Working Together: Role Models and Girl Scouts
Acknowledgments

This project is truly a partnership, and we would like to thank our partners at the Girl Scout councils that shared their time, experience, and lessons learned. We would like to acknowledge the Girl Scouts of Central Maryland, Girl Scouts of Central Texas, Girl Scouts of Northern California, and Girl Scouts of West Central Florida who reviewed earlier drafts of this guide. We are especially grateful to the Noyce Foundation for recognizing Techbridge’s potential to impact girls beyond those in our local community. Through their generous support, the Noyce Foundation and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation have helped make this project possible.

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This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant No. HRD-1153882. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the National Science Foundation.
In this guide...

This guide is designed to help Girl Scout councils recruit and prepare role models to inspire girls in science and engineering. We outline key ideas when developing a program or event involving role models. Included with these ideas are tips for implementation. While this guide has been designed with input from Girl Scout staff and volunteers, we encourage you to tailor our suggestions to meet the needs of your council and role models and the interests of your girls.

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Visit our website for additional resources for role models.

techbridgegirls.org
Role Models Matter

For the past century Girl Scout leaders have shared a mission to empower girls by providing opportunities to develop interests and skills that will impact their futures. For many girls, opportunities to explore science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) are few and far between. Generation STEM, a study by the Girl Scout Research Institute, reveals that 74% of teen girls indicated an interest in STEM, especially when exposed to STEM fields and a compelling adult network of STEM professionals.

Bringing science and engineering to life is an important step in creating excitement about STEM careers. Providing girls the opportunity to meet science and engineering professionals helps keep their curiosity and interest alive and exposes them to careers they may have never known about. By introducing role models and engaging your girls in hands-on STEM activities, you can give them a glimpse of what their futures can hold. Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) emphasizes the importance of role models. Through Journeys, GSUSA highlights the power of exploring the many roles that women can play in society and encourages Girl Scouts to connect with meaningful role models from their communities.

Techbridge was launched in 2000 by Chabot Space & Science Center in Oakland, California with the mission to inspire girls in science, technology, and engineering. Our vision is to create a future where girls and other underrepresented groups will play a larger role in these fields and where all girls will have the opportunity to explore the wonders of science and engineering. Since its inception, Techbridge has served more than 5,000 girls in after-school and summer programs in the San Francisco Bay Area; and through partnerships with Girl Scout councils, Techbridge has reached thousands of girls nationwide.

Our role model program is one of our most important—and impactful—parts of Techbridge. Interacting with girls one-on-one, role models share their passion for their professions, answer questions, dispel misconceptions about working in STEM fields, and inspire girls to study and pursue a career in STEM.

To learn more about Techbridge or our partnership with Girl Scout councils visit techbridgegirls.org.

“The work of today is the history of tomorrow, and we are its makers.”

—Juliette Gordon Low
The Role Model Difference

Research shows that role models are important for expanding career options and exposing girls to STEM careers. While most young children—girls and boys—say that they like science, differences in confidence and interest in STEM begin emerging in middle school. In high school, girls may enroll in as many advanced math and science courses as boys do and perform just as well, but fewer high school girls pursue technical majors in college, particularly in engineering and computer science. Introducing girls to role models can change these outcomes.

The current representation of women and other underrepresented groups in STEM fields remains alarmingly low:

- The U.S. Department of Commerce reports that only 14% of engineers are women and that 5% of STEM workers overall are from underrepresented groups.\(^i\)\(^{ii}\)
- At the college level, women account for only 18% of those earning a bachelor’s degree in engineering.\(^i\)

There is a need for role models, and they do make a difference:

- Less than 50% of high school girls know a woman in a STEM career.\(^i\)
- 93% of Techbridge program participants say that field trips and role models made them more interested in working in technology, science, or engineering.\(^i\)
- Exposing girls to female role models helps to counteract negative stereotypes about women and STEM.\(^i\)\(^{vi}\)\(^{vii}\)
Finding Role Models

One of the first questions we are asked by Girl Scout councils is: “Can you help us find role models?” Scientists and engineers are in your community, whether you live in a rural area or an urban city. Role models may be neighbors and friends or people who work in local businesses, universities, and museums. Don’t be shy about asking someone to be a role model; many people just need an invitation. Once you start, you’ll find it gets easier to ask.

