

Belonging And Leadership

An Interview with Shari Krull, Chief Executive Officer, Girl Scouts of Greater New York

EDITORS' NOTE Shari Krull is the newly appointed Chief Executive Officer of Girl Scouts of Greater New York. Her Girl Scouts journey began as a Brownie, sparking a lifelong passion for community, friendship, and adventure. Over the past 25 years, Krull has built a career in the nonprofit sector in roles that reflect the Girl Scouts' mission, including social worker, therapist, after-school educator, professor, volunteer, and community leader. She earned her master's degree in social work from



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Columbia University and began her career supporting women and children in foster care, the criminal justice system, and mental health systems. In the early 2000s, she spent over a decade with Catholic Big Sisters (now Bigs and Littles) in leadership roles including Program Director, Development Director, and Managing Director. She then served as Executive Director of Grace Institute, a workforce training organization advancing economic opportunities for women, before becoming CEO of StreetWise Partners in 2015, supporting career mobility for young adults and skilled immigrants in the New York City and Washington, D.C. areas. Krull is active in the nonprofit community, serving on the Board of the New York City Employment and Training Coalition and the Advisory Board of The Ready Foundation. She has been recognized as a Nonprofit Trailblazer by City & State Magazine and received the 2025 Betty Cook Award for women's empowerment from the Women's Bond Club.

ORGANIZATION BRIEF Girl Scouts of Greater New York (girlscoutsnyc.org) is New York City's oldest and largest girls' leadership organization, reaching tens of thousands of girls ages 5 to 18 in every zip code of the five boroughs. Through Girl Scouts, girls explore STEM, business and entrepreneurship, environmental leadership, and outdoor adventure, advocacy, and much more. Girl Scouting is "by girls, for girls," and today's Girl Scouts learn to lead with courage, confidence, and character, to make the world a better place.

Will you discuss your career journey?

Ever since I was young, I knew I wanted a career focused on helping others and ensuring that everyone – regardless of background

or zip code – has access to safety, security, and opportunity. That sense of purpose guided me early on, and after college I earned my Master's in Social Work from Columbia University. I began my career in direct service, supporting individuals and families in underserved communities. My work included providing critical services to young people in foster care, individuals navigating mental health challenges, and survivors of domestic violence. I then spent the next 10 years at a youth development organization,

where I led after-school programs for girls and connected their families to essential resources and support. While I was proud of the direct impact I was making, I also recognized an opportunity to deepen and broaden that impact by moving into leadership – building partnerships, raising resources, and strengthening organizations so they could reach more people in more meaningful ways.

For the past 15 years, I have served in CEO/Executive Director roles, focusing on mission-driven leadership, scaling programs, and

mobilizing the funding and community support needed to create lasting change.

How do you define Girl Scouts of Greater New York's mission?

The mission of Girl Scouts of Greater New York is to build girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place. In New York City – one of the most diverse and dynamic communities in the world – that mission means ensuring every girl has access to leadership development, mentorship, and life-changing opportunities. Through hands-on experiences in STEM, entrepreneurship, the outdoors, civic engagement, and community service, we equip girls with the skills and resilience they need to thrive.

At its core, Girl Scouts of Greater New York is about belonging and leadership. We create safe, supportive spaces where girls can discover their strengths, develop their voices, and learn that they have the power to lead and make meaningful change in their communities and beyond.

Will you provide an overview of Girl Scouts of Greater New York's programs?

Girl Scouts of Greater New York delivers a comprehensive leadership development program



Shari Krull at a cookie rally



Shari Krull speaking at a Girl Scouts event

rooted in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE). Through this model, girls discover their strengths, connect with others, and take action to make a difference in their communities. All programming is girl-led, built on cooperative learning, and grounded in learning by doing – ensuring that girls gain confidence and skills through hands-on, team-based experiences. Our programs span four core areas: STEM, life skills, outdoors, and entrepreneurship. In STEM, girls explore computer science, robotics, engineering, environmental science, sustainability, and health sciences through interactive, project-based learning. These experiences spark curiosity, build problem-solving skills, and expand access to high-growth career pathways – particularly for girls who are underrepresented in STEM fields. In life skills programming, girls engage in civic leadership, communication, healthy living, and global citizenship experiences that help them build resilience, strong values, and healthy relationships. Outdoor programming – from local park exploration to camping and environmental stewardship – builds independence, teamwork, and confidence. For many New York City girls, these experiences provide their first opportunity to explore nature beyond their immediate neighborhood. Entrepreneurship is brought to life through the Girl Scout Cookie Program – the largest girl-led business in the world – which teaches goal setting, financial literacy, marketing, decision-making, and business ethics. Girls gain firsthand experience managing money, engaging customers, and leading a team, often running their first business before high school.

Across all four areas, girls benefit from supportive relationships with peers and mentors that foster a strong sense of self, positive values, challenge-seeking, healthy relationships, and problem-solving skills – the hallmarks of a successful Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

Will you highlight the strength and expertise of the Girl Scouts of Greater New York team?

The strength of the Girl Scouts of Greater New York team lies in both its expertise and its ability to turn mission into measurable impact. Our staff brings deep experience in youth development, equity-centered programming, and nonprofit leadership, with seasoned program leaders who know how to support girls – particularly those facing systemic barriers – through culturally responsive and trauma-informed approaches.

At the same time, we have the operational and strategic capacity to scale what works by building strong partnerships, securing resources, and delivering high-quality programs across all five boroughs. We are embedded in the communities

we serve and remain focused on outcomes that go beyond participation, emphasizing real leadership growth and long-term opportunity for girls. This combination of frontline insight and organizational strength is what enables Girl Scouts of Greater New York to drive lasting change.

What does effective nonprofit leadership mean to you in today's environment?

Effective nonprofit leadership today means balancing the urgency of mission with strategic discipline. The challenges our communities face – economic instability, mental health needs, and persistent equity gaps – require leaders who are both compassionate and decisive. For me, it involves maintaining a relentless focus on impact while building organizations that are financially resilient, data-informed, and adaptable. Leaders must think entrepreneurially, diversifying revenue, forging strong cross-sector partnerships, and embracing innovation, all while keeping the needs of the people and communities they serve at the forefront. It also means leading with transparency and trust. In times of uncertainty and change, effective leaders provide clarity of vision, invest in talent, and cultivate a culture where teams feel valued, supported, and united around a shared purpose.

What advice do you offer to emerging women leaders or young girls who aspire to leadership roles?

My advice to emerging women leaders and young girls is to believe that your voice belongs in every room you enter – and to use it. Leadership isn't about being perfect or having all the answers. It's about showing up with courage, staying curious, and being willing to learn.

I also encourage young leaders to build a strong support system. Seek out mentors, but just as importantly, build a community of peers who will challenge you, champion you, and remind you of your worth on the hard days.

And finally: don't wait for permission. Take up space, ask for opportunities, and trust that you are capable of more than you think. The world needs your ideas, your compassion, and your leadership – exactly as you are. ●



Shari Krull with Girl Scouts at Nasdaq