



# Sharing girl scouts stories of hawai`i

Four years ago, our daughters joined the Girl Scouts of Hawai`i as Brownies. It was notable because one of the two had recently joined our family. Amelia is the same age as Bella Grace and this would be a first organized activity together, outside of school. Over the weekend before their induction we drilled them on the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

On that Monday night they were inducted, wearing new and unadorned brown vests. I, of course, was streaming tears. As they recited the Girl Scout Law and pledged to Troop 649, I snapped photos and shot video through my tears documenting what I hoped was **the beginning of a bond for the two who had been sisters for only months**. Thankfully, that proved to be the case. They are now Cadettes and have been through three bridging ceremonies. Each has three vests filled with pins and badges.

As a Girl Scout during my childhood on Guam and supporter of Girl Scouts of Hawaii, I was proud they would be carrying on a tradition that started with Mom. In the 1970s the uniform was much more involved, and my mother made it clear this was an expensive investment for our family that she hoped I appreciated. I stood in my green and white uniform in the only department store on our small island and I was bursting with excitement. I still have my sash, and bring it to presentations I make to Girl Scouts about my profession (public relations/business owner), my journey through college and becoming an adult.

Selling cookies, earning badges, going to camp—**it was a transformative experience for me**. I didn't make it past the Junior level of Girl Scouts, but it pushed me out of my shy demeanor, sparked entrepreneurial ideas and helped me focus on goals and accomplishment.

In our daughters' first year, Troop 649 was the focus of a cookie sales campaign. Several of our Scouts were on television and radio—exciting and beyond-the-normal Scout experience. The Troop's regular activities proved impressive as well. The **focus on leadership, being good citizens and understanding other countries comes through in everything** the Troop does. Troop service projects have ranged from donations to the Humane Society to donating a defibrillator. Our family takes on two Troop things each year: Photography (our Troop's history) and World Thinking Day. We've presented on Jordan, Greece, France and Tanzania. The year we did France was the same year of the bombings in Paris.

The Girl Scouts of today do so much more than I was doing 40 years ago. They go to celebrations where "CEO" awards are given. They research women leaders. The list goes on. The commitment to developing girls of courage, confidence and character who make the better place is the bottom line. I will continue to sew on their badges, and Dad will continue encouraging their participation because **Girl Scouts has brought these two sisters closer** and is giving them guidance on how to be a good citizen and overall human being.

Barbra Pleadwell, Girl Scouts of Guam (1970s) Mom  
Bella Grace H, Girl Scouts of Hawaii (Cadette, Troop 649)  
Amelia L., Girl Scouts of Hawaii (Cadette, Troop 649)