Look Around Your Community.

Girl Scout Resources

- Start with the people you know—Girl Scout members. Let the families and teachers of the girls in your troop or after-school program know that you are looking for role models.
- Girl Scouts has a tradition of older girls helping younger girls. Enlist Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors in your council to host an engineering challenge to serve as role models and show how fun and exciting STEM can be.
- There are more than 59 million Girl Scout alumnae in the U.S. Is there someone from your council who benefited from Girl Scouting and welcomes the chance to pass it forward?
- Contact your council’s development staff. They are connected to funders from national and local businesses with outreach interests.

Local Resources

- Local businesses and corporations know that their long-term success lies with the next generation. Your girls may be their future computer programmers, mechanical engineers, and product designers. Start with the outreach department or human resources division to help you find the right people for your event.
- Local government agencies and utilities have scientists and engineers working in departments such as Forensics or Public Works. Check out your local utility companies including wastewater engineering firms or waste and recycling organizations that have interesting careers to share.
- University faculty and students can be especially appealing and effective role models. Student sections of the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) and other STEM groups are committed to outreach.
- Staff at technology and science museums not only make fascinating role models but may also offer behind-the-scenes experiences at their sites and insights into emerging fields in science and technology.

Professional Organizations

- The National Girls Collaborative Project links organizations that serve girls and can help you find role models. They also offer mini-grants which can fund projects involving role models. Look for your region’s collaborative at ngcproject.org.
- FabFems.org is a growing database of role model profiles. You can search by location, career field, and other keyword interests. Looking for someone to help lead an engineering activity for a troop, visit an after-school program, or support a summer program? Find her at fabfems.org.
- Look online for professional groups that have a mission to do outreach. For example, the Association for Women in Science and SWE have role models who are eager to volunteer and who are passionate about their fields. Reach out to groups such as the National Society of Black Engineers and the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers who have role models from diverse backgrounds.
Tell Everyone About Your Event.

- If you are planning a large scale event or a small gathering, get the word out early by posting your request for role models on your council’s website and in weekly email blasts.
- Request volunteers and role models from listservs of professional groups.
- Write a blog about the importance of role models and highlight an upcoming opportunity where you will need role models.
- Highlight successful outreach efforts in newsletters and annual reports and include a shout-out to the role models who participated in the event. You can include a request for additional volunteers for future opportunities.
- Put up flyers and posters of upcoming events at colleges and universities and contact their STEM departments.
- Use social media such as Facebook and Twitter to get the word out that you need role models.

Go Digital.

If you can’t find a role model to come in person, use videos of role models. Harness the power of technology to expose your girls to an array of role models from different backgrounds, careers, and disciplines. These videos can be used during a program or event to introduce a new career or an activity – or to make connections to real-world issues. Some resources include:

- girlscouts.org/imagineengineering  
  Interviews and profiles of women in engineering
- engineeryourlife.org  
  A guide to engineering for high school girls
- dotdiva.org  
  Profiles of women in computer programming
- engineergirl.org  
  Highlights opportunities for girls in engineering
- women.nasa.gov/a2i  
  An inspiring site profiling the women of NASA
- pbskids.org/designsquad/video/heroes  
  Video profiles of women and men highlighting engineering projects
Getting Started!

Good projects take time to plan; think about teaming up with another council member to plan your role model visit from start to finish. If you’ve been involved with any kind of production, like the school play, you know that the thundering applause at curtain’s close wouldn’t happen without all the hard work backstage. Get off to a good start by keeping track of all the moving pieces.

1 Invite Role Models.
Role models, whether they’re STEM professionals or college students, are busy people. Your invitation should make a compelling case for their participation in your event. When communicating with role models, be sure to explain how important their role is to making an event meaningful for girls. Follow up with a friendly email, note, or phone call.

Include:
• Testimonials or stories from girls and role models from past events.
• Research on the importance of role models.
• Descriptions of how role models benefit from the experience.
• The time commitment for your events and training.
• Training dates.
• Details about the event.

