

SOUTHERN NAZARENE UNIVERSITY
ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

MEETING THE NEEDS OF GIRLS
THROUGH
GIRL SCOUTS REDLANDS COUNCIL

A PROJECT REPORT
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MEETING THE NEEDS OF GIRLS
THROUGH
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A PROJECT REPORT APPROVED FOR THE
ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

By

Project Coordinator

By

Program Director

This report is not to be regarded as confidential and its use as a
sample in future classes is not restricted.

By

Site Contact

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ABSTRACT

The Girl Scout organization was created in 1912 to bridge the gap between childhood and young adult. It was an avenue for girls to become productive citizens giving back to society through community service, while having fun and meeting new friends. The purpose of the Girl Scout organization has not varied since its inception, however the involvement of girls had changed.

This study was investigated to determine if there was a need to increase and retain youth and adult membership in the Girl Scouts Red Lands Council. A survey of 99 girls and 59 adult volunteers was conducted to evaluate their satisfaction of the Girl Scout program and to solicit recommendations for possible program changes.

Once the research and data was gathered in this study, an analysis was conducted to determine if the programming and retention practices of the Girl Scouts Red Lands Council was sufficient.

The results of this study indicated statistically that girls are pleased with the programming offered in the GSRLC. Given the positive results from the survey, the question of declining membership remains a focus and possibly answered in the response from the girls that they are ashamed to invite others to join the organization.

Chapter 1

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this project was to determine the effectiveness of the recruitment process and the programming offered to Girl Scout troops of the Red Lands Council, located within the Oklahoma City Metropolitan area. The project involved surveying the Red Lands Council Girl Scout Troop members and leaders regarding programming. Once the data was reviewed, program changes took place.

The Girl Scouts of America supports youth in America. This support continues to evolve and change as the lives of youth continue to change. This project included the opportunity to identify the needs of youth served in the Santa Fe Service Unit, a division of the Red Lands Council.

Organizational Context

Setting of the problem.

The Girl Scouts Red Lands Council began in Oklahoma City in 1935 with the intention of mobilizing girls to serve their communities, meet new friends, develop spiritually, mentally, and physically. The traditional activities of selling cookies as a fund raiser, camping to learn survival skills, and community service to make the world a better place one community at a time are the foundation of the Girls Scouts Red Lands Council.

The motto that Girl Scouting is for “Every Girl Every Where” was created as a plea to all girls to get involved with scouting. As the Girl Scout organization dealt with factors such as race, disabilities, and economic status, new elements were introduced; low volunteerism, organized sports, church programs, youth social clubs, and tight family schedules that hindered

girls from joining or retaining individual membership. Membership in Girl Scouting has consistently declined in the Oklahoma City Metropolitan area. The total membership of Red Lands Council girls is less than five thousand, a small portion of the population of girls eligible to join the scouting program in this area of the city. The 70 year old organization recruited girls 5 years old through 17 years old. As the girls mature faster the programming no longer kept interest, whether by the quality of the program or program implementation by the Girl Scout Leader. Various programs were developed for the scouts that were fun and educational for the creator however, lacked appeal to the girls because they did not challenge the individual mental or physical being.

The goals and objectives of Girl Scouts are lived by its members and stated in the mission statement, Girl Scout Promise, and Girl Scout Law.

Insert Figure 1

A non-profit organization, the Girl Scouts Red Lands Council serves fifteen counties and is governed by a board of directors that include two girl members, community leaders, and Girl Scout volunteers that make up a 26 total board membership. In addition to the board of directors, the Girl Scouts Red Lands Council is governed by Girl Scouts USA and the United Way.

The goal of Juliette Gordon Low in establishing an all girl group was for girls to have fun. She felt this could be accomplished by reaching out to all girls and teaching them how to be independent and creative. As girls develop friendships, they are also empowered by learning technology, arts, sciences, camping, First Aid, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), astrology,

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Girl Scouting is to inspire girls with the highest ideals of
character, conduct, patriotism, and service
that they may become happy and resourceful citizens.

GIRL SCOUT PROMISE

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.

GIRL SCOUT LAW

I will do my best to be
Honest and fair,
Friendly and helpful,
Considerate and caring,
Courageous and strong, and
Responsible for what I say and do,
And to
Respect myself and others,
Respect authority,
Use resources wisely,
Make the world a better place, and
Be a sister to every Girl Scout.

FIGURE 1 Mission Statement, Girl Scout Promise, and Girl Scout Law

money management, goal setting, health, fitness, and how to play basketball. Juliette wanted the girls to have the skills necessary to be business women as well as a homemaker.

Insert Figure 2

History and Background

Girl Guides, the original name of the Girl Scouts organization, originated in the United States in 1912. Influenced by the success of the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides in Scotland, England, Juliette Gordon Low born Juliette Magill Kinzie Gordon in Savannah, Georgia, held the first Girl Guide meeting in her home March 12, 1912. There were 18 girls that committed to be in that charter group, with Juliette’s niece Margaret “Daisy Doots” Gordon as the 1st registered member. In 1913, the Girl Guides changed their name to Girl Scouts, and on June 10, 1915 the Girl Scouts were incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia.

With over 3.7 million members, Girl Scouts is considered to be the largest learning organization for girls. In order to provide age appropriate activities and learning, the Girl Scouts are broken down into four groups: Daisy (5-6 year olds); Brownie (6-8 year olds); Junior (8-11 year olds); and Studio 2B (11-17 year olds). Girls gather as individuals (Juliettes), groups, or troops, meeting in homes, schools, churches, community centers, housing units, or parks. Each girl is asked to make the Girl Scout Promise, live by the Girl Scout Law, and demonstrate high levels of character, conduct, patriotism, and service.

Girl Scouts have made tremendous contributions in the world since 1912 from collecting peach pits for use in gas mask filters during World War I; baby sitting children as women go to vote for the first time; participating in food drives and canning programs during the Great Depression; to collecting scrap metal for recycling after the Pearl Harbor bombing. Girl Scouts

