

**20  
23**

**Annual  
Report**

**Girl  Guides**

# Message from Chair of the Board



At Girl Guides of Canada, we believe in empowering girls to achieve all that they can be – as leaders, innovators and change makers.

This year, we were encouraged by the steady pace of recovery and positive membership momentum. Throughout this period, we've been laser-focused on anticipating and responding to the evolving needs of girls post-pandemic, and ensuring they have access to experiences that will not only help them navigate their world, but to see the power they have to make a difference. Critical to this are our incredible volunteers. Whether they're supporting girls as they explore the outdoors, share openly about their mental health, or discover a creative STEM experiment, it's our Guiders who make it possible for girls to have life-changing experiences at Girl Guides.

Looking ahead, we are optimistic about what we'll achieve together as One GGC – a united, collaborative partnership between volunteers and staff in every council nationwide. Together, we are working to elevate the very best of what Girl Guides offers girls, youth and women across Canada, now and for decades to come.

To all of our families, volunteers, staff, donors and partners, thank you for believing in our Mission, our Vision, and most importantly, the incredible power of girls.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sarah Govan-Sisk". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

**Sarah Govan-Sisk**  
Chair, Board of Directors

# Message from CEO



**There is power in having a safe, inclusive space where girls and youth can explore new challenges. At Girl Guides, we are committed to creating this space so girls can thrive.**



As a girl in Girl Guides, I was introduced to the outdoors, critical life skills and more. But what impacted me most were the opportunities to help others. As CEO, I am excited to return to where it all started to fulfill my Promise again to “do my best” and help girls in Canada thrive.

The Girl Guide Mission remains critically important today. In this report, you’ll see stories of how we’re ensuring girls and youth across Canada have access to youth development programming where they can grow, learn and succeed. Stories of how our volunteers inspire as mentors, helping girls thrive. With every Girl Guide activity and experience, girls are developing the skills to create their future and see their power to do good in the world.

As the world that girls live in is changing, what Girl Guides does remains critically important. Thank you for helping us ensure we can have a meaningful impact on the lives of girls and youth across Canada.

**Shannon Benner**  
Chief Executive Officer

# Our membership recovery story



Girl Guides of Canada is continuing our journey of membership recovery to pre-pandemic levels.

The 2022-2023 Guiding year saw a more than 15% increase in girl membership compared to 2021-2022 which allowed Girl Guides to recover 77.8% of our membership as compared to before the pandemic (2019-2020).

The impact of the pandemic on families and the economy has meant an increased demand for our Membership Fee Subsidy Program. We were able to ensure that funds were available for more than 6,500 girls who registered with a subsidy in 2023.