2 Track Role Models.
Keeping track of the following details in a database will be helpful in making successful matches between role models and events and groups of girls. Your database may include:
• Notes about role model participation in past trainings and outreach events.
• Personal information like schooling, professional background, gender and ethnicity.
• Contact information and preferences.

3 Track Partner Organizations.
Keeping track of partner organizations will provide you with a database of key community partners.
• Keep a record of the dates they host a field trip or event.
• Store contacts of employees who are interested or have participated in outreach.
• Note any publications (including websites, blogs, and social media) where you can market events or post a thank you.

TIP
Some councils use Personify, a Customer Relationship Management System. You can access Personify to view troop and “customer” information, as well as maintain and organize valuable data regarding use of role models. You can also use something as simple as an Excel spreadsheet to keep track of your role models.
“I learned how many ways you can make things green, and that I want to be a green engineer when I grow up.”

– Girl Scout
Role Model Training

Role models can make a world of difference to the girls you serve; prepare them well so that they know how to effectively engage girls. You can convey the information that a role model needs to be successful by leading her through an interactive role model training. Preparing role models helps create a successful event for all the participants. Role models who have been trained report that they are more comfortable and prepared to interact with the girls and are more likely to continue to do outreach.

Role Models Need to Know:
- How to interact with girls and inspire them in STEM careers.
- What kind of messages they should share with girls about STEM.
- What works and what doesn’t in leading or assisting with a hands-on activity.

Formats for Training:
- If your event is on site at the role model’s company, you might try a one-hour lunchtime training at the workplace.
- For an all-day outreach event, consider a half-day weekend or evening training where you practice the hands-on science and engineering activities and go over techniques for working with girls.
- Some councils, when they have an established pipeline of role models, hold quarterly trainings to avoid overscheduling.

Training Option:
How you structure the training depends on the nature of your event and on the needs and availability of the role models. In your training, we recommend you run through the elements of a typical role model event. We strongly encourage you to do a hands-on activity with your role models so they have first-hand experience with the activity and learn where to anticipate challenges. If you have the time to do a hands-on activity with your participants, go for Training Option 1. If not, you can do a more condensed training by showcasing successful role models using Option 2.
Training Option 1: Role Model Training with Hands-on Activity (2 HRS.)

Welcome and Introduction. 5 MIN.
Share your background and your work at your Girl Scout council. Did you have a role model who made a difference in your life? Invite the participants to introduce themselves so that everyone gets to know who is in the room. If your group exceeds 10, you may want the role models to introduce themselves at their tables.

Icebreaker. 10 MIN.
Start the training with an icebreaker that sets the tone. Review the activity by discussing why it is important to start with icebreakers when working with girls. We sometimes hear that leaders or role models want to leave out icebreakers in the interest of time, but they are more than just fun and set the stage for a role model’s success.

Icebreakers help role models:
- Make girls feel more comfortable with one another and with the role models.
- Introduce new scientific topics, vocabulary, or careers.
- Gauge girls’ level of background knowledge on a particular topic.

Visit our website at techbridgegirls.org for sample icebreakers.

FOCUS ON STEM MESSAGES
“Difficult...boring...just for boys.” This may be the way some girls describe engineering, but with the right experiences girls can learn to see engineering as fun and engaging. Your role models can help combat stereotypes by highlighting the creative and collaborative nature of STEM - areas where your girls may shine. When helping your role models develop their introduction, share the following tips to help role models cast a positive light on their professions.

- Girls want to make a difference in the world. Let them know how engineers and scientists make a positive impact on society and the world.
- Engineers and scientists are creative problem-solvers and help shape the future.
- Be dynamic! Your enthusiasm and passion for your work will be contagious, and will inspire girls to follow in your footsteps.
- Highlight scientific and technological inventions by women and minorities.
- Discuss overcoming struggles and challenges.
- Avoid using industry jargon; this may turn off girls if it’s over their heads.
- Long presentations can disengage girls quickly. Keep presentations short and include pictures.
Make the Case. 5 MIN.

Share experiences and research about why it is important to get more girls interested in STEM. The following data is from the Girl Scout Research Institute’s 2012 Generation STEM report.

The good news and the not so good...