GIRL SCOUTS-RED LANDS COUNCIL FLOWCHART

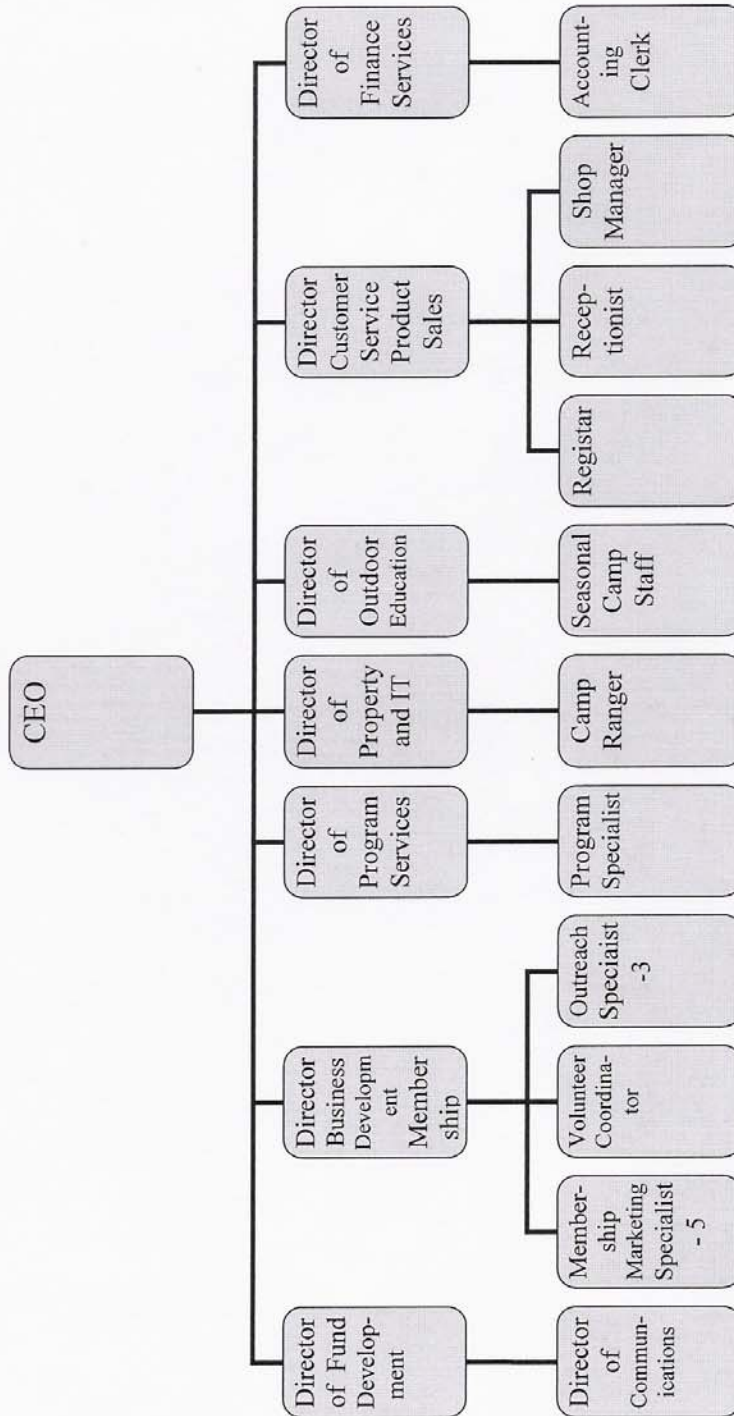


FIGURE 2 Girl Scouts Red Lands Council Organizational Chart

along with the leaders were trend setters in breaking down racial prejudices; witnessed first hand the launch of Apollo 12 at Cape Kennedy, Florida; and assisted Vietnamese children in adjusting to the new homes in America after the Vietnam War. Girl Scouts learned about youth suicide, literacy, child abuse, and drugs; restored eyeglasses for the homeless; community service projects after the September 11, 2000 bombing; and monetary gifts, gift cards, toiletries, games, backpacks, school supplies, and numerous other items donated to the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

The recruitment process of the Girl Scouts - Red Lands Council has produced less than desirable results. The girl membership has consistently declined in numbers since the year of 2000. In the year of 2000, the membership demographics showed a girl population between the ages of 5 – 17 to be 85,489 in the 15 counties served by the Red Lands Council which include: Harper, Woods, Alfalfa, Grant, Ellis, Woodward, Major, Garfield, Dewey, Blaine, Kingfisher, Logan, Lincoln, Oklahoma, and Pottawatomie (Red Lands Council, 2000). Of the available 85,489 girls in the year of 2000, only 5,035 were registered girl scouts or less than six percent of the available girls. A steady decline in membership reveals the 2005 registered girl scouts to be 4,513 (Red Lands Council, 2005).

Scope of the Project

Addressing the need of girl retention and adult leader retention had been a continuous challenge in the Girl Scout organization over the past several years. The implementation of an advertising campaign, along with an incentive reward of college scholarships for girls advancing in the Girl Scouting program through the Gold Award increased the overall membership. In addition, the Red Lands Council had no official way of tracking its past girl scouts as they advanced into adulthood. An effort to identify past girl scouts to show the many

accomplishments of former members was initiated. Troops that awarded girls with the highest honor in girl scouting were contacted to receive information on the individual Gold Award Girl Scouts. This database created with Gold Award recipients allowed for the girls to be contacted every five years from the award date to complete a “Where Am I Now” information sheet.

This project involved a survey of active girl scouts, active leaders, past girl scouts, past leaders, and non active girls and the parents regarding involvement in the scouting program or lack of involvement. A random selection of girls and leaders in the Red Lands Council jurisdiction were surveyed to gather data to begin the process of identifying the needs of Girl Scouts in the Red Lands Council.

Significance of the Project

The significance of this project was to provide an approach for Girl Scouts Red Lands Council to increase, retain, and track membership. The Girl Scout organization’s approach is to mentor girls and develop them mentally, physically, and spiritually. However, if the message was not getting out to the masses the effect in communities was minimal. Manufacturers and retailers use advertising to lure the population into buying products and creating demand for products, what one child has several more children will want. Therefore, by creating a large advertising campaign focusing on Girl Scouts, interest will be generated amongst girls, parents, and people that just want to get involved as a volunteer.

With increased membership, staffing and funding allows growth, thereby eliminating problems with training leaders, supplying resources, and stress levels. Girl Scouts Red Lands Council trained a large number of girls in character, conduct, patriotism and service to work in our communities and become resourceful citizens.

Definition of Terms

Girl Scout---any girl between the ages of 5 through eternity that has taken and accepted the Girl Scout Promise and the Girl Scout Law.

Girl Scouts of America---The national office of girl scouts located in Savannah, Georgia.

Girl Scout Troop—A group of girls that plan, plays, and learns together.

Gold Award---The highest award that a girl scout 14 years old through 17 years old may earn.

Leader---aka troop leader---a volunteer that plans activities, host meetings and field trips, enjoys interaction with children, implements the Girl Scouting Program, and is responsible for guiding the girl scout in developing mentally, physically, and spiritually.

Programs---Age appropriate activities created for the advancement of girl scouts.

Red Lands Council---An organized body of paid and volunteer workers that provide resources and services to Girl Scouts and the community.

Resources---Girl Scout literature, manuals, handbooks, activity kits, music, etc. (all tools created for the advancement of girls in scouting by helping to develop them mentally, physically, and spiritually.

Santa Fe Service Unit---An area in the city under the jurisdiction of Red Lands Council that serves northeast Oklahoma City.

Service Unit Director---A volunteer that is the liaison between the Red Lands Council and troops. The service unit director gives leadership to the troop leaders in her service unit (district).

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

To understand how to meet the needs of girls one must first understand how youth see themselves. As children progress into adolescence they begin to associate with peer groups according to the self-concept of themselves. This association with the guidance of family, clergy, teachers, and friends can guide the youth into positive behaviors that include: interest in family, spirituality, academics, and community service. However, if the network of support is negative or non-existent, the behaviors of the youth can become self-destructive with behaviors such as drinking, smoking, drugs, and sex.