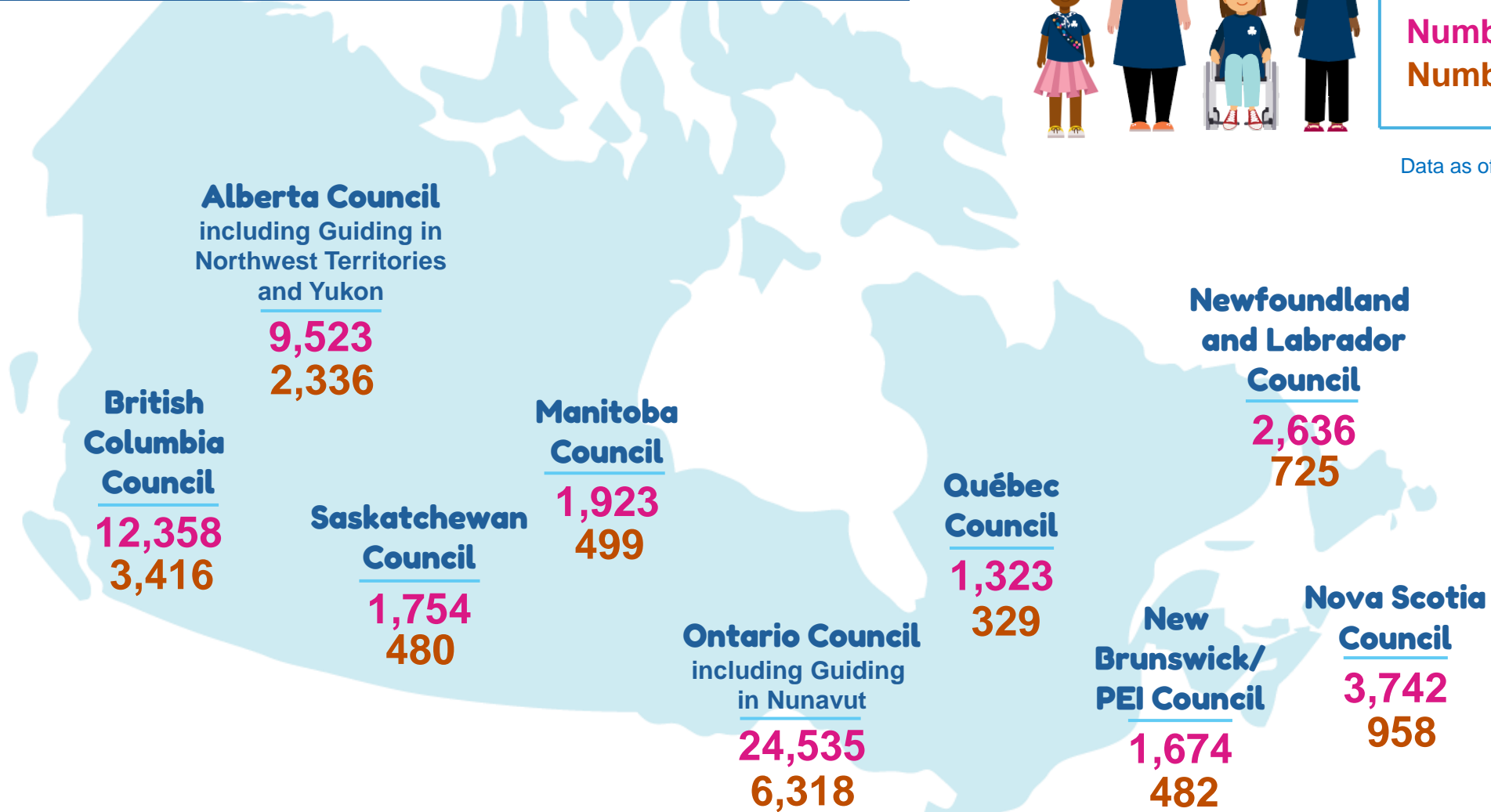
Over the last several years, Girl Guides has focused on rebuilding our membership base, increasing available space for girls in high-demand areas and making improvements to elevate the best of what we offer girls and women across Canada.

# Guiding by the numbers from coast-to-coast-to-coast



Number of girl members  
Number of adult members

Data as of January 1, 2024





**Girl Guides is a place where girls can share new experiences and build their confidence together with friends.**

# Guiding has a positive impact on girls

The Girl Guide program is designed to challenge, inspire and empower girls. In a supportive space where they can just be themselves, girls can try new things, discover their unique talents and interests and build leadership and life skills.

The results are girls with the confidence and skills to achieve their goals and a strong network of friends who will cheer them on every step of the way.

## What caregivers tell us about how Guiding impacts their child's life

**89%** agree that Guiding is a safe and inclusive space that encourages a diverse membership.



**87%** agree that Guiding provides fun and enjoyment.

**80%** agree that Girl Guides enhances their child's social skills and helps them make new friends.



**79%** see the positive impact that Guiding has on their child's development and personal growth.

# Guiding across Canada

At Girl Guides, girls have the chance to explore a variety of activities and discover their unique talents and interests together with friends.

From community projects and local events to outdoor adventures and learning new skills – girls shared new experiences together with their peers and our dedicated volunteers in 2023.



The 1st Tisdale Guides made dinner for their families! As a group they learned life skills like meal planning, creating a budget and making a shopping list with all the ingredients to prepare a delicious meal.