- 74% of high school girls across the country are interested in the fields and subjects of STEM.
- Only 36% of girls with an interest in STEM have participated in STEM activities outside of school. Only 13% of girls with little stated interest in STEM have participated in STEM activities outside of school.
- 57% of those surveyed say that girls their age don’t consider a career in STEM.
- African American and Latina girls have a high degree of interest in STEM, high confidence, and a strong work ethic, but few supports and less exposure to STEM.

Role Model Introduction. 15 MIN.

Discuss how role models can make connections with the girls through sharing information about themselves and their lives outside of work. It may be hard for some professionals to describe what they do to a younger group of girls. It’s helpful for role models to practice their introductions and share feedback with one another.

During their introductions, encourage role models to:

- Make it personal. Share stories from their work and school experiences.
- Address challenges and triumphs they have experienced in their career.
- Highlight the positives about their work or studies.
- Use kid-friendly language.
- Share their academic and career path.
- Show how engineers and scientists can change the world, and relate their work to the girls’ knowledge and experiences.

ACADEMIC & CAREER GUIDANCE

Encourage role models to talk about their academic path.

Offering academic and career guidance can help girls navigate their course. This guidance might include describing coursework and the support they had to make it through. Encourage girls to start study groups, find an internship at a company they find interesting, or look into advanced math and science courses at their school. Summer programming or camps can be a great opportunity to explore budding interests in STEM.

Many girls may not know how they will afford college, so information about scholarships and financial aid is important, especially for students who will be the first in their families to attend college.
Strategies for Working Effectively with Girls. 15 MIN.

Share with the participants that supporting girls’ exploration and discoveries is an important aspect of their experience. Through questioning and feedback strategies role models can help foster a growth mindset, where girls develop the understanding that through effort and determination they will grow and succeed.

During the hands-on activity, encourage role models to:

- Give positive and specific feedback.
- Use open-ended questions.
- Promote inquiry by encouraging girls to problem-solve and think critically.
- Practice “hands-off” facilitation where the role model uses questioning to get girls back on track.
- Make connections to careers.

**GIVING FEEDBACK**

Feedback can motivate and instill confidence in girls. Timely feedback helps them understand what they’re doing while they are doing it - so don’t wait until your closing discussion to review. Verbal feedback for younger groups can often be misunderstood, so consider using a demonstration to clarify the feedback. For example, younger girls may understand how triangular-shaped elements can be used to strengthen a structure if it is demonstrated.

Keep in mind how much feedback you are giving and allow others to chime in as appropriate. Be sure to provide a little “think time” to give girls an opportunity to respond.

Give feedback that:

- Is specific, provides guidance, and reflects back what the girls are doing and how they can meet the challenge. Don’t just say, “You’re so smart! I know you can succeed.” Instead praise how she is trying different approaches or designs to complete the activity.
- Does not compare the work of one girl against another’s.
- Helps girls think about their process and achieve their goals, and shows that their effort and persistence will make a difference.

Here are a few sentence starters to use:

- I really like how you tried different ideas…
- I saw you were using a lot of effort when…
- This is really interesting because…

**THE IMPORTANCE OF QUESTIONING**

The questions we pose to girls during a hands-on activity can help them figure things out for themselves and think critically about their work. Encourage role models to ask open-ended questions that have more than one answer. This will help girls solve a problem or think through the challenge. In this atmosphere, girls will feel encouraged to ask their own questions – it’s all part of the scientific process!

Sample questions:

- Could you explain your design to me? How did you come up with it?
- I notice that you’re … Could you tell me more about that?
- What changes would you recommend to improve your design?
- What would happen if …?
- Did you get the result you were expecting? Why or why not?
- What are other possible outcomes?
- What are the applications for this?
Working Together: Role Models and Girl Scouts

6

Hands-on Activity. 50 MIN.
Lead participants through a hands-on activity that they may use. This will give them a chance to reflect on what kind of facilitation strategies work and what doesn’t work to engage girls.

During the hands-on activity, encourage role models to:
- Make connections to careers.
- Show how the activity relates to the real world.
- Emphasize the engineering design process.
- Highlight collaboration.

7

Reflection. 15 MIN.
To close your training, lead the role models through a debrief of the hands-on activity, modeling for them the importance of making real-world connections.

