participate in Sangam's activities.

Sangam's 60th Anniversary

Sangam opened our doors on the 16th of October 1966 and soon we'll be crossing the threshold to our 60th birthday.

Those who are able to attend the Birthday event will have the opportunity to explore and learn more about Sangam and Indian culture (traditional celebration meals, Bollywood dances) as they take part in a range of fun and exciting activities including a special diamond themed birthday party!

They will take away the fact that from Pune (India) to every corner of the world, Sangam keeps inspiring

girls and young women to dream boldly, lead confidently, and believe in themselves.

Happy Birthday, Sangam! One of the five magical homes of our WAGGS World Centers family!



Friends of Pax Lodge

The 35th anniversary of Pax Lodge was fairly low key—but we all had a great time and learned a lot. We began our birthday festivities with Sunday Afternoon Tea where we learned we had a wonderful group to spend the next 5 days with—and a very busy week. Everyone got to peek at the archives that generally aren't out for perusal.



Our birthday dinner was appetizers and late arriving pizzas—one of the few things that didn't go smoothly. We shared a lovely, tasty anniversary cake before heading out to the garden for the dedication of our "fire" pit. This memorial to friends we have lost was long-coming and will be a special place to remember those who have passed. This was instigated by the loss of our friend (and Libby's grandmother), Mitzi Koch, and it has taken a while to create something fitting. Libby attended the dedication.



Staff with anniversary cake

Monday began with a city tour of London with an emphasis on those locations important to the history of

Girl Scouts and Girl Guides. Catherine Gritz led the tour, so we had the expert in charge. We covered such places as Girlguiding headquarters, the location of Juliette Low's home, and Westminster Abbey where we had a group photo taken at the memorial to the Baden-Powells. That evening we got to see the Brownies and Guides in action. Our young Canadian friend, Lizzie, joined the girls in their meeting.

Tuesday was Challenge Day. We had the choice of working on one of the Pax Lodge Challenges, going to



Half of the group at the Baden-Powell Memorial

Kensal Green Cemetery to see the Baden-Powell grave marker, and/or going out to the Crystal Palace Park to see the Centenary Maze that the UK Guides created for the Centennial of Guiding. This evening we attended *Mama Mia*—always a popular choice.

We left Pax early on Wednesday to go to Foxlease Park to see what the Foxie's Future team has achieved. Dr. Deborah Lafferty presented a program on how instrumental Americans were with supporting Girlguiding in the UK and around the world in the early years of the movement. Foxlease was donated by an American, Anne Archbold; Helen Storrow paid staff wages for the first 10 years; the Link was furnished by Juliette Low; and one of the rooms is named Andrée after Andrée Clark and furnished by her parents. We had a tour of the grounds and the Foxlease mansion and were impressed both by all the work done by volunteers (over 25,000 hours) as well as the financial support of the community.



World Peace Garden workers

Our last full day was filled with the WAGGGS program in the morning and the service project at the World Peace Garden in the afternoon.

Several walked up Hampstead Heath afterwards. Our evening included a Bar-B-Q and closing ceremony where we received our 35th Anniversary patches and certificates. We finished the day with singing and decorating candles for the Friends of Pax Lodge UK Christmas bazaar.

Our event ended on Friday with our flag ceremony. It was a sad good-bye as everyone went different directions—some leaving for home and others doing more exploring of England.



The Olave Baden-Powell Society (OB-PS) annual meeting is in conjunction with the WAGGGS World Conference in Cambodia from June 15-19, 2026. We are excited that Kate Marx and Amanda Modelski, (OB-PS USA Members) will take office as new members of the OB-PS Board – congratulations! Sadly, Kris McCann will complete her term as a board member at the close of the event. Thank you, Kris, for all your hard work championing girls and young women around the globe!

SAVE THE DATE: As you know, the Girl Scouts USA 58th National Council Session & Girl Scouts Unite Event will take place in July in Washington, DC. The Olave Baden-Powell Society is hosting a special reception on **Tuesday, July 21 from 5:30–7:30pm**. OB-PS Members are encouraged to bring guests interested in learning more about OB-PS and what it means to be part of this extraordinary global community of supporters.

The evening will include guest speakers, a special presentation ceremony for OB-PS Members who are unable to attend one of our international events, as well as hors d'oeuvres and beverages. Connect with OB-PS members and guests for an evening of friendship, celebration, and learning more about our global community.

