

More Than a Box of Cookies

Written by Toni Daylor



Annaleigh Bonds of Bay Hill earns a Gold Award, the highest achievement one can receive from Girl Scouts.

For some people, the only connection they have with Girl Scouts is

Girl Scouts of the USA's longevity and relevancy are evidenced by the celebration of its centennial anniversary.

When Juliette Gordon Low invited 18 girls into her Savannah, Ga., home at the turn of the 20th century,

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She had been introduced to the Girl Guides program while in London, where she met Lord Robert Baden

Powell, the founder of the Scout Movement. After a brief involvement with Girl Guides (the female counterpart

Diversity was an important component of Juliette's plan, so she recruited her first troop from a cross section

One hundred years later, this dynamic group of women — from girls age 5 through alumnae well in their

The Girl Scout experience generally begins when a girl joins a Daisy troop (Juliette's childhood nickname

Scouts earn merit badges as they master a variety of skills, engage in activities and perform community

There are milestone awards that recognize individual, larger-scope projects. Once girls achieve the Bronze

The Gold Award is the equivalent in honor and prestige of the Boy Scouts' Eagle Award. Senior Girl Scouts

Bay Hill resident Annaleigh Bonds recently earned a Gold Award for her service project that benefited Holy

As a third-generation Girl Scout, there was no doubt Annaleigh would achieve the organization's highest

She joined Girl Scouts as a Daisy out of Holy Family Catholic School in the Dr. Win Service Unit.

"My mom encouraged me to be a part of Girl Scouts from the beginning," Annaleigh said.

When she enrolled at LHPS, she joined a troop that met in College Park. About six years ago, the group

"My mother was a [Girl Scout] leader, and I have such fond memories of that time," Becky said, referring to her mother, Orange Tree resident Carolyn Bourge. "I didn't want to see the troop go," she said. "It was a good

As a result of the support of their parents and the girls' determination, six out of eight earned their individual

In addition to Girl Scouts, Annaleigh was a cheerleader and involved in LHPS's spring musical. Despite

"I never thought I should quit Girl Scouts; it really wasn't an option in my mind," Annaleigh said. "It was so

Annaleigh hopes to follow in her mother and grandmother's footsteps and become a Girl Scout leader.

Another benefit of Girl Scouting is the lifelong friendships that are forged.

"I've met most of my friends through Girl Scouts," said Jessica Gaffin, who attends Dr. Phillips High School.

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Jessica's sisters, Katie, 14, and Madelyn, 6, are also Girl Scouts. But the family involvement does not stop there.

Each year, Dr. Win sponsors a signature event known as Thinking Day, which is designed to expose Girl Scouts to various topics and activities.



Girl Scouts is a family affair for Diamond Cove residents (back, l. to r.) Jessica, Katie, (front, l. to r.) Jane and Madelyn.

The Girl Scout model is designed to encourage girls to grow in responsibility and organizational skills as they learn to lead and work with others.

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“We really rely on the older girls to help organize and lead the larger activities like Camporee,” Janet said.

“I love the whole independence part of Girl Scouts,” Jessica said. “We are taught that we are able to imp

“We try to do a community service event each month,” Janet said. “It can be something as simple as col