

Discover

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Connect

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Take Action

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Leadership

Girl Scouts®
San Jacinto Council

2007 Annual Report



DISCOVER

As a Girl Scout discovers her world, she:

Develops a strong sense of self

Gains practical and healthy life skills

Strengthens her values

San Augustine, Texas doesn't have a movie theatre. It doesn't even have a Wal-Mart. But what it does have are two women who have worked over the past 20 years to keep Girl Scouting alive and well in the area.

Falbert Garrett and Nina Smith both grew up in San Augustine and both are longtime teachers at San Augustine Elementary School. Neither woman had the opportunity to participate in the program as a girl. "When I was in school, there were Boy Scouts but not Girl Scouts," says Falbert.

"My younger sister was a Girl Scout," says Nina. "There wasn't time or money for me to be one."

As adults, they have worked to make sure that other girls have the opportunity to be Girl Scouts. Both women got involved in the program through their daughters. They didn't serve as troop leaders initially, but it wasn't long before they took on a leadership role. Although their daughters grew up and had daughters of their own, Falbert and Nina have continued to mentor and serve a new generation of girls – including their Girl Scout granddaughters.

"I enjoy the troop meetings," says Nina. "I like being with the girls and their friends." Currently, Nina is the co-leader for a Junior troop and a Daisy troop at the school, as well as serving as the troop manager for the fall product and cookie sales. "I am so appreciative of the other leaders at San Augustine Elementary School," she says. "Without their support, we wouldn't be able to do what we're doing."

Falbert, who leads a Brownie troop at the school and serves on the service unit leadership team, seconds the sentiment. "We recruit any teacher who says yes to being a volunteer. It's a challenge to find enough volunteers some years but we keep trying."

Nina credits Falbert for keeping her involved over the years. "Falbert is so dedicated to her job at the school and to Girl Scouts. She's very determined and very persuasive!"

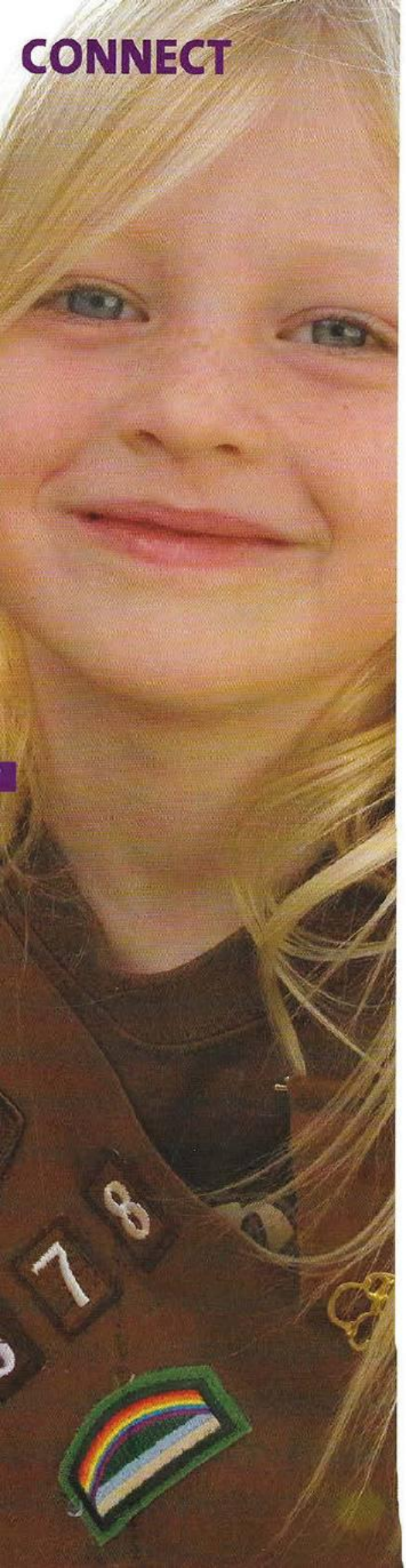
"I like children better than grown-ups," jokes Falbert. "I keep going because I think it's important to the girls. They learn to lead and they learn to follow. I think it's important for girls to have girl time." To ensure that all the girls in the area have the opportunity to get together, she invited Juliette Girl Scouts, or those not affiliated with a troop, to her house last Christmas. They had a three-day sleepover. "I taught them how to build a fire and cook pancakes," Falbert says. "We had a good time."

"There aren't many activities in San Augustine for girls," says Nina. "One thing that has kept girls involved is our travel." The troop has been to the zoo in Houston and taken a train ride from Rusk to Palestine. They have also been to San Antonio and to Shreveport.

"I like teaching because the minds of children are wide open," says Nina. "I like Girl Scouts for the same reason. We show these girls they can do and be anything."







CONNECT

As a Girl Scout connects with others in a global community, she:

Forms caring relationships

Promotes cooperation and team building

Embraces diversity

The special bonds formed through participation in the Girl Scout equitation program are not only between two-legged mammals. "The horses are like old friends to these Girl Scouts," says volunteer Diana Beeman. "They teach the girls about hard work and about what it means to be truly responsible for something."

Diana is the coordinator for the equitation program at Camp Misty Meadows. In this role she oversees the equitation badge programs and the Love, Hug and Groom program, which gives the youngest Girl Scouts the opportunity to interact with horses. She also helps manage the SPURS (Super People Using Riding Skills) program in which girls are trained to work with younger riders.

She got involved with the program after her Girl Scout troop came to Camp Misty Meadows to go riding. "We fell in love with it," says Diana. "My daughter Allie talked the girls into taking the SPURS training and four of them started coming regularly. I took lessons right along with the girls."

After Allie graduated, Diana remained active. "I enjoy seeing that shy little girl who comes in a little scared and watching them grow up to walk in a stall without any qualms. They get so much confidence in themselves."

She sees the girls in the SPURS program growing as leaders as they mentor younger girls. "I remember one girl in particular who was kind of angry and withdrawn. It was a joy to watch her find her place and become a true leader."

Aside from the personal satisfaction she gets from being around horses, Diana knows that the program is making a real impact. "We give girls a safety net. If they are involved in something good, they're less likely to seek out something bad."

One person who can confirm that positive effect is college student and SPURS volunteer Crissy Jonson.

"The most fun I ever had in Girl Scouts was with SPURS. I had a lot of interaction with other girls and I became more independent. I'm in school to be a teacher, and I want to become a principal someday. People told me that I was really good with kids when I was a SPUR and that played a big part in where I am in my life right now."

Crissy is busy with school and with her job, but she still makes time to head out to Camp Misty Meadows. "I love the SPURS program, and I know that without enough adult volunteers the program couldn't continue. That's a big motivator for me because I know the benefits."

"I'm not too far removed in age from the girls," says Crissy. "When I was just starting out in SPURS, I wasn't as comfortable as everyone else so I can really understand where a lot of them are coming from. It's fun to watch them follow the same path I did."