YOU are invited to join us! Whether you can attend for just a few minutes or for the entire event, we would

truly love to see you there. If you would like to attend the reception, please register using this link:

[RSVP](#)

Sincerely,

Karen Saenz (karen.saenz.obps@gmail.com)

Sue Goldsmith (suegoldsmith.obps@gmail.com)



Light the Future 2025: Get Ready for World Conference

As excitement builds for the upcoming WAGGGS World Conference, the Get Ready for World Conference team is already seeing the incredible impact of your generosity through Light the Future 2025.

This year, 180 young people have registered to take part in the programme, with 135 joining us in person in Cambodia. Together, they represent a vibrant global community of emerging leaders, bringing diverse perspectives, ideas and experiences to the future of Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting around the world.

Get Ready for World Conference is about far more than preparing delegates for an event. It is an investment in confident, capable young leaders who are ready to engage in governance, understand how decisions are made, and shape the future of our Movement. Alongside workshops and learning opportunities, the programme creates space for meaningful friendships, cross-cultural understanding and lifelong connections.

At a time when young women continue to face barriers to leadership and representation, this project ensures their voices are heard, valued and empowered on the world stage.

If you supported Light the Future last fall, thank you. Your support is already creating opportunities for young women around the world. Keep an eye on your inbox for more updates as the Get Ready for World Conference journey continues.

Light the Future 2026 is Live

We are delighted to share that Light the Future 2026 is now officially live, supporting the next phase of WAGGGS' Growing and Learning initiative.

Growing and Learning helps strengthen Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting across the globe by providing accessible, high-quality learning opportunities for volunteers, trainers, and leaders. By investing in skills development, leadership growth and shared learning experiences, the programme helps ensure that every girl can benefit from safe, impactful and inspiring Guiding experiences — wherever she is in the world.

When we invest in learning, we invest in stronger Member Organizations, more confident leaders and brighter futures for girls and young women everywhere. You can support Light the Future 2026 here:

<https://waggs.givevirtuous.org/donate/light-the-future-2026?segmentCode=L10226EM2>

News: Gill is Taking to the Skies

This year, supporter and adventurer, Gill Clay – granddaughter of Lord and Lady Baden-Powell – is taking fundraising to new heights (quite literally!) with an exciting wing walk challenge in support of WAGGGS.

By stepping far outside her comfort zone, Gill is helping raise vital funds that will support girls and young women around the world to access leadership opportunities, international experiences and life-changing programs through Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting.

Her determination is a wonderful reminder that there are many ways to make a difference, and that every act of generosity and adventure can help create brighter futures for girls worldwide.

You can sponsor Gill and support her challenge here: <https://waggs.givevirtuous.org/donate/gill-wing-walk>

Olave Baden-Powell Society, 2025 Annual Review

We're pleased to share the 2025 Annual Review from the Olave Baden-Powell Society—a celebration of what's possible when a global community comes together to invest in girls and young women.

This year's review highlights the impact made possible through the generosity of OB-PS Members, supporting leadership development, advocacy, and life-changing opportunities for girls and young women across the world through the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts.

Take a few moments to explore the stories and impact behind this year's review. Together, we are helping build a more equitable future, one girl at a time: [https://waggs.dcatalog.com/v/Annual-Review-2025-\(March\)/](https://waggs.dcatalog.com/v/Annual-Review-2025-(March)/)

And if you are interested in being part of this global community of supporters, you can learn more or join OB-PS here:

<https://campfire.waggs.org/dashboard/obps>

Update from the World Centres

We're pleased to share that the [2025 World Centre Annual Reports](#) are now available. These reports highlight the incredible work carried out across our Centres over the past year and the impact made possible through your support. We encourage you to explore them and, if helpful, share them within your networks or incorporate them into your own outreach this year.

At the same time, the WAGGGS World Board has approved the launch of a forthcoming Capital Campaign for the World Centres. This important initiative will ensure that these special places continue to be cared for, maintained, and sustained for future generations of girls and young women.

More details will be shared in the second half of the year - thank you, as always, for being part of this journey with us - we can't wait to tell you all about it.

Surf Smart shortlisted at the Better Society Awards

WAGGGS and [Gen](#) were shortlisted in the category 'Partnership with an International Charity' at the Better Society Awards in May for our global programme Surf Smart.

Now in its 15th year, our internet safety programme empowers girls and young women with the skills and knowledge needed to navigate the online world safely and confidently.