When reflecting on the hands-on activity, encourage the role models to:
- Discuss how the girls handled challenges.
- Help the girls see how the activity relates to real-world situations.
- Relate science and engineering careers to the activity.
- Discuss how the girls might apply what they have learned in and outside of school.

8

Training Evaluation. 5 MIN.
Gather information from participants about how helpful they found the training. This will help you understand what works well and how you can improve your training next time. A sample role model training survey is available at the Techbridge website.

CASE STUDY
A case study can be a description of role model interactions at an outreach event. Sharing case studies during a role model training is an effective way to explore important facilitation principles. For additional resources, visit techbridgegirls.org.

Training Option 2: Role Model Training with Case Studies (1 HR.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5 MINUTES</th>
<th>10 MINUTES</th>
<th>5 MINUTES</th>
<th>15 MINUTES</th>
<th>10 MINUTES</th>
<th>10 MINUTES</th>
<th>5 MINUTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome &amp; Introduction</td>
<td>Icebreaker</td>
<td>Make the Case</td>
<td>Effective Strategies</td>
<td>Share Case Studies, Stories or Video of Successful Role Models</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“The way engineers help people is just amazing and to learn about someone in that job is more amazing.”

– Girl Scout
Show’s On!

Interactions with role models require the right combination of academic and career guidance and social engagement. You will want to plan a schedule that is well paced and holds the girls’ interest. Whether you are planning an all-day event with SWE for 200 Girl Scouts on a university campus or an event for 15 girls in an after-school program, we recommend following a schedule that incorporates the essential elements below. These segments reinforce one another to create the best possible experience for girls and role models.

Role Model Visit: Sample Schedule (1.5 HRS.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 MINUTES</td>
<td>Welcome &amp; Icebreaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 MINUTES</td>
<td>Role Model Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 MINUTES</td>
<td>Hands-on Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 MINUTES</td>
<td>Reflection and Q&amp;A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each element of the role model visit builds upon the others. To strengthen the impact of the role model check out the following tips:

- **Icebreakers** should be interactive and fun. If the role models are not yet comfortable leading the activity or icebreaker, pair them with an experienced leader or volunteer.
- For the **introduction**, encourage the role models to share personal stories that engage the girls and help them connect to the role model’s careers. Girls enjoy hearing about family, hobbies, dreams and aspirations, and humorous stories that dispel stereotypes.
- Make it real: role models can bring in **objects and pictures** to show how their work impacts the world, and talk about the creativity engineers and scientists use to solve problems.
- The **hands-on activity** is where girls can experience connections to STEM careers. Encourage the role models to insert information about their work throughout the activity. If a direct connection to a career can’t be drawn, the role models can highlight general concepts such as the engineering design process, scientific method, or importance of collaboration.
- Watch the clock. Hands-on activities tend to run over, so it’s important to save time for **reflection** at every role model event. It’s a chance to strengthen connections between the activity and the role model’s career and to address any remaining questions.
- Schedule time for the role models to **interact informally** with the girls. This can happen during a lunch break or other scheduled breaks. Some girls will feel more comfortable asking questions outside of the larger groups.
- **Questions and prompts** can be provided to role models and girls in advance to help initiate conversations.
Crowd Control.

The role model may be an expert in her field but may not have the personal knowledge or the Girl Scout leader’s skill in guiding girls. You can incorporate these skills into the training and provide tips in your communication prior to the event.

Before the event or role model visit, review the management expectations and practices of your troop or council. For example, if you use the Girl Scout tradition of raising your hand and standing silently to get attention, make the role model aware of that practice so she can use it too.

Offer to share the responsibility of managing the group. As the leader, if you take an active role in assisting the presentation by passing around objects or holding up an exhibit, any intervention to manage the girls’ behavior will seem more natural. Since the role model may not have experience with your group of girls, she may be unaware, unwilling, or unable to manage their behavior.

