Parade Information Packet for America's Thanksgiving Parade

November 26, 2026



girl scouts of southeastern michigan

Parade Highlights

We are thrilled to welcome you to America's Thanksgiving Parade® presented by Gardner White! The Parade has been a one-of-a-kind spectacle of fantasy, holiday spirit and community enthusiasm. The Parade has grown to include more than 75 parade units, including floats, balloons, and marching bands in procession.

Every year, hundreds of thousands of Parade spectators line historic Woodward Avenue Thanksgiving morning to watch the larger than life floats, colorful helium-filled balloons, thunderous marching bands, and exciting specialty acts!

The Parade is televised live locally on WDIV-TV, Local 4 with a syndicated national potential reach of over 65 million households! Radio coverage will begin with, A Prelude to The Parade hosted by Paul W. Smith, on News/Talk 760 WJR. The Prelude begins at 6:00 a.m. and runs until 9:30 a.m. The LIVE play-by-play of The Parade will be on WOMC – 104.3 with Bobby Mitchell & Stacey DuFord from 10:00 a.m. - Noon. The Parade kicks off from the corner of Kirby and Woodward at 8:45 a.m.! Thanksgiving morning with the live broadcast on WDIV Local 4 at 10 a.m. online at www.clickondetroit.com.

We are thankful for all of our Girl Scouts and their families for sharing Thanksgiving Day with us and representing Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan in America's Thanksgiving Parade®.

Day of Parade Information

Welcome to the 2026 America's Thanksgiving Parade® presented by Gardner White. Enclosed you will find all information necessary to make your Parade participation successful and enjoyable.

Arrival Location: GSSEM Detroit Service Center
1333 Brewery Park Blvd. Suite 500, Detroit, MI 48207

Most GPS will direct you to the Russel entrance. All visitors must enter using the Gratiot gate, just past the Historic Trinity Church.

Each car will need to check in with security before they will be allowed into the facility. Then please proceed forward to the Stop sign. Turn right at the Stop sign. Our suite door is directly across from the entrance to the parking ramp on your right.

Starting Arrival Time: 6:00 A.M.
Please be at the Detroit Service Center by **6:30 AM at latest**. Please allow yourself enough time to arrive on time. Take into consideration traffic, weather conditions, etc. Breakfast will not be provided! Therefore, girls should eat breakfast prior to their arrival. Due to limited space and to decrease the amount of time spent prepping, adults will be asked to remain outside of the Service Center the morning of the parade.

Parade Route: On Woodward from Kirby to Congress
Girls and staff chaperones will be bussed to the parade route from the GSSEM Detroit Service Center. The buses will also bring the girls and staff back to the GSSEM Detroit Service Center once they step off the parade route. **Girls may NOT be taken off the parade route or picked up as they step off the parade route.** They must remain as a unit until we arrive back at the GSSEM Detroit Service Center. Girls will be given water and snacks on the return trip back to the GSSEM Detroit Service Center.

Viewing Area for Parents
We suggest Girl Scouts parents choose a viewing location on the EAST side of Woodward Avenue near the beginning of the parade route. No special viewing accommodations have been pre-arranged for parents. Once you see the Girl Scout unit pass by, this will allow you an easier experience leaving the parade to pick up your daughter at the Detroit Service Center.

TV Zone Appearance: 11:30 A.M.
Please note this time is only an approximate time; times could change between now and Parade Day. TV Zone is located on Woodward Avenue between Grand River and Gratiot. GSSEM is in the second half of the parade near the end. Our girls will be on TV for approximately 1 minute.

Pick-Up Dispersal Location: GSSEM Detroit Service Center
1333 Brewery Park Blvd. Suite 500, Detroit, MI 48207 // Girls are required to reenter the service center after exiting the bus and be checked out by a staff member.

Please be mindful that the girls have danced/walked 3 miles and will be anxious to go home and rest. We anticipate being back at the GSSEM Detroit Service Center with the girls at approximately 11:45 a.m. - NOON.

GSSEM STAFF- Emergency Contact List
Kaylyn Borucki - 313-870-2546 // Jennifer Prahler - 248-871-9217

Parade Route and TV Zone Etiquette

DO
- SMILE
- Dance & Wave
- Keep up with your unit
- Look uniformed and stay in formation as directed by choreographer!
- Watch & listen to the TV Crew guiding you through the zone
- Speed up when asked
- Slow down when asked
- Keep it clean
- Be patient
- Perform!!!
- HAVE FUN!!!



