

EVENT PLANNING 101

How to plan and carry out “neighborhood” events. (Neighborhood events are events open to all or a select age group of troops within our Service Unit which is comprised of about 30 or so troops)

Why host an event?

- It’s awesome
- Connection between girls and their GS community
- Encourages retention
- Leadership opportunities for older girls
- Recruitment
- Expands a girl’s experience beyond troop activities
- Builds on girls’ confidence and social skills
- Cost sharing (multi-troop contribution to a bridging ceremony or journeys)

Examples of Events

- World Thinking Day
- Badge work/ jumpstart a journey (help your troop level or younger to achieve badge or journey goal)
- Pinewood Derby
- Bridging Ceremonies
- Mother Daughter Event
- Leader Appreciation
- Cookie Rally
- GS Olympics

Venue

- The Service Unit can help with finding the right contacts for some venues and to help ensure the costs are kept low or free
 - o Examples: Neighborhood Park/Shelter, Haine Middle School Cafeteria, Local Churches
- Good practice is to first find an appropriate venue and secure a date

Scheduling/Conflicts Check

- Good to consult our Service Unit Calendar
- Seneca Valley’s (School) Calendar is important to consult because you may not get a big turnout (or volunteers) if it conflicts with a major school event. [Calendar \(svsd.net\)](http://svsd.net)
- Get the word out to the Service Unit during our meetings that you are considering a particular event (just in case someone else is and perhaps you can buddy up!)

Structuring the event:

This is totally up to you and your troop. Some events have been done year after year (Pinewood Derby or World Thinking Day) so as soon as you sign up to host, you will be greeted by TONS of ideas from the previous years’ hosts. Here are some ideas of ways to approach the event’s structure:

Formal Agenda: Opening Ceremony, Main Event, Refreshments, Closing

Stations: Participants can travel from station to station based on a fixed amount of time. They will rotate to visit each station. Choose your own opening and closing (always start with the Promise/Law)

Open House: Participants come and go as they please

Break Out: Start out as a big group, explain the stations and they girl pick the stations or “sessions” they are interested in (you can always ask them to choose which session in advance)

Third Party Event: This will be an event that is conducted at a venue where they will essentially instruct you on the structure. For example, the Strand Event at Christmas Time or Zelienville Christmas Parade.

Communication

- Again, if you have a good idea about an event, share it during our monthly leaders’ meeting. Even if you are not committed to it, let us know what you are thinking. We won’t hold you to it! Just let us know when you are ready to announce the “Save the Date” (or similar) communication. Our secretary will send it out when you give the green light (during her regular email distribution communications). We can also add it to our Facebook page. If you want to open it to the broader community, consider the SV backpack flyers page. [Backpack Flyers / Backpack Flyers \(svsd.net\)](#)
 - o NOTE: when you are ready to commit to save the date notice, please prepare a flyer that gives preliminary details (see below)
- When you are preparing the flyer make sure you cover the following:
 - o Descriptions of activities
 - o Time/date/location
 - o Cost and what that covers
 - o Age group limited or open
 - o Spots limited?
 - o Volunteers needed?
 - o How to RSVP and cutoff date (consider Signup Genius)
 - o If you put it on SV portal it must have the following disclaimer (“This is not a Seneca Valley sponsored event”)
 - o Special Instructions (will they get messy or will there be food served)

Budget and Event Recap

- Remember to work with your girls on a budget. Calculate fixed and variable costs in advance of registration.
- Use this number to help set your cost to participate and ask for help if you are not getting discounts!
- If the hosted event is for multiple troops in the service unit payments must be made out to Morning Star Service Unit.
- All cash received and expenses (with receipts) need to be reported on an Event Recap form and submitted to the Service Unit Finance Manager.
- You can use troop or personal funds for the expenses and will be reimbursed after the Event Recap form is submitted.
- We have LOTS of stuff in the Shed. Please don't buy anything until you have verified what may be available.
- Other troops may have materials they can loan you. Attend Leader Meetings and find out! (e.g. Luau, Christmas or Halloween themes)
- Consider whether additional Insurance is needed. [Planning Activities | Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania \(gswpa.org\)](https://www.gswpa.org)