

How to Host a Girl Scout Event

Step 1: DECIDING TO HOST: It's never too early to introduce the idea that events are hosted by other Girl Scout troops. Talk to the girls in your troop about hosting an event that they have attended and enjoyed. If you have a younger troop, introduce the idea a few years ahead of time to get them thinking about hosting. Talk to them after an event about things that they liked, disliked or might do differently. This helps them to start thinking about what they could do if they hosted an event. Depending on the event, girls as young as 5th or 6th grade could start hosting simple events, like a song fest, thinking day or boutique for example.

Step 2: COUNCIL TRAINING: An adult or two from your troop should attend the Adult Education courses at Council for the following topics: Event Planning, Risk Management and/or First Aid. These classes help you prepare for the paper work, outline requirements for different kinds of events, and give you timelines for planning. Classes are held several times during the year. Look in the Adult Education brochure or check on line at www.girlscoutshcc.org.

Step 3: SIGN UP TO HOST: Sign up well in advance to sponsor an event. The sooner you sign up, the more time you will have to plan. A year in advance is recommended for most events. If you are seriously thinking about an event, but not ready to commit, talk to troop leaders that have previously hosted an event, or ask to see the event planning binder for the event you are considering. These binders have heaps of useful information passed on from year to year.

Step 4: SET THE DATE AND BOOK THE SITE: So you've picked an event to host. Now what? Meet with your girls and involve your parents. Depending on the event some involve more parental help than others. Pick several dates that will work for your girls, and then discuss the venue options. Double check attendance figures from previous events so you pick a site that can accommodate the expected attendance. List the preferred dates and venues and then book it! The service unit is available to help you in booking the facilities and assisting with the rental fees if the event is a non money making event. If your troop is considering hosting an event as a money making activity, the service unit may be able to assist in a loan for the facility fees. You should talk to Service Unit Manager/Treasurer/Event Coordinator about the options and procedures. The time frame for booking different facilities varies greatly. The earlier you plan, the more likely you are to get your preferred date and location. Fill out and turn in the EVENT PLANNING INTENT FORM!

Step 5: PAPERWORK, BUDGET AND PLANNING: A good place to start planning any event is choosing a theme, the activities will all evolve from the theme. It's difficult to figure out a budget without knowing the types of activities, cost of supplies, facility fees, etc. You will also need to know how many girls can be accommodated at the venue (based on the Fire Code/Maximum Occupancy). It's a good idea to check how many girls have attended in the past to have a realistic number when setting event registration fees. Some events may not require you to decide on a theme (Holiday Boutique), or the theme may already be set by GSUSA (Thinking Day). Events like these or a Songfest may be a great first time event for a troop to host since, the level of planning is less. Troops can concentrate on the planning basics: budget, safety, advertising and registrations. Songfests require a minimal of activity planning since most of it is song based and the duration of the event is easily controlled. Events such as a Camporee, Dance or another themed event will require more planning because of crafts, food, decorations etc. Create an event planning timeline/calendar so every detail can be given adequate time to accomplish. Assign responsibility to girls/families, especially for big events. Use the event binder (if one is available) to help make sure you cover all the important details and read the advice others have for future troops/events.

Step 6: ADVERTISE YOUR EVENT: Even before you make a flyer or select a theme, get the date on the SU calendar so leaders know when it's happening. Create an event flyer with all the pertinent information: Name of event, date, time, location, who its for, (age level, troop or individual event), how to register, the troop that's hosting, the name and contact details for more information, how to pay, deadlines for registering, what troops need to bring and when troops will know if they are 'registered.' Have the flyer approved by the SU manager and council before distributing. The best way is to have the flyer available at the leader's meeting and also as an electronic file (pdf format is best) that can be emailed directly to troops. Girls from your troop can come and present the event at a leader's meeting. This is a great public speaking opportunity for the girls! Make sure to get your item on the Leader's meeting agenda ahead of time.

Step 7: PLAN, PLAN, PLAN!: Make sure everyone in the troop is helping to the best of their ability. The girls should be helping with the research, shopping, and decisions. Try out any crafts or games in advance of purchasing supplies to make sure that they will work and can be done with in the budget. Girls should help with registrations and keeping track of the money and number of attendees. Think through the event: access to water, electricity, bathrooms, flags, tables, chairs, adult:girl ratios, first aid station, security, risk plan, set-up and clean-up, transportation/delivery of donations after the event, refreshments, music, etc.

Step 8: VOLUNTEERS: Do you need additional help outside of your troop: another troop to take care of a flag ceremony, an event photographer, a Level II First Aider, a DJ, Lifeguards? Book these people in advance and reconfirm their availability regularly as the event approaches. If you are planning a Camporee, do you need additional Program Aides to help run activities? Talk to the Service Unit team about resources available for finding additional help.

Step 9: ORGANIZATION: Keep track of receipts, deposits, registrations and supplies. Make detailed lists of who is responsible for even the smallest of supplies. Do you need extensions cords, card tables, name tags, PA systems, water coolers, etc? Who is bringing them and how many. What time will they arrive on site. Do you want to collect everything in one place a day or two prior to the event so you know the condition of everything? If you think of it write it down so you don't forget, no detail is too small.

Step 10: KEEP CALM!! Even when you have planned everything out, something invariably goes wrong. A parent or girl becomes sick the day of the event, the weather changes, an electrical outlet doesn't work. Stay cool and be flexible. Let those in the troop know what is going on and see what solutions might work. If the problem is really beyond your control, you will be surprised at how understanding people can be!

Step 11: AFTER THE EVENT: Finalize all the paperwork. Turn over checks to the SU Treasurer along with receipts for reimbursement. Turn in final budget reports and evaluations to SU/Council, get feedback from your troop and families about how things went, would they make changes if they did it again, what advice would they pass on. Get feedback from other leaders or adults who came to your event. How did the registration process work, did their girls have fun, what activities did they like/dislike and why. Add all this information into the event binder for the next troop along with copies of the pertinent paperwork. This not only becomes valuable information, but becomes part of our SU history! Return the Event Binder to SU Event Coordinator.

Still have questions or ready to sign up? Email the Davis SU Event Coordinator.

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