Members of the Québec Youth Forum visited the 1st St. Lazare Sparks Unit.



Rangers and Trex tried hands-on activities such as suturing and ultrasound while learning about careers in medicine at the University of Alberta.



The 3rd Eastern Passage Sparks were not deterred by the rain during a fun circus-themed camping weekend!



# Guiding across Canada



Sparks in West Kelowna helped harvest pumpkins, corn and potatoes for a local food hamper program.



The 400th Winnipeg Guides planted more than 70 trees along Sturgeon Creek.



The 1st Larkhall Embers and Guides learned outdoor skills, including how to make a bed roll.



The 10th and 11th Stittsville Embers painted kindness rocks to include in their local community garden.



More than 450 Guiders, girls and their families from Southwest New Brunswick gathered to support their community and the Saint John Sea Dogs.

# The first year of Embers

Girl Guides of Canada announced Embers as the new branch name for girls ages 7 and 8 in January 2023. New resources and a new Ember Story were created to support units in celebrating this change.

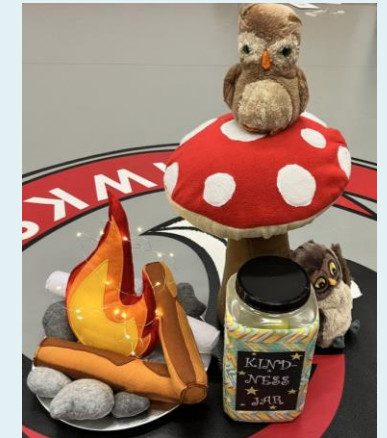
## Embers Story Contest

More than 4,600 Sparks, Embers and Guides submitted their creative ideas to the Ember Story Contest.

The new Ember story was inspired and co-created by the winner of the contest: Nora, an Ember in Manitoba. Nora worked with Canadian children's author Ashley Spires and the Programs team at Girl Guides to create a story that is truly for girls and by girls.

## Celebrating Embers

Inspired by the new branch name and Ember story, a Becoming Embers Instant Meeting was developed to encourage units to find new ceremonies, songs, enrolment ideas and more to celebrate the new name.



# National Service Project: ReconciliACTIONS

Girl Guides of Canada's 2021-2023 National Service Project: ReconciliACTIONS helped to deliver on our commitments to celebrate Indigenous cultures and expand awareness of the impact and history of residential schools.

This was achieved with the help of our partners at the Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund who provided toolkits filled with engaging resources and ideas for units to add ACTION to reconciliation.



ReconciliACTIONS  
at Girl Guides

From  
2021 to 2023  
**11,642**  
members participated.

A total of  
**2,339**  
toolkits were sent out  
nationally.



More than  
**11,000**  
crests were earned  
by members across  
Canada.

# 2023 Highlights

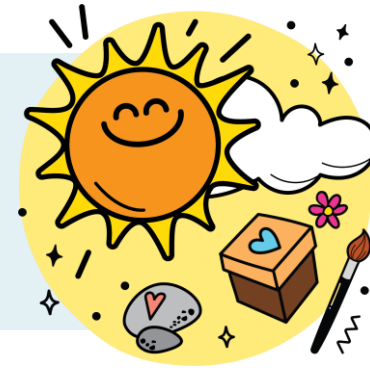


## Spark Year-in-a-Box

The Spark Year-in-a-Box supported Sparks and their Guiders in having a full year of fun! It included twelve meeting plans, a back pocket activity list, theme badge activity ideas and more!

## Celebrate Summer activity packs

These take-home activity packs meant that Sparks, Embers, Guides, Pathfinders and Rangers could have fun outside, celebrate sunshine and stay connected to Guiding all summer long.



