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Girls Scouts achieve 'trip of a lifetime' goal

By Kara Navolio



The Planning Committee regularly meets at Papillon to plan their dream trip. Photo Kara Navolio

girls and their parents, to raise \$1,000 completely on their own without parents contributing any money. They had to plan the entire trip, decide where to stay, and even arrange carpools. They earned money from a combination of projects that helped the community to the traditional cookie sales. Girls were also allowed to earn money separately through babysitting and other jobs to add to their goal.

The girls, all Stanley Middle School students, started out with a Trash-a-thon. They got sponsors to pledge money for each ounce of trash they picked up. Every Wednesday after school they fished garbage out of Lake Merritt or picked up trash around Lafayette. They even unearthed a bicycle wrapped in a tarp. In all, they collected 3,000 ounces of trash and recyclables and earned \$3,000.

They also held car washes and garage sales. They collected aluminum cans and plastic bottles in their own neighborhoods and earned another \$2,000. In the three years of middle school, they earned \$7,500 through cookie sales. The troop, in total, earned \$15,000, enough for their dream trip, plus half of the cost for each of the four chaperones accompanying them.

The six girls on the planning committee all had specific jobs to do like getting T-shirts made for the trip, planning menus, getting ID tags made or coming up with a Code of Conduct. They earned badges such as "Financing Your Dream," "Budgeting," and "Public Speaking."

On a starlit night in the Narrows at Zion, the girls are planning to bridge from Cadettes to Seniors, the next level of Girl Scouting. Garces and Jeyakrishnan are making a video of memories for the occasion to document all that the girls have been through. Some of them have been in the same troop together since kindergarten at Springhill Elementary.

The girls presented their project to a meeting of Girl Scout leaders and have been asked to help other younger girls learn to do what they have done. Troop leader Nanette Heffernan added, "They are the first troop in this area to accomplish a project this big."

Their excitement was palpable as they prepared to leave on June 8. "None of us could have done this without the others," said DePagne. "We learned how easily your mind can be changed when you believe," added Anie Heffernan. There is already talk of a senior trip at the end of high school, and no doubt these girls will accomplish whatever they set their minds to.

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