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New Research Affirms the Overwhelming Benefits of Outdoor Experiences for Girls

Girl Scouts brings the camp experience into the twenty-first century

(Spokane, WA–June 5, 2014): According to a new study by the Girl Scout Research Institute, *More Than S'mores* (2014), girls benefit immensely from time spent outdoors. Girls who regularly spend time outdoors eclipse their peers who spend less time outdoors in environmental stewardship, more readily seek challenges, and are better problem solvers—all important traits in twenty-first century leadership.

Outdoor experiences are also particularly beneficial to girls of comparatively low socioeconomic status (SES). *More Than S'mores* finds that lower-SES girls who have regular outdoor exposure through Girl Scouts are likely to credit Girl Scouts with helping them become leaders.

“In this study, we expected to see that girls were having fun in the outdoors,” says Dr. Kallen Tsikalas, lead researcher on the study. However, we were surprised by just how important it was for them how much they appreciated having opportunities to take on challenges and build skills in a socially supportive environment. Girls really want to feel like they are accomplishing something and growing as a person, and the outdoors is perfect place for them to do this.”

Additionally, outdoor experiences through Girl Scouting, such as camp, are beneficial to girl leadership development across ethnicities. Latina (38 percent) and African American (40 percent) girls are more likely than their peers (28 percent) to say they overcame a fear of the outdoors through Girl Scouting; seventy-nine percent of Latina girls say they first tried an outdoor activity in Girl Scouts, and an overwhelming 59 percent of Latina girls say Girl Scouts has offered them outdoor activities they would not have otherwise had access to.

“We offer a session for every girl with a diverse range of themes, interests and skill levels,” said Sarah Betts, Girl Scouts of Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho Camp Four Echoes Manager. “Our camp gives girls time to relax, do things they don’t get to do the rest of the year and make new friends that will last a lifetime.”

Girl Scout camp is a tradition central to Girl Scouts since 1912 and is still available to girls in all 50 states. Today’s camps are highly evolved, matching the interests of twenty-first-century girls. Girl Scouts of Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho’s Camp Four Echoes offers fun and creative themed weeks including *Mad Science*, *Night Owls*, *Just Chill*, *Art to Wear*, *Jump in the Lake*, *Imaginarium*, *Dip, Dip & Swing*, *Everything H2O*, *Spotlights On*, *Teen J.A.M.*, *Nocturnals* and much more. There are special sessions for girls interested in more advanced skills such as sailing, paddle boarding, windsurfing, canoeing and more. Camp is open to all girls, grades 1-12. You don’t have to be a Girl Scout to attend; you just have to be a girl.

(more)

Families are welcome to attend a Camp Four Echoes Open House on June 22, 1pm-4pm in Worley, ID. This is your opportunity to tour camp, explore camp sites including tee pees and treehouses, meet staff, visit the Trading Post and stop by the Kitchen for refreshments. New to camp this year is swimming docks, beach shed and Aqua Jump. No registration required. For a full listing of the 32 summer 2014 camp sessions visit www.campfourechoes.com or call 747-8091 ext. 225.

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About Camp Four Echoes

Camp Four Echoes is owned and operated by Girl Scouts Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho, located on Lake Coeur d'Alene. It operates as a summer resident camp for all girls in grades 1-12 each year from mid-June through mid-August and hosts other troop, volunteer and council related activities year round. The camp features six themed camp sites, a modern lodge (built in 2011), hiking, geocaching, water activities, archery range, certified ropes course, a mile of waterfront and 212 wooded acres to explore daily. For more information and to register for Camp Four Echoes Summer 2014 sessions go to www.campfourechoes.com .

About Girl Scouts Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho

Girls are at the center of everything we do. Girl Scouts is the preeminent leadership development organization for girls, the leading authority on girls' healthy development and is working with girls and women to transform the leadership landscape for girls into the next century. Girl Scouts Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho serves more than 4,600 girls and 2,200 adult volunteers. The council region encompasses 67,000 miles that includes 20 counties in central and eastern Washington and 10 counties in northern Idaho. Girl Scouts Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho is committed to discovering, celebrating and fostering the leader in every girl. Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence and character who make the world a better place.



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