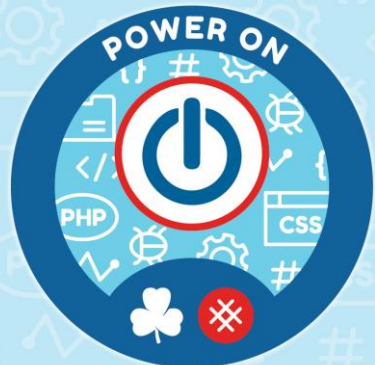
## Inclusive programming

Our new Different Together Badge-in-a-Box and Exploring Anti-Racism Instant Meeting, along with updates to Our Identities and Love is Love Instant Meetings, increased access to inclusive programming to create spaces where girls can belong.



## Learn to Code with Canada Learning Code

For the second year in a row, Girl Guides partnered with Canada Learning Code to provide more than 800 girl members at all branch levels with the opportunity to develop their coding and digital literacy skills as part of a virtual event.



Code. Create. Change.

# Change Maker Award



Girl Guides of Canada's Change Maker Award recognizes the courageous and inspiring actions of girls from all branches and celebrates the compassionate young leaders they're becoming.

## Meet some of our 2023 Change Maker Award recipients



**Hannah** made welcome cards and raised money to buy school bags, books and paint to help newcomers and refugees in Canada settle into their new home as part of a Warm Welcome initiative.



**Iyah** made 60 care packages filled with water bottles, snacks and toiletries to donate to a local shelter. Iyah even inspired a group of her friends to join in!



**Sofia** created a campaign at her school to challenge kids to think about how they treat others. She made posters with information on neurodiversity and ways to make others feel included and accepted.



**Taylor** used their leadership skills to protect the environment, improve the community and support diabetes research. Taylor organized a Walk Run Roll event which helped raise awareness and support research for diabetes.



**Janae** is a dedicated part of the Black York Region Youth group who planned a Black History Month assembly and created a video on anti-Black racism. Janae also volunteers with the Markham Sports Dome and the Boys and Girls Club East Scarborough.

See the full list of [2023 Change Maker Award recipients](#).

# Empowering girls, one cookie at a time



## The sweet power of Girl Guide cookie sales helps girls develop top skills:

- ☆ Planning and goal-setting
- 💰 Money and time management
- 😊 Self-confidence
- 💡 Entrepreneurship
- 🤝 Teamwork



Cookies remain the primary fundraiser for Girl Guides of Canada. In 2023, Girl Guides of Canada introduced Square readers, a cashless cookie payment option that allows payment by debit or credit so it's even easier to purchase cookies that support Girl Guide programs across the country.



**Girl Guide volunteers inspire, empower and mentor girls to be the new generation of changemakers, innovators and leaders.**



# Volunteers inspire powerful girls

Girl Guide volunteers create a space where girls can just be and lead them through a range of empowering, hands-on activities at every meeting.



Together they share new adventures and real-life experiences where girls can explore their curiosity and creativity.



Guiders have front row seats to watch girls' confidence grow as they discover their unique talents and interests.



Our volunteers become an influential part of girls' lives as they share laughter and build unbreakable bonds.





# Women in Guiding lead so girls can build a thriving future



The girls have shown me over the years how important authenticity is in a world that is constantly asking them to change in order to fit in.  
- Shontal



Being a Guider gives me the joy of making a difference, building wonderful connections and creating long-lasting memories.  
- Courtney





**Thank you to all the women in Guiding who are inspiring, empowering and mentoring the next generation of changemakers, innovators and leaders.**

# 2023 Highlights

Supporting our volunteers means equipping them with the resources they need to lead girls through a variety of fun activities, all year long.

**2023-2024 Unit Calendar**

Featured Programming - Inclusion Ideas - Helpful Reminders - Tips and Tricks - Space to Plan

Check out the centrefold for an activity you can use with your unit!

Girl Guides

**12,138** Unit Calendars were sent to Guiders across the country. This resource calendar included tips, tricks, reminders and programming suggestions that aligned with the Big Ideas Calendar.

Funded by the Government of Canada's Community Services Recovery Fund

## Big Ideas Calendar

For the third year in a row, the Big Ideas Calendar was the year-at-a-glance resource for Guiders. It had inspiration for district camps, unit bridging ideas, unit activities and more.