The Girl Scout Red Lands Council (GSRLC) was an organization to bridge the gap between childhood and young adult. Volunteerism and service to others have long been basic values of the American people, and GSRLC served as a link for girls to be contributing members of society and possibly the influence to avoid self-destructive behaviors. Hence, affiliation by youth with organizations has been found to be very effective.

Affiliation with an Organization

The reduction in membership in the Girl Scout organization does not parallel with a girl's need for affiliation. Social scientists, (Ausubel, 1958) and (Riesman, 1950), have suggested that a youth's need for affiliation reaches its highest level during the adolescent years. Due to this, the Girl Scout organization must continue to be a more viable source of fun and purpose for girls. Youth, by developmental stages are seeking to join something. Stogdill (1959) stated that "individuals join organizations that act as reference groups, the individual tends to identify with persons and groups that have been influential in shaping their expectations" (pp. 75-77).

Affiliation with a group becomes essential to girls struggling to separate themselves from their families and attempting to find their own identity and security patterns. During this finding themselves period, youth are looking for opportunities to interact with peers to try out adult roles they will need as they mature (Burk, Kushner & Zdep, 1973). There are four sets of factors that will contribute to the attitudes and participation of youth: family, peer groups, program, and beliefs. A detailed study of ten high schools revealed one of the schools with 34 cliques in a population of 513 students (Hoge & Petrillo, 1978).

Considered as a traditional agency, GSRLC has its largest girl membership in the Daisy Girl Scouts and Brownie Girl Scouts. This represents the girls ages 5 through 10. By the time the girls reach age 11 they begin to look for something more challenging than arts, crafts, and cookie selling. They are looking for acceptance, purpose, and romantic involvement. Adolescents are concerned about their physical development and if they are a part of the popular crowd (Prinstein & LaGreca, 2002).

Diversity in Recruitment

In an effort to be inclusive to girls, the Girl Scout organization opened its membership to girls with disabilities from its inception in 1912. This was a natural act because the founder of the organization, Juliette Gordon Low was deaf. (“History Juliette Gordon Low Biography,” 1998)

To continue with the momentum of diversity, the Girl Scout organization over the years has opened its recruitment to minorities, residents of juvenile-detention centers, and homeless shelters. The girls participate in all the traditional Girl Scout activities of: arts, crafts, camping, and cookie sales, plus activities that address the current needs such as conflict-resolution skits, and identity recognition (Drebes & Person, 2004). This focus was to reach the youth before they

began deviant behavior, once the youth are active in negative behaviors the programs that are created to reach out to them are often unsuccessful and sometimes counterproductive (Dison, Nelson, & Yasui, 2005).

Suffolk County in New York State experienced a thirty six percent increase in their Girl Scout population from September 1989 to September 1994. According to the Suffolk's Girl Scout demographics, one out of every four girls living in Suffolk County was a registered member of the Girl Scouts. The Executive Director/CEO, contributes the growth to the 11th largest council nationwide to "diversity". The concern for girls and consistency, were cited as the main reason for becoming the number one Girl Scout Council in New York State. ("Suffolk County," 1995) The programs offered to the girls in Suffolk County were tailor made to meet individual needs of all of today's girls, including the physically and economically challenged (Long Island Business News, 1995).

Girl Scouts in the Oklahoma metropolitan area continue to be recruited as a whole on an annual basis during the month of September at the "Girl Scout Kick Off". This council wide event occurs on a Saturday, and includes all 15 counties which gather all Girl Scout leaders, returning girl scouts, and new girl scouts to one location for a time of fun, fellowship, and registration if they have not previously registered. Information about the "Kick Off" has been submitted through the Girl Scout office, the GSRLC web site, and given to Service Unit Directors and Troop Leaders for distribution. The registration provides membership for all girls from any religious, cultural, ethnic, or socioeconomic background. The cost to register is \$12 per girl which includes the \$10 registration fee, and a \$2 membership pin however, this cost can be paid through financial aid if needed. Uniforms are available however, they are not required. Flexibility is given to each troop whether they choose to wear the Girl Scout uniform.

According to Girl Scouts USA, the requirement of full uniform when wearing the Girl Scout pin supports written policy.

Uniforms in Scouting

Uniforms provide a sense of belonging and unity however, if the uniform is not desirable and stylish very few girls will want to adorn the ensemble. Take for instance the cap and gown at graduations, most every graduate is proud and eager to wear the garment to show that they belong to the elite, the graduating class. Then consider a prison jumpsuit, no one wants to be seen in this uniform because it signifies shame and confinement.

The Girl Scout uniform is an important item, not as an attraction, but because it conceals all differences of social standing and the girls are free to focus on themselves and each other without the stigma of social economic standing (Lord-Baden, 2002). As the girls gain increasing confidence in themselves, self-esteem is built and girls embrace and respect individual uniqueness.

With the added confidence of uniforms, girls have felt empowered to try something new without the self-doubt of failure. Even if a girl does not succeed at one activity, there are several opportunities waiting to be discovered. Most importantly for the Girl Scout organization is the inclusion of God within the curriculum.

God in Scouting

In an effort to make Girl Scouts appealing to all girls and be all inclusive, Girl Scouts USA decided to keep the name God in its Girl Scout Promise. However, it was determined to leave the interpretation of what God meant to each member individually. This change allowed all girls to feel comfortable in their own spirituality.

As girls mature as teenagers, research has found that they become less involved in religious traditions and church activities as they discover new activities from their peers that help to relate them to their changing situations (O'Connor, Hoge & Alexander, 2002). This change in attitude does not mean that spirituality will be lost, only overshadowed by new interests. As children are reared in spiritual ways, parents training will have a substantial impact on behaviors of major concern when they reach adolescence (Brown & Mounts, 1993).

Church involvement and youth programs have been found to be an important part of developing youth. Teens showed the greatest interest in support programs that consisted of: Christian fellowships, ministry, counseling, group discussions, rap sessions, seminars, and workshops. The second most prominent interest was sports activities, including camps, teams, and martial arts classes (Rubin & Billingsley, 1994). Scouting programs are an intricate part of this support for today's youth.

Scouting programs

Scouting programs must meet youth where they are. Activity considerations can include arts, crafts, and camping. However, if the youth want to dissect frogs, play basketball, and learn about sexually transmitted diseases, these activities must be incorporated into the curriculum. The key is to provide a change and create excitement that will draw youth into the organization.

What better way to offer the activities that youth want than to involve them on organizing committees. This allows youth to be with peers in a supervised setting. Most importantly being productive, empowered, and having fun. In regards to Girl Scouts, involving the girls in the organizing allows them to be a part of the solution to youth participation and builds continuing power that can be passed on for generations to come (Stahlhut & Bowes, 2003).

Because in adolescence girls interest change, a girl that once was family oriented may develop into someone who becomes recluse. Although the girl may withdraw from family communication, in most cases she increases her conversations about interpersonal issues with peers (Larson, Richards, Moneta, Holmbeck, & Duckett 1996). With the knowledge of how adolescences are altering behavior, adults must conform if maintaining a close relationship.

