



Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois receives USDA Challenge and Change grant

January 11 2013 8:47 AM

Glen Carbon, Illinois – Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois (GSSI) has received a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), in collaboration with Girl Scouts of the USA, to implement *Challenge and Change* projects in three southern Illinois communities.

Challenge and Change: Challenge Yourself, Change the World strengthens rural communities. Through these projects, girls become change-makers as they envision and start long-term community service projects in their very own communities. Girls begin with an initial day long training where they learn leadership, problem solving and entrepreneurial skills through a comprehensive curriculum. Led by trained facilitators, the girls discover what effective leadership looks like, connect with local experts and take action by digging into issues affecting their communities. After the training, girls recruit a community action team – including an adult who serves as their community champion – to turn their good idea into a sustainable, long-term project.

GSSI has selected three *Challenge and Change* projects. Each project will be funded up to \$5,000 by the USDA and supported by their local communities and other Girl Scouts in their area. The projects are:

City Park Path – Percy, IL This project will allow for people to have a safe place to go and exercise in Percy. The project centers on building a pathway around the city park for people to walk, enjoy the nature and the landscape and to watch their children play at the park. By creating a pathway that is pleasant to walk, jog or even to push a baby in a stroller on, people will be exercising and interacting with each other. Creating this pathway keeps people safe and from having to walk on the sidewalks near the highway.

Unity Point Learning Garden – Makanda, IL This project will address poor nutrition and obesity in children in the Makanda community. The goal of this project is to further

educate children about nutrition and healthy food choices by teaching kids how plants grow and where food comes from. The garden will not only provide a learning experience for the kids that will work in the garden but will also provide an educational curriculum for science and health classes.

Homework Pals – Anna, IL The goal of this project is to assist and encourage elementary school students to have strong literary skills such as reading, writing, literary analysis and critical thinking. In addition, students will be helped in other academic areas like math, science, history, music, computer skills and art. The goal for the project is to develop stronger readers who attain higher grades, higher scores on standardized tests and an increase the graduation rate from Anna-Jonesboro Community High School.

Challenge and Change aligns with the Girl Scout Leadership Development Program, where girls discover their full potential, connect with others in an increasingly diverse world and take action to solve problems and improve their communities. The *Challenge and Change* curriculum draws on extensive research in youth development, leadership and social entrepreneurship.

The Girl Scout Mission is: ***Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence and character who make the world a better place.*** 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 working together.

Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois serves 14,000 girls and 4,800 adult volunteers in more than 40 counties in southern Illinois. Girl Scouting has inspired more than 50 million girls and women since its founding in 1912. Girl Scouting is focused on providing a premier Girl Scout Leadership Experience for girls in the 21st century, while ensuring the traditions and values that have been core to Girl Scouting since its beginning remain strong and relevant.

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.

Also check us out at www.gsofsi.org or “Like” us on Facebook