Our recently updated curriculum, which includes content on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and was developed with support from Gen's cyber safety brand Norton, helps participants understand both the opportunities and challenges that AI brings. Earlier this year we also launched our new Surf Smart advocacy curriculum, Advocacy for Generation Digital, which equips girls and young women with the skills to speak out and engage decision-makers to help create safer digital spaces.

This longstanding partnership has reached over 850,000 participants across 15 years, and we were thrilled to have it recognised in this way.

WAGGGS Census Report 2026

This year our Membership grew to a record 11.5 million, reflecting continued growth across our Global Movement. The WAGGGS Census Report explores the driving factors of this growth, the trends influencing our Membership and the challenges some Member Organisations are experiencing. It offers an insightful view of where we are today and what the future looks like. Read the census report here:

<https://campfire.waggs.org/topic/census-report-2026-0>

Triennial Report 2024-2026 and Mid-Strategy Updates for 2027-2029

We are pleased to share with you the Triennial Report 2024-2026 and Mid-Strategy Updates for 2027-2029. This report presents the progress made during the 2024-2026 triennium, alongside reflections at the midpoint of the 2024-2029 Global Strategy. It brings together key developments, achievements, and learning across the Movement, highlighting both the collective impact of our work and the areas where continued focus is needed. Read the report in all four WAGGGS languages here: <https://campfire.waggs.org/topic/39th-woco-document-3-triennial-report-2024-2026-and-mid-strategy-updates-2027-2029>

WTD 2027, Call for people

For World Thinking Day 2027, we are celebrating **"Our People"**—the incredible individuals who have shaped Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting over the past 100 years. We are inviting you to take part by nominating someone who has inspired your Girl Guiding or Girl Scouting journey, or who has positively impacted your community.

Whether from the past or present, and regardless of age, we want to hear about the people whose stories deserve to be recognised and celebrated. This is an opportunity to shine a light on those who have made a meaningful difference within the Movement.

Submit your nomination and help us celebrate the people who make Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting so special here: [Nominations](#)

WAGGGS Global Forum 2026

The WAGGGS Global Forum 2026 is a participant-shaped space, a shared journey for Member Organisations to learn from one another, strengthen our educational method and adult learning, and shape the future of Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting through Growing and Learning (GAL).

With over 100 participants already pre-registered, Kusafiri World Centre is getting ready to host this collaborative space to explore real challenges, share experience and build lasting, purposeful relationships that continue well beyond the event itself.

Learn more and register on Campfire:

<https://campfire.wagggs.org/event/wagggs-global-forum-2026-kusafiri-ghana>

Explore the New STEM Programme Dashboard

We are excited to launch the STEM Changemakers Campfire Dashboard, bringing together STEM programme resources and key insights in one place. It's a space designed to support learning, sharing, and connection across our Movement.

We will continue to update the dashboard and create a space for you to share your STEM journeys, helping us better understand reach, engagement, and girls' experiences in STEM learning. Explore here:

<https://campfire.wagggs.org/dashboard/stem>

Girls Leading the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Conversation

Last month, during the 70th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), we hosted a webinar led by our Global Advocacy Champions (GACs) from Egypt, Kuwait, Lesotho, Pakistan, Philippines, Tunisia and the United Kingdom. During the webinar, participants explored the impact artificial intelligence (AI) has on girls' rights, safety, and justice, including issues such as harassment, online misogyny, deepfakes, image-based abuse, body confidence, and environmental costs.

The session highlighted barriers to online justice and the need for girls to be included in ethical AI development. Young leaders also called for stronger platform regulation, as well as digital literacy and education, to create safer digital spaces. Watch here: <https://www.youtube.com/live/Uh8WRgvoUnI?si=Zwxo7CI4wt4-MLx2>

WAGGGS at Women Deliver

Over the past year, WAGGGS has been proud to partner with Women Deliver and the Girls Deliver Working Group, alongside UNICEF, Save the Children, and adolescent girls and young women from around the world, to contribute to a shared vision for gender equality beyond 2030.

This process was grounded in extensive global consultations, bringing together more than 650 voices across 30+ sessions. It reinforced a simple but powerful truth: the future must be co-created with girls, not for them. In April, WAGGGS joined feminist movements and youth-led organisations in advocating for stronger accountability, rights, and systemic change.