DON'T
- Smoke or Drink
- Have your cell phone out of your pocket
- Wear unapproved costumes and/or clothes
- Make profane jesters
- Carry unapproved banners or signs
- Hand out or throw items to the crowd
- FROWN

FAILURE to abide by these rules will result in immediate removal from the Parade Route and you will not be asked back to future events!

How to Dress on Parade Day!

LAYER UP:
The best way to dress for winter is to wear layers. This gives you flexibility to add or remove layers, depending on the weather. In general, three main layers are wicking, insulating and weather protection.

WICKING LAYER: This is the layer worn next to your skin, usually consisting of long underwear.

- Look for thermal underwear made of a synthetic – usually polyester – fiber that has "wicking" power. This means the fibers will wick (move) moisture away from your skin and pass it through the fabric so it will evaporate. This keeps you warm, dry and comfortable. Silk is also a good, natural fabric that has wicking abilities.
- Even though it's cold, you will sweat—especially if you're walking/dancing THREE miles down the Parade route.

INSULATING LAYER: This middle layer includes sweaters, sweatshirts, and pullovers. The purpose of this layer is to keep heat in and cold out, which is accomplished by trapping air between the fibers. Popular insulation materials include:

- Fleece, a synthetic material which maintains its insulating ability even when wet and spreads the moisture out so it dries quickly.
- Wool, which naturally wicks away moisture.

PROTECTION/VISIBLE LAYER:
GIRLS MUST WEAR: BLACK turtleneck, BLACK pants, BLACK shoes, BLACK socks
JACKET: (Provided by GSSEM)
HEADWEAR: Black and blue hat (Provided by GSSEM)
GLOVES: BLACK/WHITE fleece gloves (Provided by GSSEM)
NECK: White gator (provided by GSSEM)

When choosing pants and shirt, keep the following in mind: The exterior layer, generally a shell and pants, serves as your guard against the elements of winter. It should repel water from snow, sleet or rain and block the wind, while also letting perspiration evaporate.

Most genuine winter shells and pants are made waterproof and breathable to some extent by using tightly woven fabrics teamed with a coating or laminate. This keeps moisture on the outside but allows perspiration to escape, keeping you dry and comfortable.

Don't wear jeans or street pants. Denim is not waterproof, so water will soak through and you'll end up cold, wet and miserable.

Cotton is a no-no. Cotton is great for towels, because cotton soaks up and retains moisture. That's precisely why cotton is all wrong for Parade Day. It absorbs moisture (sweat, snow, rain) and retains it. When the wind blows, you will get very, very cold. Don't wear cotton socks, cotton jeans, cotton sweatshirts or cotton t-shirts.



Shoes must primarily be **BLACK**. A small amount of color is OK, but excessive color should be covered with black tape or black permanent marker. If wearing

boots, **your pants must be worn OVER your boots**. Wear comfortable shoes (i.e. tennis shoes, dance shoes, marching band shoes).

Socks must be black and they should cover your ankles.

Hair should be kept out of your face and for long hair, please tie back in a low pony tail.

Makeup is encouraged, but should be natural looking. Consider "stage makeup" and lipstick.

OTHER NOTES:

- Do not carry a purse or anything else of value. There are small pockets in the jacket for necessities. The pockets are not deep or secure. DO NOT over stuff.
- All cell phones must be off and not visible on the parade route.
- GSSEM is NOT responsible for lost or stolen items.

Ways to SHINE on Parade Day!

- As the star performer...INTERACT & ENTERTAIN the crowd!
- Dance like nobody is watching....even though they are!
- Everyone loves games... here we play follow the leader.
- SMILE!! It's contagious! People will smile back!
- You're on TV...SMILE!
- Create a fun memory for a child!
- Keep up with your unit... they'll miss you!
- You're in a Parade and representing GIRL SCOUTS!
- HAVE FUN!!!

Please encourage your family, friends, neighbors and other GIRL SCOUT sisters or fans to CHEER for our Girl Scout Unit in person or watch for us on WDIV!