With youth becoming increasingly more aware of themselves and their interests, adults must get involved with youth by volunteering in organizations such as Girl Scouts to learn more. Youth want to express themselves and adults must listen. As adults become involved as guidance mentors, youth will develop confidence and increase self-esteem.

Conclusion

Change is inevitable and should be embraced and not feared. Decision makers of the GSRLC must hold to tradition but recognize that girls are passing them by to acquaint with the organizations willing to think outside of the box and address individual needs, concerns, and curiosities. There are a multitude of girls that are living in the GSRLC district, surrounded by numerous positive and negative organizations for girls to join. It is the responsibility of the GSRLC to make its program enticing, and create public awareness of the opportunities that are available to girls through its programming. The Girl Scout organization must create such an excitement that all girls and their parents are inquiring about how they can join. Without rejuvenating this type of excitement the organization will remain stagnate and eventually die out.

The effectiveness of the RLCGS located within the Oklahoma City Metropolitan area was shown through its recruitment and programming offered to girls ages 5 through 17.

Chapter 3

Methods & Procedures

Hypotheses

The research hypothesis that was investigated in this project was the need to increase and retain youth and adult membership in the Girl Scouts Red Lands Council (GSRLC) located in the metropolitan area of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The membership enrollment in the Red Lands Council had declined annually, and it did not appear that the youth or adult volunteers felt the need to be affiliated with the Girl Scout organization. The dependent variable measured responses to surveys that focused on the satisfaction of girl scouts five through seventeen years of age.

Data Source

The data for this research was obtained from survey responses of girls that attended camp Red Rock during Spring Break, girls in the Santa Fe Service Unit, and youth girls from St. John Missionary Baptist Church. A random sample of 99 girls and 59 adults that attended Girl Scout troop meetings was selected to measure the fulfillment and interests of participants.

Instrumentation

The operational definition for the dependent variable consisted of two surveys, one for the youth girl and one for the adult volunteer. The surveys discovered what interests girls had, and how those interests could be incorporated into the Girl Scout program. The adult volunteer survey was geared towards finding out what motivated the adult to volunteer and how much time adults were willing to donate to Girl Scouts. The knowledge gained from the responses was used to develop programs that would be satisfying to girl scouts and adult volunteers.

The dependent variable of responses to the “Survey—Girl Scout Programming” (see Appendix I), and “Survey—Girl Scout Volunteers” (see Appendix II) provided nominal level scores. These unpublished surveys were written by the researcher and were not tested for reliability or validity.

The youth girl survey consisted of 15 questions. Six of the questions were multiple choice; three required yes/no, or undecided responses; three required fill in the blanks; one requested ranking according to importance; and one solicited check all that apply. The final question was open ended for the girl to share any information that she thought might be of importance to the Girl Scout programming. The adult survey consisted of five questions. All five questions were multiple choice. Three of the questions allowed room for “other” responses.

The response from the youth girl surveys reflected the percentages of girls that had the same interest in various categories. The calculations also identified the areas of the scouting program that had low appeal to youth girls. Additionally, the responses from the adult volunteer survey identified how to motivate the adult volunteer, what program area adults were willing to work, and how to structure the time allotment.

Procedure

A need analysis was conducted utilizing a random sample of girl scouts from the GSRLC. The GSRLC office was contacted to determine the most effective way to distribute surveys. The recommendation of the Director of Program Services was to ensure diversity by distribution at spring break camp. In addition, surveys were distributed at troop meetings in the Santa Fe Service Unit and youth meetings at St. John Missionary Baptist Church. After two weeks the directors were contacted to check the status of the distribution of the surveys. The surveys were distributed with a letter of explanation to encourage participation.

Data was tabulated by counting the frequency of occurrence within the various categories. A summary report was compiled and mailed to GSRLC, Santa Fe Service Unit, and St. John Missionary Baptist Church with a thank you note for their participation.

Data Analysis

Once the surveys were calculated, the nominal level scores were summarized using a frequency distribution. A histogram was used to chart the number of surveys returned. The null hypothesis tested there was no need to increase membership in GSRLC. The alternative hypothesis was that a need existed to increase and retain youth and adult membership in GSRLC.

Limitations

One of the limitations of this study was the lack of participation from girls that were no longer in scouting. Determining why those girls quit scouting could make a tremendous difference in the results of the surveys.

Another limitation was counting on others to distribute, collect, and return the surveys. If not administered correctly the random sample of 5,000 girls could be isolated to a very few service units with a limited number of Girl Scout troops.

A variable not considered was the ability of the youth girl to be honest with her answers, the completed survey was to be given to their troop leader or a volunteer that works directly with them, therefore the youth may have been hindered to share her true likes and dislikes.

Chapter 4

Summary of Results

The following is a summation of the data collected from a survey of a randomly selected sample of adult volunteers and girls in the district of Girls Scouts Red Lands Council. The information from the test instruments were tabulated and evaluated and found to support that neither youth girls nor adult volunteers felt the need to prioritize the Girl Scout organization.

Restatement of the Hypothesis

The objective under study was the need to increase and retain youth and adult membership in the GSRLC located in the metropolitan area of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The accompanying hypothesis was that the membership enrollment in the GSRLC had declined annually, and it did not appear that the youth or adult volunteers felt the need to be affiliated with the Girl Scout organization.

An evaluation of the test results by the arithmetic mean revealed that girls in scouting were satisfied with the scouting program, and that adult volunteers were motivated to work with girl scouts to increase relationships with youth.

Descriptive Statistical Information

The hypothesized statement that a need existed for increased youth and adult membership in GSRLC was investigated. A sample of 99 girl scouts and 59 adult volunteers were randomly selected for participation in this study. This represented 2.19% of the girl membership and 3.60% of the adult membership. The membership totals are shown in figure 3.

