

# Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois Say Two More Weeks to Get Your Cookies and Help Girls

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter  
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**SOUTHERN ILLINOIS** - The Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois are selling cookies for another two weeks, but there's a lot more at stake than Samoas.

Loretta Graham, CEO of the Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois, explained that the Girl Scout Cookie Program teaches skills from business ethics to team-building. For the scouts, the Cookie Program is just part of what they do to become leaders in the

community, and proceeds from cookie sales go back to the programs and projects they complete year-round.

“All of you great supporters, keep supporting the Girl Scouts, because there’s so much in that box of cookies,” Graham said. “Every time these girls are selling cookies, they’re learning business ethics, they’re learning how to start their own business, they’re learning how to deal with different cultures and different people, they’re learning diversity skills, they’re learning so much team-building. There’s so much when it comes to these girls and what they’re learning through the Girl Scout Cookie Program.”

The Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois is made up of 6,500 scouts, 3,000 volunteers and 40 counties in Illinois. In addition to the Cookie Program, they have several leadership opportunities, community service projects, badge programs and camps that are designed to help scouts explore their interests and reach their full potential.

Graham noted that many successful women got their start through Girl Scouts, and she believes the rising youth will “change the world” with the support they receive in the Girl Scouts organization.

“When it comes to our youth, all they need is a little opening, a little support, the right resources, and the sky is the limit,” she said. “They’re going to be our caretakers, our congressmen, our presidents. They’re going to be so much more. And I always say the Girl Scouts move at the speed of the girl because they’re ready and they have the guts — something that we don’t have nowadays — to make things happen. So we move at the speed of the girls and whatever comes next, we want to be right there to support them and make sure they have the resources to move forward.”

Graham points to the Girl Scouts’ founder, Juliette Gordon Low, as an example. Low started the Girl Scouts with 18 girls in 1912. The organization experienced financial difficulties and struggled to stay active. To help, Low sold a strand of pearls that she had received as a wedding gift to fund the Girl Scouts and keep them going strong.

Today, the Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois honor Low with the Pearl Society, which invites people to make recurring donations to the organization so girls who cannot afford the membership fee can still become Girl Scouts.

“I always say, every girl that wants to be a Girl Scout should be a Girl Scout, whether they can afford it or not. They should be a Girl Scout because we make leaders for tomorrow. Our success speaks for itself,” Graham said. “I think what’s different about the Girl Scouts is we’re not only leading girls that are going to lead the world, but they’re going to change the world. So much in our world needs to be changed, so much nowadays. And what I like about Girl Scouting is that all-girl environment where girls

feel very comfortable being who they are, bringing in their true authentic selves to the table without fear.”

For more information about the [Pearl Society](#) and local Girl Scouts troops, visit the [official Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois website at GSofSI.org](#). You can also [find cookies online](#) for two more weeks while Girl Scout Cookie Season continues.

“We build girls’ courage, confidence and character,” Graham added. “Watch our youth. There is no reason to doubt that it is going to be the youth that is going to shape this country where it needs to be.”