## Putting safety first

Keeping members safe has always been a priority for Girl Guides. In 2023, the focus was on providing easy-to-use risk management tools and resources to volunteers such as Pocket Planners for popular activities, expanding the list of A to Z of Activities and creating a Supervisor and First Aid Ratio Calculator.



## Unit Experience Compass

The Unit Experience Compass is an interactive tool to help Guiders create variety in activities as the unit works towards completing badges and achieving goals.

# 2023 Highlights



## Campus Connections

2023 was the first year of Campus Connections, a project to engage post-secondary students in leadership development training, mentorship, volunteering and meaningful experiences to mitigate social isolation on campus.

The pilot started at the University of Guelph and expanded to include Trent University, McMaster University and University of Waterloo in Ontario as well as Dalhousie University and Mount Saint Vincent University in Nova Scotia.

This project was funded by the McCall MacBain Foundation

## Sisterhood Challenge

Adult members were encouraged to nurture and strengthen their relationships within the Guiding sisterhood as part of the challenge.



## Supporting our Guiders

Trainers across the country ran 131 virtual training sessions on the National Training Calendar on topics ranging from new Guider supports to outdoor activities.

## Fall into Guiding Challenge

Adult, bridging and Ranger-aged members were encouraged to be prepared for the new Guiding year by completing trainings as part of this challenge.



## Winter WonderLearn Training Convention

More than 800 members joined this virtual training convention to prepare adult members and Rangers for a strong second half of the Guiding year.





# National Youth Council

The National Youth Council provides insights and input to Girl Guides of Canada's Board of Directors and staff on what matters to girls, ensuring that girls' voices and perspectives are front and centre in decisions shaping the future of Guiding. The 2023-2024 National Youth Council is made up of members from British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Québec, Nunavut, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador.

## Meet the 2023 National Youth Council



Catarina



Chiara



Desirae



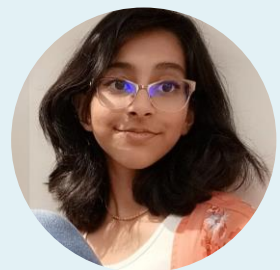
Katie



Meghan



Nadia



Neha



Pooji



Sera



Sidney



Talia

# National Indigenous Advisory Circle

The National Indigenous Advisory Circle (NIAC) is a space for Indigenous girls, youth and women to connect and help integrate Indigenous knowledge and teachings at Girl Guides of Canada. NIAC members assist and guide us in identifying barriers faced by Indigenous members in Guiding and help support in creating ways to remove those barriers to foster a more culturally-sensitive space for Indigenous girls and youth at Girl Guides.

## Meet the current NIAC members

Abigail	Anteia	Dawn	Koren	Ruth
Alexina	April	Jana	Krystal	Sabrina
Alice	Aurora	Jennifer	Lucy	Shelby
Amanda	Cariboo	Joann	Molly	Sierra
Amy	Cassie	Juliette	Paige	Stephanie
Angela	Charlotte	Katie	RM	Sydney



## Thank you

to youth members, like Sabrina (left), and adult members, like Shelby (right), for dedicating their time each month to share their experiences and support Girl Guides to become a place where every girl, youth and woman knows they belong, and that their culture is respected and celebrated in a way that honours them.

# Provincial Commissioners

The Provincial Commissioner (or team of Provincial Co-Commissioners) is the lead volunteer of their province and chair of the provincial council. They connect with girls and volunteers across their council and are leaders in the design and implementation of provincial operational plans that support GGC's Strategic Plan.