Insert Figure 3

Girl Scout Membership

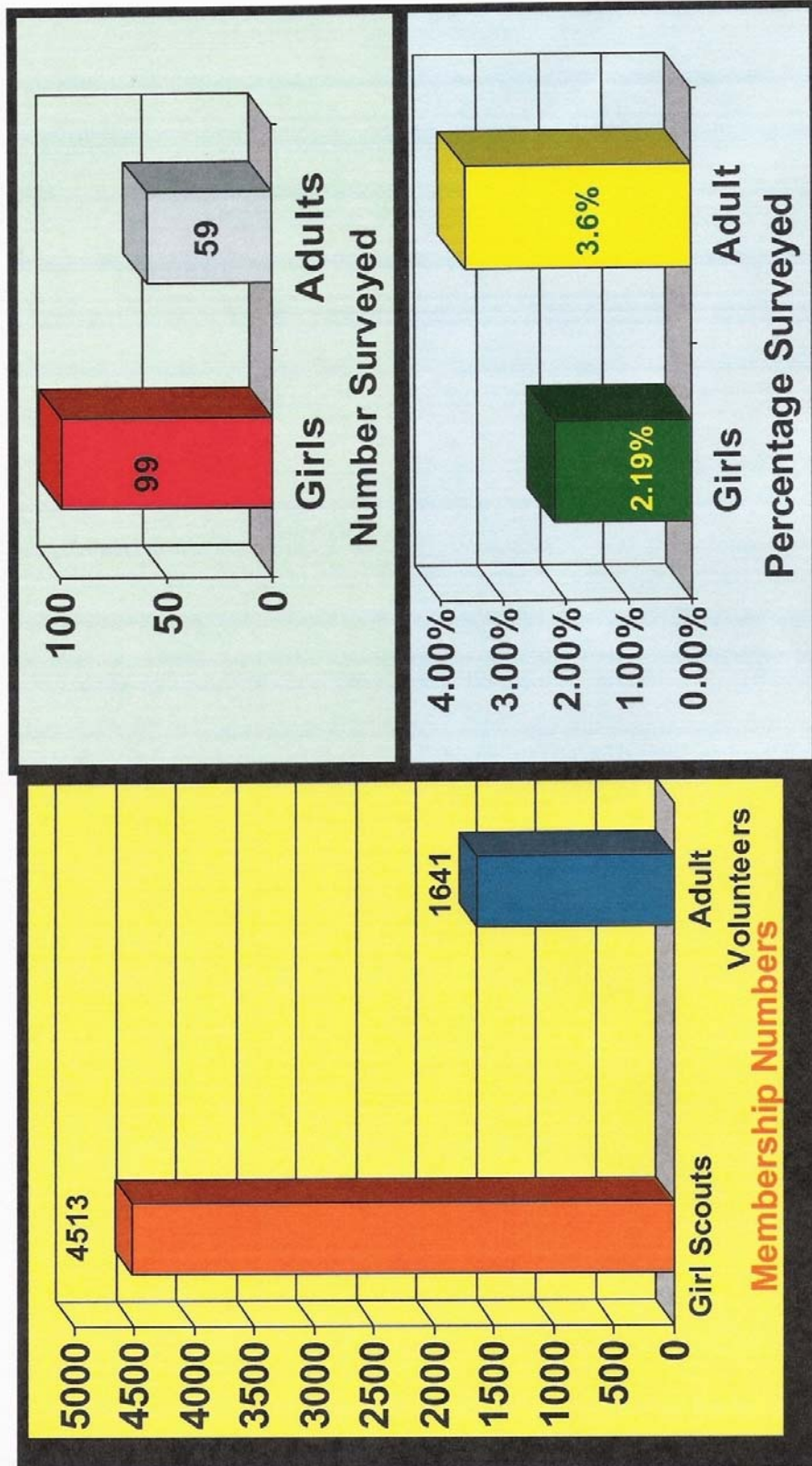


FIGURE 3 Membership totals of RLCCGs

The quality of the GSRLC program was tested and the results stated that 74.75% of those surveyed believed that girl scouts made a positive difference in their life. When asked about troop meeting activities 36.36% responded that troop meetings are challenging, but fun. The survey asked the girls if they would be interested in participating in an annual event with Boy Scouts of America and 51.51% of the girls said yes. The majority of the yes votes derived from the 12-17 age group. The program results are shown in figure 4, 5, and 6.

Insert Figure 4

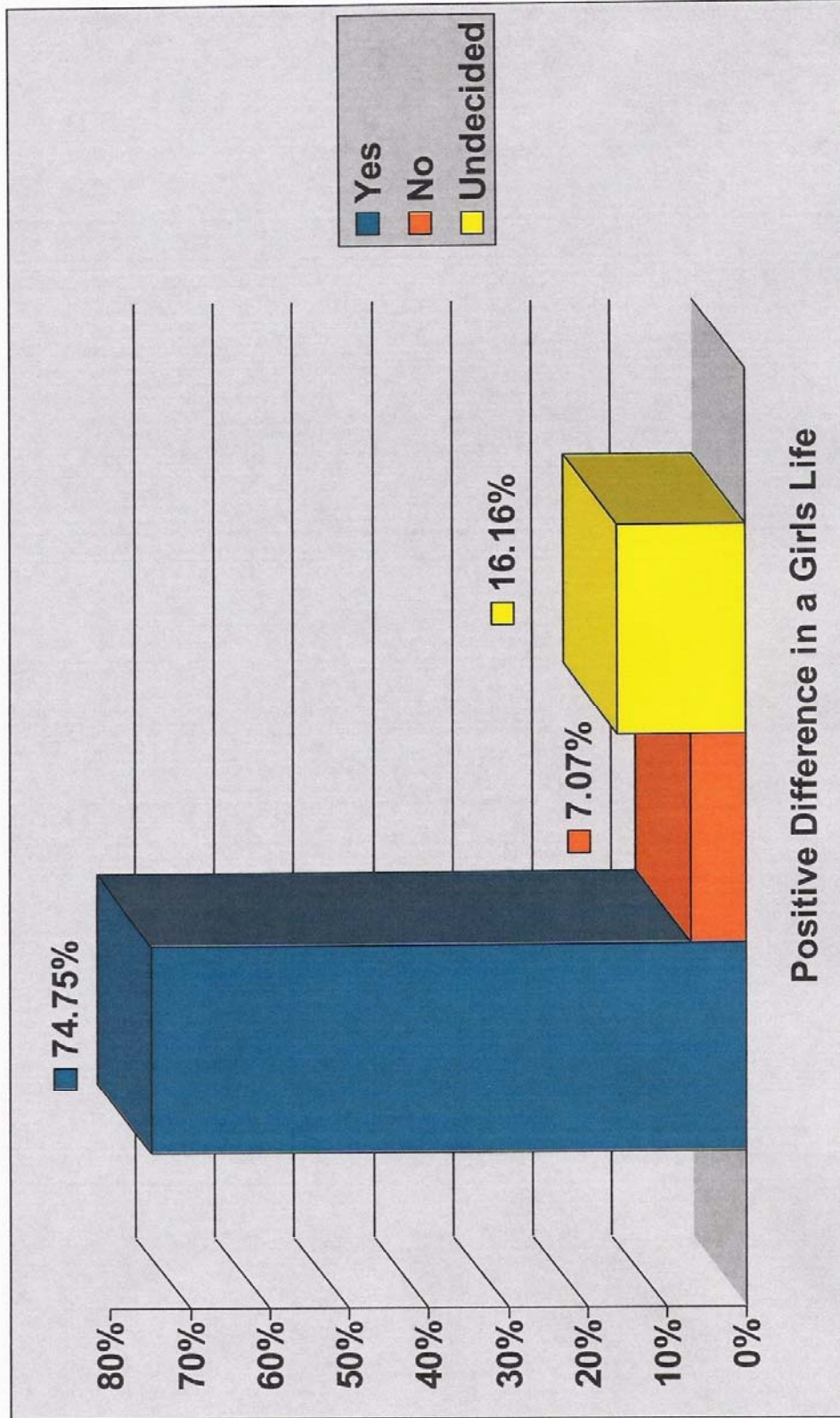
Insert Figure 5

Insert Figure 6

The girls were asked to rank the importance of six Girl Scout activities offered. The tabulated results of the test revealed that troop outings were ranked number one, and selling cookies ranked sixth. The other choices were camping (ranked second), meeting new girls (ranked third), troop meetings (ranked fourth), and community service (ranked fifth).

