



*Join us in welcoming our March guest blogger, Neliana Ferraro. A decade after she represented Girl Scouts of Central and Western Massachusetts in Washington, D.C., Neliana reflects on the staying power of Girl Scouts. Her bio follows this post.*

### **Creating our future: Celebrating 110 years of Girl Scouts**

The true staying power of Girl Scouts became clear to me when, as a high school student, I went to Washington, D.C. for the 100th anniversary celebration as a representative for Girl Scouts of Central and Western Massachusetts. Not only did I meet so many amazing girls my age who were already making a difference in their community, but I also learned just how many leaders in our Nation's Capital had been Girl Scouts themselves. I was able to see the future and the legacy of the organization at the same time.

Now, as we add another decade to the anniversary count, it's clear *why* so many of these girls and women chose Girl Scouts as the organization to launch their passions and careers.

Girl Scouts helps you find out what kind of girl you want to be. It proves there is no "one size fits all" path to success.

If you dream of becoming a fashion designer, there's a badge for that. You get to explore what the industry is actually like, rather than a glamorized version portrayed in movies and magazines.

If you want to become an engineer, there's likely a college in your area partnering with Girl Scouts to offer a day camp. You can explore fun STEM activities and talk to people in the field.

If you've always wanted to learn archery, you can go to an archery lesson or spend a few weeks exploring that and other fun pursuits at Girl Scout summer camp.

If you want to really take a deep dive into your spiritual life, there are religious awards and medals to earn through study and contemplation.

If you feel called to make a lasting difference in your community, you can plan and execute a project as part of the Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards.

Girl Scouts shows girls that you can be anything. You choose your own path, and Girl Scouts is there to provide those critical opportunities that light the way.

I personally had so many opportunities because of Girl Scouts, everything from co-founding the Girl Leadership Board to getting a summer job as a bank teller out of high school.

I learned about all kinds of career paths, and my Gold Award project even helped fuel my ambition to become a news reporter. Even after deciding to leave my dream career, I knew my activities with Girl Scouts had given me the leadership skills to adapt and find a new passion in marketing.

Girl Scouts will continue to exist as long as there are girls who are driven to find the best version of themselves. And knowing our girls, that will be another 110 years.

*Neliana Ferraro served as a Girl Member-at-Large on the Girl Scouts of Central and Western Massachusetts Board of Directors, helped found the Girl Leadership Board, and represented Girl Scouts during the 100th anniversary celebration in Washington, D.C. She earned her Gold Award, encouraging her community to remember the tragedy and heroism that occurred on September 11, 2001.*

*After graduating from Quinnipiac University, Ferraro became a news producer and reporter in Vermont and upstate New York. In 2019, she took a position at Baystate Health as a digital content coordinator. She lives in Chicopee with her husband and rabbit. In February, they welcomed their first child, Bruno, into the world. In her free time, she manages her rabbit's social media empire, teaches Faith Formation classes, and gets crafty.*