

2011 Kickoff Remarks

It really is my pleasure to be with you today at this beautiful camp, as you learn about what is planned for the coming year, and take some time to network and share ideas. I hope you find it a rewarding day.

And perhaps most exciting is that we will be sharing with you our council's plans for the 100th Anniversary. There will be so many special things unfolding over the next year and a half. This is truly a great time for girl scouting in the Heart of Pennsylvania.

100 years. By any measure, that's a long time. I've been reflecting a lot on this lately. For example, I've been bemoaning that Borders just went out of business. My first reaction was "oh no – that can't be...I love that store!" But then I thought a little more and tried to remember the last time I actually was IN a Borders book store. Was it this past spring or maybe it was for some Christmas shopping last fall? I just can't remember.

As much as I count myself a Borders admirer, I must admit I haven't been much of a customer the last few years. Too busy to read. Too many books already stockpiled on the shelf. Or is that I order from Amazon more often than not because it's so convenient? Or perhaps it's because my husband got me an eReader as a Christmas present?

Whatever the reasons, as much as I enjoyed being in a Borders store, settling into those comfy chairs and poring over a travel book or a book on gardening perhaps, I haven't done that very much lately. It seems that Borders is no longer all that relevant to this consumer.

I did some internet research and found out that Borders as a company started in 1971. They lasted just 40 years. Period. And then there's Circuit City – remember them? That was the IT place before Best Buy came along. Circuit City lasted 60 years before they closed in 2009.

And before that there was Ames Department Stores. Our town had one of them long before the Wal-Mart moved in. Ames lasted 44 years.

Going back further, how about PanAm and TWA ... they were

considered big glitzy airlines when I was a kid. Gone after 64 and 76 years respectively.

The point is – all these companies failed to maintain their relevance. They lost sight of their mission and failed to adapt to the changing environment and needs of the constituencies they served.

But Girl Scouting coming up on a 100 years old. Wow! Why so long when so many others have failed? Because we are still relevant. Because just as Juliette Gordon Low believed back in 1912, we still believe it is critically important to provide girls opportunities to experience new things, new friends, new cultures and to grow into tomorrow's leaders. The way we deliver the programming may differ from the days of Juliette but our fundamental mission and objectives are the same.

And you, our volunteers and the 100's of 1000's of volunteers that came before you – you are what makes Girl Scouting that positive, nurturing, relevant experience for our girls. I hope you are as excited as I am about what the organization has accomplished over the last 100 years and all

the great things Girl Scouting will be over the next 100 years. I promise you that we're going to have fun over the next year celebrating our collective accomplishments and setting the stage for the generations of girls and adult volunteers who will follow us.

I had the opportunity to have dinner this week with one of our recent Gold Award recipients who lives in my town. We had a wonderful time together. I asked her why she loved Girl Scouting. She said she liked meeting new people and being involved in community service projects, but mostly she said "Girl Scouting lets me be me." Isn't that what it's all about?

Before I turn the program over to Jane, I'll just mention that I'll be around all day, popping in and out of workshops. Please feel free to pull me aside if you'd like to chat about anything. I hope you all have a wonderful day.

Now here's your CEO Jane Ransom...