When asked if the girl scouts had invited another girl to join scouting 66.67% said yes, and 29.29% said no. The results revealed that 29.29% said they did not invite another to join scouting gave reasons of, “friends are not interested in scouting,” “never thought about it,” and

Quality of Scouting Program Positive Difference in a Girls Life



Positive Difference in a Girls Life

FIGURE 4 Quality of Scouting Program
Positive Difference in a Girls Life

Troop Meetings

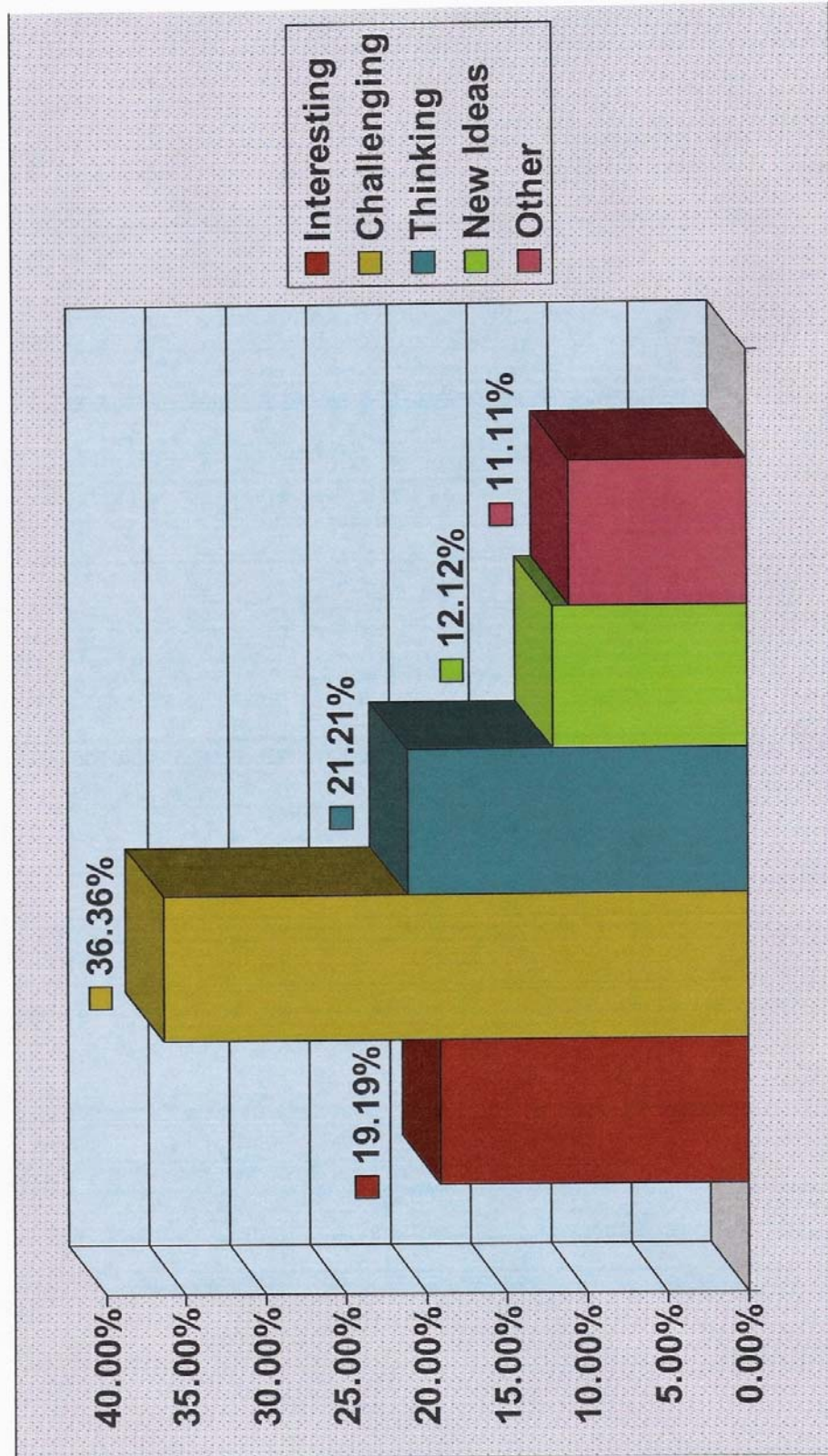


FIGURE 5 Troop Meetings

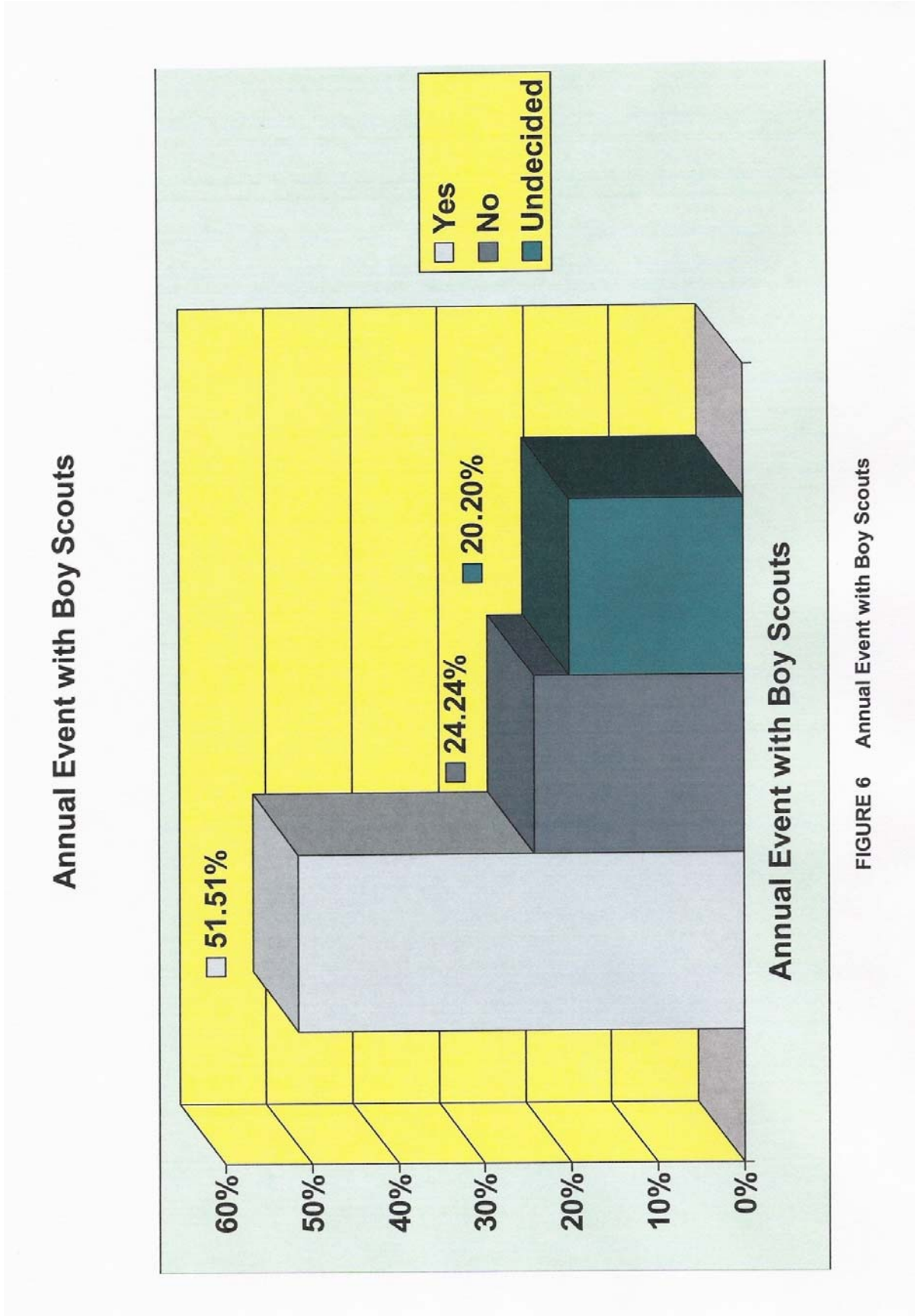


FIGURE 6 Annual Event with Boy Scouts

“scouting is wimpy.” Test results revealed that girls are spending time in organized sports and other physical activities including dancing and riding bicycles.

When asked what would encourage the girl scouts to continue in scouting through the age of 18, a scholarship incentive received 57.58% of the vote by those surveyed. The data collected on girl and adult participation and interest in scouting indicated that a need existed for increased membership and retention.

Results of Needs Analysis

The results of census information provided by RLCGS confirmed that numerous girls live in the GSRLC district. Test results revealed that girls are involved in sports, church groups, and some social groups, however there are a large number of girls that are not involved in any extra curricular activity that would benefit from the array of programs offered by Girl Scouts.

Since this study was based on the perception of the need, additional time and research would be needed to implement a program that would focus on increased membership and retention.

Status quo. Membership in GSRLC declined due to lack of exposure, staffing, and adult volunteers. Without the ability to reach every girl everywhere the program is only partially successful. The Girl Scouts organization began to give girls opportunity to serve their communities, meet new friends, develop spiritually, mentally, and physically. The goal of Juliette Gordon Low in establishing an all girl group was for girls to have fun.

The values that the Girl Scout organization was founded on are valid and girls have embraced those beliefs. The shared values and programming that was implemented to include the entire district resulted in girls that developed to their full potential. Being taught how to make sound decisions and the importance of contributing to the improvement of society.

Relating to others with increasing understanding, skill, and respect, the girls developed a meaningful set of values to guide actions.

Implementation of an Advertising Campaign. An advertising campaign could be created by asking advertising companies to donate a few hours of professional staff to create television commercials, brochures, and billboards. Once the film and artwork were created, news stations and printing companies could be asked to donate the cost of producing the required product. The cost that was not absorbed by the advertising, printing companies, and news stations could be solicited from corporations and individuals. A mass produced advertising campaign would be the push that generated renewed interest in the GSRLC adult and girl membership.

Alternative Suggestions. By reducing the scouting age, girls at age 5 are excited to join scouting and that excitement continues through the age of 8. Membership in girl scouting begins to decline after the Brownie Girl Scouts, therefore the cut off age for girl scouts could be reduced from 17 years of age to 9 years of age. Reducing the age of scout membership would assure the continuance of excitement in scouting and as the girl approached the age of other interest her tenure in scouting would be completed.

This change would reduce the number of paid staff, need for volunteers, and resources. The recruitment focus would be centered on a younger audience, which is shown by the census to produce the largest number of scouts. Staff members would focus on only two age groups allowing specialization. Due to the young ages that would receive so much attention the staff may see this change as glorified pre-school programming. Resources would no longer have to be created for the 9 through 17 year olds. The values taught would remain the same and the budget would decline due to reduced constraints on programming.

