

November 2007



**Dear Girl Scouts, Parents, and Friends,**

I hope that this letter finds you well and enjoying the changing seasons of Michigan. We are changing at the Girl Scouts of Michigan Capital Council [GSMCC] as well. I am pleased to introduce myself to you as the new Chief Executive Officer at GSMCC. As you may know, Pam Sievers recently resigned from our council to accept another Girl Scout position in Japan working with girls of military families serving in the Pacific region. The Board of Directors offered me the position in late September, 2007.

I am excited about working with all of you to make Girl Scouting in our community the best leadership and development experience for girls and a worthwhile and valuable experience for our volunteers. The next year has many challenges and opportunities for us to grow individually and collectively as an organization. I write to update you on those happenings, announce a new leadership opportunity for girls, and provide news about the upcoming realignment [i.e. merger] of five Michigan Girl Scout councils [including the Girl Scouts of Michigan Capital Council] that is planned for October, 2008.

### **Latest Research Exploring Girls' Leadership**

This Fall the Girl Scout Research Institute [GSRI] published an enlightening report on girls and leadership. The report [for more information see [www.gsmcc.net](http://www.gsmcc.net)] highlights what leadership means to girls, how girls view leadership differently than boys, and identifies what factors are obstacles in girl leadership development. The GSRI found that many girls' ideas about leadership differ from the traditional "top-down" model that emphasizes authority, control and ego. Girls today define leadership as being a good listener, building consensus, and ensuring happiness for others.

The report explores how the field is moving toward a model that embraces youth actively participating in their own development by:

- Empowering them to participate in decision-making and civic involvement;



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- Recommending girls be involved in designing/implementing activities; and
- Asking girls to look at the impact they have today, not just as adults tomorrow.

## **Girl Advisory Committee Opportunity**

Taking this research to heart and being consistent with our value of programming “for girls, by girls”, I am forming a special Girl Advisory Committee. This advisory group will consist of GSMCC Girl Scouts in grades 8 through 12 and will meet at least three times over the next 10 months. The purpose of the group is to advise the CEO on how to keep Girl Scouting relevant, provide programming ideas, and offer girls a unique leadership experience. The Girl Advisory Group will also provide input on what girl issues the Girl Scouts of Michigan Capital Council should be discussing with local and state decision makers. Applications are available at [www.gsmcc.net](http://www.gsmcc.net) or call the Council at 517-699-9400 for one to be mailed to you. The application deadline is January 5, 2008.

## **Council Realignment**

As you may know, the Michigan Capital Council will be merging with the Mitten Bay, Huron Valley, Glowing Embers and Irish Hills Councils to form a new organization to serve Girl Scouts in central Michigan.

The purpose of the council realignment is to assist in the creation of high-capacity councils that have the funding, connections and scale to achieve their purpose. The realignment will strengthen Girl Scouting’s resources at all levels including fundraising, public relations, property, staffing, and volunteer support. All of us involved in the merger intend to increase opportunities for girls and maintain a high quality of service to Girl Scouts. Our new council will be pooling volunteer and staff resources, enabling us to increase the number of program events offered and the locations we can offer them in. It will also afford all girls the chance to meet more Girl Scouts.

## **Fall Forum Update**

We want to thank all of the volunteers who attended the Fall Forums. The forums gave us the opportunity to share with you the latest information on the realignment and, more importantly, hear what delegates and volunteers hope for in the new council. Some of the consistent themes shared at the meetings were:

- Provide girls the opportunity to network with more girls;
- Keep traditions: McCheer Off, All That Glitters, Polar Bear and Mom & Me camping weekends;
- Provide more programs with more variety and more accessibility;
- Keep strong connections with council staff;



- Have trainings in the communities where leaders live;
- Keep access to a store within a 30 minute drive;
- Keep Camp Deer Trails as well as other resident camps;
- Offer camping experiences that are more progressive by age group;
- Keep Volunteer Connections, The Source and the website as resources;
- Maintain Service Units;
- Keep adult volunteer recognitions!

If you were unable to attend the Fall Forums but would still like to contribute, the questions asked are on our website, [www.gsmcc.net](http://www.gsmcc.net). Email your responses to [kchase@gsmcc.net](mailto:kchase@gsmcc.net). These comments will be shared with the GSMCC Board of Directors and all volunteers serving on Council Realignment Committees.

**Camp Deer Trails 70th Anniversary  
August 8-9, 2008**

This year we celebrate the 70th anniversary of Camp Deer Trails. This is an opportunity to look back at all we have done through the years and also look forward to what the future can hold. We are looking for all campers [and all future campers!] to invite them to the party. If you know contact information of campers, please email Amy Hough at [ahough@gsmcc.net](mailto:ahough@gsmcc.net).

**Thank You for Supporting  
Girl Scouts**

The Girl Scouts of Michigan Capital Council is a prudent steward of dollars given to support girls in our community, balancing our desire to do more programming and offer more services when funding is not growing at a similar rate. GSMCC is funded from a variety of revenue sources. The largest source of operating funds, 61 percent, comes from product sales [cookies and fall product campaigns]. In contrast, only 6 percent of our operating budget comes from local United Ways, an amount that has been reduced dramatically in the last few years. [Thank you for supporting your local United Way campaign as Girl Scouts is a United Way agency.] We receive 11 percent

**Key Dates**

Cookie Kickoff: January 12, 2008

McCheer Off: January 20, 2008

Sneak a Taste: March 11, 2008

Annual Meeting: April 22, 2008

Camp Deer Trails Anniversary:  
August 8-9, 2008



from grants, corporate sponsors and private donors. Program fees at 18 percent and a small investment income round out revenue sources.

Your gift goes a long way toward keeping our programs affordable and accessible. Each year we also support girls who have the enthusiasm and energy for Girl Scouting but may not have the financial resources to participate in scout events. The requests for scholarship assistance always out pace our ability to help.

***Thank you for speaking out and promoting Girl Scouting – it raises awareness. Thank you for encouraging your daughter or a young girl to participate in Girl Scouting – it helps build leaders. Thank you for financially supporting Girl Scouts – it invests in the future.***

As the season turns colder, I hope that the warmth of family and friends brightens your days.

Yours in Girl Scouting,

*Ruth Hohl Borger*

Ruth Hohl Borger, Ed.D.  
Chief Executive Officer  
Girl Scouts of Michigan Capital Council  
rborger@gsmcc.net

P.S. Please think of Girl Scouts as you make your end-of year donations. Your gift goes a long way to building girls of courage, confidence, and character.