As part of this collective effort, WAGGGS Global Advocacy Lead, Anber Raz, reflected:

“The Melbourne Declaration for Gender Equality could not come at a more important time, as we continue to see the erosion of the rights of women and girls around the world and disregard for international human rights and legal norms. The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts stands in solidarity with girls and young women worldwide, demanding a better future for all and is committed to supporting a collective voice and the dismantling of oppressive systems.”

WAGGGS is proud to have contributed to this global process and to continue working alongside partners to champion girls' leadership and advance gender equality on the global stage.

Red Pride Week 2026

In May, we celebrated Red Pride Week 2026, a global campaign led by girls and young women to challenge period stigma and promote menstrual health and dignity. Supported through initiatives such as the YESS Girls Programme, Red Pride Week brought together communities to spark honest conversations, share stories, and take action towards creating a more period-friendly world.

Throughout the week, girls and young women led discussions, creative activities, and awareness-raising initiatives that encouraged greater understanding of menstrual health and helped break down the silence and shame that can still surround periods. Together, we reaffirmed a simple but important message: no girl should miss out on opportunities, stay silent, or feel ashamed because of her period.



GSUSA is delighted to announce the nomination of Tricia Tilford, World Foundation Board Emeritus, as a candidate for the WAGGGS World Board. A lifelong Girl Scout, Tricia brings more than 20 years of volunteer experience with WAGGGS across a range of roles. Most recently, she has served on the Finance, Audit, and Risk Committee. A certified financial accountant, Tricia pairs strong financial stewardship with a long-term strategic perspective. She also brings deep governance expertise, having served on multiple nonprofit boards, including six years as Chair of Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts. Tricia is a thoughtful, empathetic leader and a steadfast champion for girls. We are honored by her nomination and wish her every success in the election.

GSUSA also extends its heartfelt thanks to Debra Nakatomi for her six years of service on the WAGGGS World Board. Her leadership, reliable support, and unwavering commitment have made a lasting contribution to WAGGGS and the broader movement. Thank you, Debra, for your dedicated service.



A Special Greeting from the World Board

Dear Friends and Supporters of the World Foundation for Girl Guides and Girl Scouts,

As I prepare to travel to Cambodia for the upcoming World Conference and conclude my tenure as Board Chair, I find myself reflecting on the remarkable journey we have shared over the past three years.

Serving in this role has been one of the greatest privileges of my life. Throughout my term, I have witnessed the extraordinary power of our Movement and the dedication of those who believe in its mission. None of our achievements would have been possible without the steadfast support, generosity, and friendship of supporters like you.

Thank you for standing beside WAGGGS and the World Centres through times of opportunity, challenge, growth, and

renewal. Your commitment has helped ensure that girls and young women around the world continue to have access to leadership development, international friendship, life-changing experiences, and the confidence to create positive change in their communities.

I am especially grateful for your unwavering belief in our vision. Whether through philanthropy, advocacy, volunteer service, or simply sharing the story of Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting, you have strengthened our global sisterhood and expanded opportunities for future generations.

As I look back on the past years, I am proud of all that we have accomplished together. From supporting the resilience and evolution of our World Centres to advancing WAGGGS' global impact, your partnership has been a constant source of encouragement and inspiration. Knowing that such a stellar community of supporters stood alongside us has made every milestone even more meaningful.

The generosity of the World Foundation made it possible for me to access opportunities that once felt far beyond my reach. Through support that enabled my experience at a World Centre and many other opportunities within our Movement, it helped shape my journey from a young Guide to serving as World Board Chair. I know that my story is not unique. Like me, thousands of girls and young women have been able to discover their potential, broaden their horizons, and dream bigger because of your support. The impact of your contribution extends far beyond any single programme or experience; it changes lives and creates ripple effects that last generations.

The friendships I have formed and the dedication I have witnessed across our Movement, both at home and around the world, will remain among my most treasured memories. While my time as Chair is coming to a close, my belief in this Movement and gratitude for each of you will continue. I leave this role with tremendous confidence in the future of WAGGGS and deep appreciation for the World Foundation community that has helped make that future brighter.

As I conclude my term, I sincerely hope I have been able to serve our Movement well and, in some small way, give back a fraction of the incredible investment you have made in girls and young women around the world.