Another option of larger magnitude would include combining scouting programs of boys and girls. The groups would be able to benefit from increased funding, larger staff, and increased number of available volunteers. Each program teaches values and how to be good citizens, by combining the groups each gender could learn different skills.

By combining the groups some paid staff positions would be eliminated because of duplication. This reduction in staff would cause tension, in addition to the new demands of staff and volunteers to become gender sensitive in teaching activities and new skills.

Combining the two groups may develop an additional set of problems dealing with opposite gender relationships. Therefore the focus of scouting may be lost due to relationship issues.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusions

This study was conducted to evaluate the need of increased membership and retention of adult volunteers and girls in the GSRLC in Oklahoma City. A review of the demographics of the GSRLC showed that of the 23,812 girls that were in the district only 4,513 of the girls participated in Girl Scouts.

A total of 59 adult surveys and 100 girl surveys were distributed to adult volunteers and girl scouts in the GSRLC district. The following is an explanation of the tabulated data that was obtained from the study.

General Discussion and Conclusions

The results of the study indicated statistically that the original hypothesis was incorrect. According to the statistical analysis of the test scores, girls are pleased with the programming offered in the GSRLC.

Girls described activities as challenging, fun, and interesting. Given the opportunity over 66% of the girls invited others to join Girl Scouts. Most girls wanted to meet with the troop two hours each week. When asked to rank the importance of Girl Scout activities, troop meetings ranked fourth out of six possible answers.

Given the positive results from the survey, the question of the large difference in girls actually enrolled in Girl Scouts and the available number of girls in the district was raised. With 29% of the girls surveyed not inviting other girls to join scouting the results seem to say that scouting is good enough for the active scout however, not good enough for one's friends.

Girls are involved in several extra curricular activities and Girl Scouting should be one of them. RLCGS and volunteers must make the scouting program exciting enough that members

are not ashamed to invite others into the organization. Girls everywhere should talk fondly regarding scouting that if one girl is not a member the need to belong to the Girl Scout sisterhood would be overwhelming.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Study

The study gave insight as to the interest of girls, the likes and dislikes of the uniform, and input on enriching the program. It confirmed that the programs offered are good programs that need to be shared with all girls.

One of the weaknesses of the study was that it addressed active girl scouts. The girls that are not in scouting did not have input into the survey that reported why they are not participants in the scouting program.

Another weakness of the project, the questions on the survey were geared towards positive responses unless one took the initiative to fill in the other responses.

Recommendations

As a society that was focused on staying busy and acquiring material things, families lost focus of the benefits of togetherness and growing together. In the hustle of adults attending meetings and transporting children, the art of communicating with the child was lost. Boundaries were set and activities outside of the workplace limited. The family was given top priority as all members felt a sense of belonging to an organized group.

