

# Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois' United We Lead Gala a Tremendous Success

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GLEN CARBON – Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois held their annual United We Lead Gala on Saturday, September 10 in O’Fallon, Illinois. The event was a tremendous success, raising nearly \$120,000 for the organization.

The United We Lead Gala, themed The Girl Scout Difference this year, brings together a wide range of people who share a common goal – to empower today’s girls to become tomorrow’s leaders. Guests were entertained by musician Erin Bode, enjoyed a delicious meal, listened to first-hand experiences from current Girl Scouts, participated in various auctions, and heard from recent U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame inductee Dr. Sandra Magnus. Dr. Magnus is a former Girl Scout and a very decorated astronaut who hails from Belleville, Illinois. She spoke of her pre-college plan to eventually work for NASA and how her path to that goal evolved, discovering previously unknown opportunities along the way. Dr. Magnus commended Girl Scouts for providing girls with countless programs to explore what peaks their interests, and that girls should capitalize on these opportunities to chase their dreams.

A highlight of the evening was presenting the inaugural Distinguished Community Leader Award to Ralph and Donna Korte of Highland, Illinois. The Kortes have been a part of Girl Scouting in Southern Illinois for over 50 years. They’ve been involved in

hosting fundraising events, programs, membership, training, troop facilitation, and more. Donna alone has had 17 different titles within our council ranging from board member to day camp director. Ralph stepped up to the plate numerous times to organize past golf tournaments to benefit the council. Ralph and Donna are beyond deserving of this award that recognizes individuals who significantly contribute to the vision and growth of Girl Scouting in Southern Illinois.

“I am thrilled with the success of our fourth annual United We Lead Gala,” said Heidi Koehl Weaver, Director of Fund Development. “I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to our guests and generous supporters. Their belief in The Girl Scout Difference enables us to carry out our mission of building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.”

Plans are already underway for the fifth annual United We Lead Gala. Save the date – Saturday, September 9, 2023!

Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois serves nearly 5,000 girls and engages over 2,000 adult volunteers in 40 counties in Southern Illinois. **Call 800-345-6858 or email [customercare@gsfsi.org](mailto:customercare@gsfsi.org).** Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois is a not-for-profit organization supported by United Ways, businesses, and individual donors throughout the region.