Still, the role model should be able to hold the girls’ attention throughout the event. Here are some management tips to share with her:

- Establish eye contact with the girls when you are asking and answering questions.
- Get girls’ attention before addressing them as a group.
- Invite girls to rephrase your directions or questions to make sure they’re understood.
- Move around the room, and increase your proximity to restless girls.
- Send a silent signal like the Girl Scout tradition mentioned above.
- Instead of raising your voice, give a quiet reminder if you feel that the girls are getting too loud.
- Redirect girls’ attention if they are distracted by someone or something.
- Invite active engagement by posing questions (instead of just talking on and on).

- Make the girls aware of the time limits and remind them throughout the activity (e.g., “You have five minutes before cleanup.”) The leader could also assume this role.
- Offer a choice. If there are girls who are having a difficult time paying attention during the activity or presentation, provide an alternative activity for them if possible. There may be something these girls can do quietly and independently like journaling or creating a picture or diagram of the activity.
- Use humor. Most Girl Scout events are informal and everyone is there to learn and have fun, so enjoy your time with the girls.
- Provide positive reinforcement to the girls. Highlight their effort and thinking. This will encourage them to stay on task.
Lights-Camera-Action!
Preparing and Setting Up Your Event

Your role models will be the stars of the event; it’s important to prepare them (as well as your girls) before the big day to help them shine.

1

Preparation of Girl Scouts for a Role Model Visit.
Your event isn’t just about putting the role models on stage. The girls are key players to creating a successful experience. When girls ask thoughtful questions, it’s a win-win; the girls show how capable and interested they are, and the role models feel that their experience and expertise are appreciated.

**Before the visit:**
- Share the role model’s bio with the girls. Highlight connections role models may have to Girl Scouts.
- Familiarize the girls with the role model’s career. Provide information about the organization where she works or the school she attends.
- Collect news clips or articles about the role model and the projects she’s worked on. Better yet, see if you can find a video of the role model in action. This will help the girls see the real-life impact of the role model’s profession.
- Encourage all girls to participate. Ask the girls to write their questions on note cards or post-its and have the role model or moderator read the questions. To balance participation, if your group is small enough you can also set the expectation that every girl will ask a question. Emphasize that there are no “bad” questions. Active participation during the role model visit makes the experience more meaningful for everyone.

2

Encourage Curiosity!
Encourage your girls to think of questions that ask for a unique response or a story from the role model. These responses are not the answers to questions that the girls could find on their own. Invite the girls to ask questions about the most satisfying parts of the role model’s job, her role in her organization or field, and questions about her life and career path.

In preparing for your event, ask the role models and girls to write up their bios. Exchanging personal stories and photos in advance helps both girls and role models. For the girls, it’s fun to learn that one role model has a pet dog or that another earned her Gold Award or leads a Girl Scout troop. This helps girls relate to the person behind the suit or lab coat, and develop thoughtful questions. For the role models, knowing a little bit about the girls ahead of time helps them identify topics to discuss and areas where they can focus their academic guidance.
Checking in Prior to the Event.

Connect with your role model before the event to address any last-minute questions. During your check-in:

- Thank the role models and let them know how important they are in inspiring your girls in STEM.
- Review the goals for the day. Reinforce the importance of being a role model, which goes beyond just leading activities.
- Share the attendance numbers and the set-up of the room. Discuss how best to arrange groups for the activity.
- Review audio/visual and technology needs.
- Review proper attire for the day.
- Preview the role model’s introductory remarks and remind her about sharing positive messages about STEM. If she is planning to share a PowerPoint, review it in advance to ensure it is visually appealing to the girls and not too long.
- Provide logistics and a detailed schedule of the event, including directions, parking, and meals. Plan to meet before the event begins.
- Devise a plan for helping your role model stay on track and on schedule during the event. Have a signal when it’s time to move along and when it’s time for closing comments and reflections so that she doesn’t run out of time.
- Let the role model know who will assist her throughout the day.
- Exchange contact information for the event day.
- Invite the role model to ask questions and voice any concerns she might have about the event.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR GIRLS TO ASK ROLE MODELS...

- What projects have you found rewarding? Why?
- What project did you consider difficult? What did you learn from it?
- What does your company produce or create?
- What salary range is available in your field?
- What did you learn in (elementary, middle, high) school that is useful in your career?
- What keeps you motivated and excited about your job?
- Looking back to your earlier years, do you wish you could have done something differently?
- What is your favorite Girl Scout cookie?

