

Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois hosts 7th annual meeting, elects new board of directors, recognizes exceptional volunteers

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GLEN CARBON – Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois (GSSI) held its 7th Annual Meeting on April 9 at the Holiday Inn in Mt. Vernon, Illinois. During the meeting, approximately 350 Girl Scout members (adults and girls) from throughout southern Illinois elected Board of Director members and received a “State of the Council” report from Linda Manley, GSSI Board of Director Chair, and Villie M. Appoo, GSSI Chief Executive Officer.

In addition, Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois recognized top Girl Scout volunteers which are the heart of Girl Scouting. GSSI's 4,500 Girl Scout volunteers play an instrumental role in providing leadership programming and opportunities for more than 13,000 girls in southern Illinois. The theme for this year's GSSI 7th Annual Meeting was Golden Jubilee which celebrated the 100th Anniversary of the Girl Scout Gold Award.

Keynote speaker for GSSI's annual meeting was 1st Lt. Alyssa Heimerman, who is the Operations and Training Flight Commander at Travis AFB, CA, where she serves as an Aircraft Maintenance Officer. Lieutenant Heimerman is originally from Belleville and was a Girl Scout for many years. She culminated her Girl Scout career by earning the Girl Scout Gold Award in 2009. The lieutenant says earning her Girl Scout Gold Award was a really phenomenal experience as a young leader.

"Girl Scouts gave me so many positive things...confidence to succeed, open-mindedness and the importance of Communications in leadership," Lieutenant Heimerman added.

Selected to serve on GSSI Board of Directors were: Sarah Anderson from Mt. Vernon, P. Anne Haltenhof from Columbia, Diane Siemer from Teutopolis, Deanna Litzenburg from Edwardsville, Melanie Mills from Charleston and Nancy Smolak from Marion. In addition, P. Anne Haltenhof and Beth Winfrey Freeburg from O'Fallon were elected to GSSI's Board Development Committee.

These new board members join current GSSI board members: Linda Manley from Highland, Sharon Mayo from Robinson, Susan Bowman from Highland, Sandra Evans from Alto Pass, Anna Henkel from St. Louis, Richard Huntington from Mt. Vernon, Bishop Albert Ingram Jr. from Harrisburg, Sandra Maxwell from Carbondale, John McCracken from Edwardsville, Angie Zahn from Trenton, Carla Nilson from Herrin and Gail Short from Anna. In addition, Jane Childers from Carbondale and Lisa Smith from O'Fallon on the Board Development Committee.

In addition, delegates selected the Board of Director ex-officio girls who are current Girl Scouts and will serve on GSSI's board as advisory members. The GSSI ex-officio girl members are: Lexi Scrivner from Mt. Vernon and Megan Thompson from Red Bud. Lexi and Megan will be mentored by Caroline Stewart from Belleville and Kayli Worthey from Neoga who are former girl ex-officio board members.

"Girl Scouting in southern Illinois would not be what it is today without the dedication, passion and leadership of all of our volunteers," said Appoo. "We are honored to elect these new Board Members and recognize our exceptional volunteers as they are the driving force behind carrying out GSSI's mission of building leaders for America. Working together with our volunteers, we are providing important and

valuable programs and experience for girls who will make the world a better place for everyone,” Appoo added.

Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois is a high-capacity Girl Scout council serving approximately 13,000 girls and 4,500 adult volunteers in 40 ½ counties in southern Illinois. The mission of Girl Scouting states: *Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place.* Girl Scouts is the world's pre-eminent organization dedicated solely to girls - all girls - where, in an accepting and nurturing environment, girls build character and skills for success in the real world. In partnership with committed adults, girls develop qualities that will serve them all their lives - like strong values, social conscience, and conviction about their own potential and self-worth.

Today's Girl Scouts not only enjoy camping and crafts, but they also explore math and science and learn about diversity, good citizenship, leadership and teamwork. Girl Scouting is the place where girls experience the fun, friendship and power of girls together. Girl Scouting has inspired more than 50 million girls and women since its founding in 1912.

Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois is a not-for-profit organization supported by various United Ways throughout the region. Girl Scouts is a Proud Partner of United Way.

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