Provincial Commissioners in each council, as of December 31, 2023



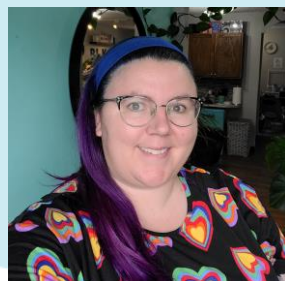
**British Columbia Council**

Colleen McKenna



**Alberta Council**  
including Guiding in  
Northwest Territories  
and Yukon

Tracy Burton



**Saskatchewan Council**

Megan Clark



**Manitoba Council**

Heather  
McFadyen



**Québec Council**

Olivia Durand



**Ontario Council**  
including Guiding  
in Nunavut

Cherylyn Sawatzky &  
Melanie Nicholson



**New Brunswick/  
PEI Council**

Shelley  
MacDonald



**Newfoundland Council**

Heather Brown &  
Mackenzie Furey



**Nova Scotia Council**

Debbie Mellish &  
Cindy O'Hearn



# Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is Girl Guides of Canada's governing body. Board members serve three-year terms and work together to set the organization's strategic direction, provide oversight on complex legal, governance, risk management and financial matters and ensure Girl Guides is relevant, growing, sustainable and truly girl-driven.

Back row (left to right)

**Evan Swance-Smith**  
Director

**Sarah Govan-Sisk**  
Chair of the Board

**Shannon Benner**  
Chief Executive Officer

**Janette Yuen**  
Director

**Adrienne Edmunds**  
Director – International Commissioner

**Andrea Chakma**  
Director – Chair, National Youth Council

Front row (left to right)

**Pam Laycock**  
Vice Chair

**Helen Cashman**  
Director – Guiding Experience,  
Guiding Ambassador

**Lisa Trostenko**  
Director – Treasurer

**Melinda Gibson**  
Director – Governance

Not pictured

**Sheliza Ismail**  
Director





# National and provincial council operations

## Statement of Operations

Year ended December 31, 2023, with comparative information for 2022

	2023	2022
Revenue:		
Membership fees	\$ 7,311,464	\$ 6,215,132
Cookie fundraising sales	22,766,019	12,439,696
Camping, conference, and event fees	1,357,691	355,717
Merchandise royalties and sales	906,728	2,413,674
Net investment income	4,871,463	4,069,351
Other income	1,974,554	1,398,268
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	13,135	10,702
Gain on sale of real property	333,670	2,914,180
Grants	636,725	486,610
	40,171,449	30,303,330
Less:		
Cookie fundraising expenses	11,355,755	7,941,998
Merchandise expenses	146,571	2,222,528
	11,502,326	10,164,526
	28,669,123	20,138,804

These figures represent the combined revenues and expenses of GGC's national office and provincial councils. The Guiding experience is offered to girls across Canada through the collaboration of the national office, the Provincial Councils, as well as areas, districts and units. The revenues and expenses of the areas, districts and units are not included in these figures.

[Continued on next page](#)

# National and provincial council operations

	2023	2022
Expenses:		
Girl experience:		
Program development	1,577,856	1,269,965
Subsidies and scholarships	355,121	230,872
Special experiences: camps, events, and travel	2,848,396	1,195,299
Camp properties and user space	1,691,616	1,222,413
Infrastructure and communications	1,790,606	1,286,341
Girl safety	522,623	493,401
	8,786,218	5,698,291
Member services:		
Customer care centre	1,002,460	825,650
Guider development	288,623	431,935
Infrastructure	1,809,466	1,562,140
	3,100,549	2,819,725
Governance and operations:		
Finance	3,425,196	3,673,407
Operations	3,301,019	2,119,948
Administration	3,696,762	3,895,642
Information technology	2,420,661	2,041,677
Human resources	893,593	670,049
Governance	718,941	519,181
Amortization	680,971	589,194
	15,137,143	13,509,098
	27,023,910	22,027,114
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses before the undernoted	1,645,213	(1,888,310)
Unrealized gain (loss) on investments	3,932,831	(12,851,332)
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses	\$ 5,578,044	\$ (14,739,642)

These figures represent the combined revenues and expenses of GGC's national office and provincial councils. The Guiding experience is offered to girls across Canada through the collaboration of the national office, the Provincial Councils, as well as areas, districts and units. The revenues and expenses of the areas, districts and units are not included in these figures.



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Sally Palm

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Municipality of the County of Kings  
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Recreation Association  
United Way of Winnipeg



## Mission

To be a catalyst for girls empowering girls.

## Vision

A better world, by girls.