ABOUT ME

WHY I CHOSE TO BECOME AN ENGINEER

As a kid, I loved taking things apart and trying to put them back together. I was always curious about what was inside and what made things work.

LIFE OUTSIDE OF WORK

I started silkscreening last year. I love transforming my ideas into something I can print. It’s fun to wear a t-shirt with my design on it.

ADVICE

School can be challenging at times, but that’s half the battle. It’s not about getting an A, it’s about what you learn along the way.
Encore!

Once your event has concluded, an important aspect of retaining role models is following up with them about the event to thank them for their work and share feedback and evaluation results. Following-up with role models after the event also provides the opportunity to get feedback from the role models and to discuss future opportunities.

1. Thanking Role Models.

A well-crafted thank you to your role models can set the stage for future partnerships. Role models are moved by thank you notes, particularly those that describe the impact they make through their visits. Take this opportunity to invite them to future events your council is planning.

- Reinforce the importance of role models in helping the girls understand what it’s like to be an engineer, computer scientist, or physicist.
- Include quotes from the girls. Role models love to hear how they made an impact.
- If possible, include a photo from the event of role models interacting with the girls.
- If you thought the role models were effective, be sure to invite them back.

If you have invited role models to a Girl Scout summer camp or troop event where you will see the girls again, make time for the girls to create thank you cards. Encourage them to get creative. Your group may need guidance on how to write an expressive thank you note. You can teach them the art of showing appreciation.

2. Giving Recognition.

Role models need your support for their volunteer efforts. You can recognize their efforts through their workplace, school, or community. Not everyone understands the value of outreach, and by sending a note or making a call, you can help inform a manager or supervisor of the value of their employee or student participation.

We encourage you to find ways to publicly acknowledge how role models really matter to Girl Scouts. Does your Girl Scout council offer an award for volunteerism? Does the corporate partner or university department recognize volunteers? Nominating your role models for these awards will keep your role models coming back and will also encourage others including their colleagues to do outreach.

3. Evaluation.

It’s good practice to assess and adapt your activities and your events so that they are as effective as they can be. What’s more, the responses you collect from role models and girls allow you to better communicate your program’s impact to others, which can help attract and retain support from funders. If your event was sponsored or funded by a company, program evaluation can be an important part of retaining that support.

There are several ways to evaluate your events. You can have the role models complete a survey about the event and their contribution, get feedback from the girls, and have council staff complete a survey indicating how effective the role model or event was. On our website, you can find sample surveys that collect data on how girls’ interest and knowledge of STEM careers are impacted by interacting with a role model.

Many girls do not have exposure to STEM professionals, careers, or extracurricular opportunities to develop or maintain an interest in STEM. Introducing a girl to a role model can have a powerful impact on her life. STEM outreach events can build skills and confidence in girls, but creating these opportunities for the girls takes careful planning and preparation. We hope that this guide will help you develop impactful STEM events to inspire a Girl Scout to change the world.
"I learned that you can be whoever you want to be, because no matter what others say, we CAN!"

– Girl Scout
Programs-in-a-Box

Girl Scout Councils and Techbridge have joined together to offer five fun, hands-on programs-in-a-box to inspire girls in science and engineering!

Make It Green

Construct a green studio from start to finish – from brainstorming an idea, to creating a floor plan, to building “green.”

Design Time

Work through the engineering design process and get your creative juices flowing with four playful design scenarios.

Power It Up

Master electricity and circuits through a series of hands-on investigations, with the option to use a soldering iron.

Thrill Builders

Explore simple machines all around you in a crazy carnival of your own creation.

Engineers to the Rescue

Apply engineering know-how, problem-solving skills, and design savvy to navigate your way out of a camping trip gone wrong.

What is Techbridge?

Founded in 2000, Techbridge has served over 5,000 girls in after school and summer programs. We introduce girls to hands-on projects and career exploration activities to spark an interest in science, technology, and engineering.

What are Programs-in-a-Box?

With support from the Noyce Foundation, the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, and the American Honda Foundation, we partner with Girl Scout Councils to bring Techbridge projects to girls across the country. Our projects come in boxes and include all the materials you need for your Girl Scout troop or event.
References


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