

PRESS RELEASE

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GIRL SCOUT MISSION LAUDED BY DR. KING IN 1956 STILL RELEVANT

King called Girl Scouts a “force”; Organization continues the legacy of diversity and empowerment

January 13, 2012 –This year Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) is celebrating 100 years of empowering girls and young women. This month, here in the Greater Los Angeles area, the iconic organization is reflecting on its trailblazing efforts to encourage every girl everywhere to reach her potential – an effort that Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. lauded in 1956.

Since its inception, Girls Scouts has had a core value of diversity. Today, a Girl Scout's commitment to embracing diversity remains woven into everything she does, beginning with the Girl Scout Promise and Law—the foundation of all Girl Scout activities. Local council Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles (GSGLA) remains dedicated to that commitment in its effort to reach girls from different backgrounds and seek volunteers who reflect all segments of the community.

“We are dedicated to serving all girls from all walks of life through the wonderful activities and opportunities that Girl Scouting provides,” said Sandra E. Silva, Vice President, Membership and Regional Mission Delivery for GSGLA. “With Los Angeles being a richly diverse part of the country, expanding into communities new to Girl Scouting and recruiting new volunteers who represent our many communities in Southern California help our council develop a strong Girl Scout presence, lasting partnerships and new traditions of Girl Scouting where none have existed before.”

Additionally, Girl Scouts around the nation are honoring Dr. King's legacy by engaging in a variety of community service projects on the celebratory holiday on Monday, from serving food at homeless shelters to participating in cultural events and celebrations at local community centers.

“It’s important to me that our girls understand King’s dream of a world free from hate, prejudice and violence,” said volunteer Girl Scout Troop Leader Carlo Bravo, whose Troop 4113 will be reciting King’s famous “I Have a Dream” speech at the Cerritos Civic Center on Monday. “It’s also important to teach our children to respect and appreciate other cultures.”

About Girl Scouts “Architecture of Inclusion”

In 1917, with the organization still in its infancy, Girl Scouts introduced the first troop for African American girls, upon the hope of founder Juliette Gordon Low who wanted Girl Scouting to be available to all girls, all over the world. By the 1950s, In advance of the landmark civil rights legislation, GSUSA began a national effort to desegregate all Girl Scout troops. A 1952 issue of *Ebony* magazine reported that Girl Scouts in the South are making steady progress toward breaking down racial taboos,” and soon after, in 1956, Martin Luther King Jr. described Girl Scouts as "a force for desegregation."

Girls Scouts' vision of an inclusive organization was even more clarified engaging African Americans, Latinas, Asian Americans, American Indians, girls with disabilities and other underrepresented populations. According to GSUSA's "Architecture of Inclusion," as early as the 1960s, Girl Scouts recognized the growing Latina population with a Spanish-language edition of the Girl Scout Handbook.

Girl Scouts continues to be at the forefront of equality and leadership, with great opportunities to inspire girls everywhere to be a catalyst for positive change, as exemplified by Dr. King.

About Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles

A charter of Girl Scouts of the USA, Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles serves more than 40,000 girls in partnership with more than 23,000 volunteers from over 350 diverse communities of Los Angeles County and parts of Kern, San Bernardino and Ventura counties. Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles is the largest girl-serving non-profit agency in Los Angeles. The council's programs engage girls in grades K-12 in the areas of arts & culture, business, environment & outdoor adventure, science & technology and healthy living. To join, volunteer, reconnect or support, visit www.girlscoutsLA.org or call 1-888-GSGLA-4-U.