Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan
Girl Scouts Michigan Shore to Shore
Girl Scouts of Northwestern Great Lakes
Girl Scouts of Northern Indiana / Michiana
Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan

Statement to All Catholic Arch/Dioceses
February 1, 2012

Girl Scouts & Catholic Dioceses Across the State of Michigan

Valuable Partners in Developing Girls Strong in the Catholic Faith

Girl Scouts and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops have had a Plan of Cooperation since 1975

> **We the members of Girl Scouts of the United States of America (are) united by a belief in God…**
>
> **-Preamble, Constitution of Girl Scouts of the United States of America**

Throughout all Catholic Dioceses in the State of Michigan, thousands of parents and adult leaders are working together through Girl Scouting to promote girls' personal growth and leadership development. Girl Scouting builds on Catholic faith development in Catholic communities. Each girl is encouraged to develop her own strong values within the context of family, faith, and the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

For nearly 100 years, Girl Scouts has partnered with the Catholic community to serve girls and inspire their growth and development. Both the Catholic community and Girl Scouts recognize that religious instruction is the responsibility of parents and religious leaders.

Girl Scouts provides many opportunities for girls to grow in their Catholic faith, including religious recognitions that are facilitated at an individual or troop level through a Catholic community. (Refer to www.NCCGSCF.org and www.girlscouts.org)

- Family of God for Girl Scout Brownies in grades 2-3
- I Live My Faith for Girl Scout Juniors and Cadettes in grades 4-6
- Mary, the First Disciple (Marian Medal) for Girl Scout Cadettes and Seniors in grades 7-10
- The Spirit Alive for Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors in grades 9-12
- The Catholic Identity Patch Program for all ages & levels
- My Promise, My Faith for Girl Scouts of all ages & levels

Recently Girl Scouts has been attacked with a campaign of misinformation. We would like to set the record straight on these essential truths about the Girl Scouts.

- The word “God” has always been—and remains—central to the Girl Scout Promise, with no alternative wording:

  “On my honor, I will try:
  To serve God and my country,
  To help people at all times,
  And to live by the Girl Scout Law.”

- There is no relationship—past, present or planned—between Planned Parenthood and any Girl Scout councils in the State of Michigan or Girl Scouts of the USA. No monies have ever been exchanged nor are there any agreements.

- Girl Scouts does not take a stand on abortion or birth control. Girl Scouts respects the moral teachings and theology of the Catholic Church. We support the right of pastors and parents to verify that troops and programs in their parishes are in compliance with Catholic social/moral teachings.

- Girl Scouts does not advocate for or against any issue regarding human sexuality. And, both our national and local policy requires the fully informed consent of parents or guardians before discussion of any such sensitive issue. We support the right of pastors and parents to verify that troops and programs in their community are in compliance with Catholic teaching.

- Girl Scout materials have been carefully reviewed for potential offense to persons of faith, and minor revisions have been made (such as the reference to certain persons and the deletion of all website addresses) at the request of the membership. However, there is no requirement that leaders must use any material or any section of any material that they may deem as inappropriate. Troop leaders are encouraged to personalize a basic outline and every badge earned by a girl provides for at least three alternative activities for each element of the badge.

- Every Girl Scout and Girl Guide organization throughout the world is a member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. WAGGGS operates in much the same way as the United Nations: countries pay membership dues based on national gross income and the size of their organizations.

  - GSUSA’s relationship with WAGGGS is much akin to the United States’ and/or Vatican’s relationship to the UN: they may not agree with every position the UN takes, but understand the value of having a seat at the table. They opt to work within the UN framework, as imperfect as it may be, to better serve humankind rather than simply sever its relationship.

  - None of a Girl Scout’s annual membership fee goes to WAGGGS.

- In the final analysis, GSUSA values WAGGGS as an organization that promotes mutual understanding and cross-cultural opportunities for girls around the world.

- However, GSUSA develops programs and materials based on our own national research-supported needs. WAGGGS does not provide the GSUSA national curriculum or any of its associated materials.

You can find more information on the attached document, **Questions and Answers Concerning Girl Scouts.**

Girl Scout Councils across the State of Michigan are proud to share responsibility with parents and the Catholic Dioceses of Michigan for developing the women of tomorrow. By living our mission, we are committed to building girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place.

Sincerely,



Jan Barker, CEO
Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan



Mary N. Flegal, Board Chair
Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan



Gloria Lara, CEO
Girl Scouts Michigan Shore to Shore



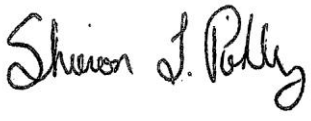
Mary K. Becker-Witt, Board Chair
Girl Scouts Michigan Shore to Shore



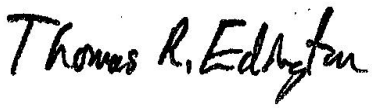
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