

Girl Scouts of the USA: Building Confidence and Advancing Leadership Among Young Women

CASE STUDY



CHALLENGE

Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA), which is the world's largest leadership organization for girls, is dedicated to building girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place.

Research shows that girls who participate in girl-serving organizations, such as the GSUSA, have the highest levels of confidence. An estimated 53% of female entrepreneurs were once Girl Scouts. And a consistent majority of women elected to the US Senate and House of Representatives — as well as all 3 women who to date have served as US Secretary of State — are Girl Scout alums.

Despite impressive generation-to-generation strides in feminism, girls experience a significant drop in confidence at the onset of adolescence. *Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America* — a national gender and self-esteem survey performed by the American Association of University Women — finds that girls are less confident than boys in every age category.

These challenges unfortunately carry over into the professional realm. Struggles for women's rights have paved the way for today's young women to have more possibilities than ever in some areas of the world. However there is still a very long way to go, and women still occupy only a small fraction of the top leadership positions in government and the corporate world.

CLIENT: Girl Scouts of the USA

LOCATION: Headquartered in New York, NY with over 100 local councils nationwide

SIZE: 300+ employees



SOLUTION

The Center for Creative Leadership (CCL®) partnered with GSUSA's Hornet's Nest Council (GSHNC) to develop a dynamic initiative – the Young Women's Leadership Institute (YWLI) – that meets the need to nurture and cultivate strong, confident young women leaders.

The YWLI, which benefits from CCL's experience creating research-driven, leadership initiatives for young women, includes programs that combine the best of leadership development with engaging themed content. Core values, personality, career exploration, healthy relationships, communication, and community-building are top content categories.

The institute offers a number of themed retreats and workshops for young women that build on each other, with incentives encouraging girls to return over the years, including engaging and networking with local female role models in the community.

The experiential learning programs feature:

- » Engaging and interactive sessions
- » Themed retreats and workshops
- » Improvisational acting classes, vision boards, rock climbing, equine experiences, and other boundary-pushing opportunities
- » Skits recreating real-life work and social dilemmas

Each program reflects 4 consistent YWLI themes – based on CCL's women's development research – that help participants better understand themselves as individuals and as future leaders. The 4 themes are:

Authenticity: Healthy alignment between participants' core values and behaviors that can reenergize work and home lives, and create a clear understanding of strengths and priorities.

Self-clarity: Participants' view of themselves that reflects their preferences, priorities, strengths, and weaknesses, resulting in heightened awareness of who they are and how they fit into the world.

Connection: Networks, support systems, and community, which include role models and mentors, that bring meaning to participants' lives, foster effectiveness, and serve as sources of encouragement and inspiration.

Agency: Feeling empowered with a positive vision for the future that instills the confidence to act on personal aspirations, and advocate for and be oneself.

RESULTS

The YWLI cultivates leadership skills and self-confidence for young women at a crucial time in their lives, while guiding them to a fulfilling and rewarding future. The benefits to young women participating in the program emerge within the earliest days of the transformational YWLI experience, and continue throughout their life journey:

- » Confidence in leadership skills
- » Understanding of themselves and their core values
- » Courage to stand up for their beliefs
- » Appreciation of different preferences, personalities, and positions
- » Insights into life goals and steps needed to achieve goals
- » Encouragement to think differently – individually and as a team member
- » Conflict-resolution abilities
- » Self-empowerment across situations
- » Drive to share learnings with other young women
- » Meaningful community contributions

Locally, young women's leadership programming creates positive ripples of change in our communities. Globally, the urgency of this work is undeniable, and the future is full of possibilities. The YWLI carries out CCL's mission by serving an important audience, girls, and extending our research and evaluation efforts in exciting new directions.

PARTNER WITH US

We can work with you to develop a custom women's leadership development program designed to equip women of all ages with the knowledge and skills needed to have greater impact and broader influence within their communities and organizations.

Learn more: ccl.org/women

We can't come close to touching the level of knowledge, experience, and background that the staff at CCL have. One big focus for me as we develop this institute is making sure that we are really able to serve any girl that wants to participate. We're working really hard to make sure this is available to every girl, everywhere."

- Program Manager,
Local Girl Scouts Council

The Center for Creative Leadership (CCL®) is a top-ranked, global, nonprofit provider of leadership development. Over the past 50 years, we've worked with organizations of all sizes from around the world, including more than 2/3 of the Fortune 1000. Our cutting-edge solutions are steeped in extensive research and our work with hundreds of thousands of leaders at all levels.

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