Once the family was reorganized youth were confident and sure of one's beliefs. With this self confidence youth were able to select extra curricular activities out of ones interest, not because of the need for affiliation. Therefore youth organizations, including GSRLC with increased awareness of the youth girls needs planned re-organization meetings to develop a strategy to attract new membership.

An advertising campaign to generate renewed interest among adults and every girl everywhere regarding scouting was implemented. The advertising campaign ran in the fall season and included television, radio, billboards, and brochures. With the benefits of increased membership, funding increased, and therefore staffing was increased.

With the increased girl membership the girls were empowered to modify the program to meet the needs of girls in accordance to the founding principals of the Girl Scout organization. This empowerment attracted all races of girls, and consequently the face of GSRLC changed to reflect diversity in girl membership, staff, and volunteers.

Without investing in the Girl Scout organization the membership will continue to decline. With decreased membership, programs will be cut and girls everywhere will miss the opportunities to meet new friends, serve communities, develop spiritually, mentally, and physically in an all girl environment.

Suggestions for Future Research

Part of the survey asked the girls to list three of the television shows each individual preferred. This question was proposed to get an idea of the kinds of things girls enjoy. By knowing the type of television shows that capture the attention of girls GSRLC would be better equipped to offer programming that is appealing.

The list of preferred television shows could be divided between volunteers to view and make notes of the setting, characters and central theme. The volunteers would meet after completing the assignments to discuss the findings, comparing similarities and brainstorming ideas that could be used in the scouting programs.

Another area of further study is scholarships. The girls listed scholarships as the number one incentive that would encourage membership in scouting through the age of 18. With this

information it is obligatory that the GSRLC investigate opportunities for additional sponsors to fund this endeavor.

As the girls mature interest change to include the opposite gender. The project results showed that girls in the 12 – 17 age group were interested in planning and participating in a social activity with the Boy Scouts of America. Frontier City was suggested as the first combined social activity.

Another area of the project dealt with the volunteer's available time and what motivated the individual. It would be beneficial if a study was performed on the attributes of the volunteer and how one could mentor the Girl Scout. This could possibly be a study on careers and apprentice placements.

Due to time restraints this research was not completed, but it could prove to be valuable when dealing with young girls. Youth are faced with many challenges and obstacles daily. It would be to the advantage of society and the GSRLC to embrace youth and provide fun, exciting, and wholesome programs for youth to grow with. Programs that are geared towards the interests of youth, and not adults trying to relive one's youth.

Once the GSRLC learned how to meet the needs of girls, the values and fun that Juliette Gordon Low implemented over 90 years ago was shared with every girl everywhere.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I

Survey---Girl Scout Programming

(Instructions: Please place a check mark or an “X” in the box next to your answer, unless the question asks you to number your answers.)

1. Do you feel your involvement in Girl Scouts has made a positive difference in your life?
 - 74 Yes
 - 7 No
 - 16 Undecided

2. How would you rate the activities at troop meetings?
 - 19 Interesting: makes me want to learn more about the topic
 - 36 Challenging, but fun
 - 21 Makes me think
 - 12 They allow me to examine other points of view
 - 11 Other (please specify) _____

3. Rank the following list of importance to you. (With “1” as your favorite through “6” as your least favorite)
 - 336 Troop Meetings
 - 256 Camping
 - 394 Selling cookies as a fund raiser (receiving reward gifts)
 - 387 Community Service
 - 282 Meeting new girls—gaining new friendships
 - 219 Troop outings (movies, pizza parties, skating, etc.)

4. Have you ever invited another girl to join Girl Scouts?
 - 66 Yes
 - 29 No

5. Thinking of question #4
 - Why To have my friend with me
It is fun

 - Why not Other girls are not interested in joining
Embarrassed

6. Thinking about the Girl Scout uniform, do you
 - 31 Like the style
 - 34 Wish you could have input on the style
 - 31 Do not like the uniform
 - 4 Other (please specify) _____

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7. What is the maximum amount of time you can spend at a troop meeting?
- 8 30 minutes
 - 25 1 hour
 - 40 2 hours
 - 21 Other (please specify) _____
8. How often would you like to gather for troop meetings?
- 48 Weekly
 - 14 Monthly
 - 22 Bi-Monthly (twice a month)
 - 8 Quarterly (once every 3 months)
9. What would encourage you to stay in scouting through the age of 18?
- 40 Gold Award (highest award earned in Girl Scouts)
 - 57 Scholarship
 - 15 Preferred acceptance as intern at corporations
 - 14 Recognition at awards banquet with television coverage; article and picture in local newspaper
 - 15 Other (please specify) _____

10. Would a annual social activity with the Boy Scouts of America be something you would be interested in planning and participating?
- 51 Yes
 - 24 No
 - 21 Not sure
11. Are you a member of any of the following? (Check all that apply)
- 64 Church youth group
 - 56 Team Sports (basketball, gymnastics, soccer, etc.)
 - 13 Social club (List name): _____
 - 37 Choir
 - 16 School club (List name): _____
 - 2 4-H
 - 22 Other (List name): _____
12. To help us know what interests you, please tell us your three favorite activities
- 1. [Physical Activity \(outdoors\)](#) _____
 - 2. [Arts & Crafts](#) _____
 - 3. [Swimming](#) _____

Appendix I

13. List your favorite television show

[Reality Shows \(American Idol, Top Model etc\)](#) _____

[Numerous Cable Television Shows](#) _____

14. Your age is?

[2](#) 5 – 6 years old

[7](#) 7 – 8 years old

[21](#) 9 – 11 years old

[65](#) 12 – 17 years old

15. Please list any comments you would like to share.

[Less boring speeches and ceremonies](#) _____

[Longer time for activities—harder activities](#) _____

[Don't do the same things each year](#) _____

Appendix II

Survey---Girl Scout Volunteers

(Instructions: Please place a check mark or an “X” in the box next to your answers.)

1. Your current involvement as a volunteer in Girl Scouts Red Lands Council is
 - 11 Full time
 - 17 Frequent
 - 13 Occasional
 - 5 No Interest in volunteering
 - 13 Never have been asked to volunteer

2. What encourages you to volunteer?
 - 38 Relationship with youth
 - 2 Recognition
 - 6 Leadership opportunity
 - 28 Ability to give back to the community
 - 5 Other (please specify) _____

3. What activities should be incorporated in the Girl Scouts-Red Lands Council program?
 - 44 Life learning skills (money management, etiquette, stress management, etc.)
 - 43 Programs that deal with current issues: fashion, music, peer pressure, self-esteem, eating disorders, etc.
 - 3 Other (please specify) _____

4. What is the maximum amount of time you can spend at a troop meeting?
 - 9 30 minutes
 - 24 1 hour
 - 23 2 hours
 - 7 Other (please specify) _____

5. How often would you like to gather for troop meetings?
 - 19 Weekly
 - 18 Monthly
 - 19 Bi-Monthly (twice a month)
 - 1 Quarterly (once every 3 months)