Thank you for your friendship, your generosity, and your enduring commitment to Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting worldwide.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Candela Gonzalez – World Board Chair

- In Memorium -



The Friends of Sangam committee was saddened to hear of the loss of one of our treasured committee members Kaye Glass. Kaye passed away on Friday, May 15, after a period of declining health. Kaye's many talents have made an impact on the lives of all the Girl Scouts and Girl Guides she knew from around the world. Her happy moments were being able to engage people wherever she went to sing and the number of songs she knew and loved to play whether on the guitar, recorder or auto harp were amazing. Kay always had a twinkle in her eyes and the smile on her face and the spirit of adventure.

The World Foundation Board was also sorry to learn of the passing of Director Emerita Carolyn McCallum this January. Carolyn served our board for over 30 years, including a tenure as President. Her lifelong passion for and dedication to Girl Scouts was reflected in her support for global initiatives, body positivity, gender equity, empowerment, and more. She was a self-described "professional volunteer" who, as her obituary phrases it, "dedicated more than seven decades to community involvement, advocacy, and volunteer work that impacted lives locally, nationally, and globally."

We are grateful for her impact, which we all continue to feel today.



Impactful Stories: Advocacy, Transformation, Sisterhood



I was a delegate of CSW70.

I remember saying it out loud and not fully understanding it. The words felt bigger than me, like they belonged to someone else. The Commission on the Status of Women. The United Nations. Global leaders. Girls like me sitting in rooms where decisions about women's rights are shaped. It felt impossible until I was standing in it.

It was the first time I ever put on a suit.

I stood in front of the mirror for a long moment, adjusting it like it belonged to someone older, someone more certain. The fabric felt unfamiliar on my shoulders, like I had stepped into a version of myself I had not grown into yet. But in that reflection, I could see who I was becoming. And I think in that moment, I started to become her.

None of this would have happened without Girl Scouts.

The first time I walked into the United Nations, I looked up at the flags from every country hanging above me. It felt like the whole world was speaking at once. I remember stopping, feeling how small I was, but also how powerful it was to be there. I was not just visiting history. I was standing where it is being written.

Across the week, I attended events that each showed me a different version of what justice can look like. Women from all over the world sharing truth, strategy, pain, and progress. It made me realize CSW is not just a conference. It is people fighting for something bigger than themselves. It is women refusing to be invisible.

At teen orientation, Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda told us to amplify our collective voice. It did not feel like a quote. It felt like a responsibility. After that, everything I experienced felt heavier, like I was meant to listen more closely and understand more deeply.

I walked through the United Nations hearing my heels against the floor, each step reminding me I was really there. I was meeting global leaders shaping change, people who do not just talk about human rights but fight for them every day. I was no longer watching from the outside. I was part of the conversation.

One of the moments that stayed with me most was an event on closing justice gaps for intimate image abuse. I met people building real systems of support for survivors, turning pain into policy and silence into action. It showed me what it looks like when justice becomes personal work.

There were other moments too. Meeting with the Mission of Ireland and speaking with their ambassador. Sitting in rooms where diplomacy felt both formal and deeply human. Learning how progress can be slow, but still possible when people refuse to stop pushing for it.

And somewhere in all of it, I found something I did not expect. Sisterhood. My Girl Scout sisters became my constant in a week that felt bigger than anything I had experienced. We were learning, laughing, running on little sleep and a shared sense of purpose, holding each other up through every long day.

Nine days later, I cried leaving New York, not because it was over, but because I had been changed by something I was not ready to let go of. CSW70 showed me what women's leadership looks like when it is real and present in every room, every voice, every decision. It showed me that international human rights is not something far away from me. It is something I want to be part of. I went there as a student. I left knowing I want to build my life in that space.



Ellie, Senior, GSNETX

Do you know someone with an Impactful Story to share, or do you have one of your own?

We are excited to highlight your stories and share them with our community. If you have been impacted by projects or programs through WAGGGS, GSUSA, or USAGSO, we want to hear them! Giving these experiences and opportunities to Girl Scouts and Girl Guides around the world is the joy of what we do. Let us celebrate with you!

If you'd like to submit a story for publication in a future What's Happening Newsletter, please send it and any photographs you'd like to include to vpierpoint@girlscouts.org with the subject line "Impactful Stories." You are welcome to send your story at any time for consideration for future newsletters. Please encourage your friends to share their stories, too!

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Support:

Gifts can be made online at

<https://worldfoundationgggs.salsalabs.org/wfdonate-on-allfunds>

Checks can be mailed to

World Foundation for Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, Inc.
PO Box 6457 – Dept. 276
Indianapolis, IN 46206

See [How to Donate](#) for information on giving via IRA, DAF, or EFT, as well as information for legacy giving