

Girl Scout Camp Reason for Success

By: Kim Dunne, Media Manager



“I credit my Girl Scout camp experiences to the person I am today. Independent, mindful of others, and leadership skills I still use,” said lifetime Girl Scout Penny Schuck from the Utica/Rome area.

Schuck began her camping career in 1952 at the age of 7. She recalls attending a two-week camping session and then crying so hard because she didn’t want to go home when her parents came to pick her up. The camp director told her mom that if they agreed she could stay for another two weeks and they would find room for

her. From then on she attended camp for a month each year until she was 16.

“I loved everything and anything about camp. I was like a sponge and wanted to learn everything about the outdoors as I could absorb. I jumped right on the outdoor skills and thought Kit Hammitt was the greatest thing since sliced bread. I worked hard on perfecting those skills and to this day can still start a fire using the basic A-frame and one match,” said Schuck.

Camp is also where she gained a love for singing. She even brought back her love by starting a Girl Scout chorus of senior Girl Scouts and even made a record with them singing their favorite Girl Scout songs.

Her love for Girl Scouts and her love for camp came full circle as she continued her Girl Scout career as a staff member in the 1960s and became Camp Director at Camp Hoover in Tully in 1972. There she directed four different camps until 1996.

Schuck says parents should consider sending their daughters to Girl Scout camp because it provides them an opportunity to stretch their wings toward independence in a controlled environment. They will learn leadership skills that will be used throughout their life. Camp provides girls with a reinforcement of what they, as parents, try to teach them.

“Someone told me a long time ago that camp was a place where you got to do things you normally wouldn’t do at home,” Schuck said. “I buy into that 100 percent and still believe that more today than ever. Where else can you be yourself, make new friends, expand your horizons in the form of skills, gain an appreciation of the outdoors, and then go home with so much to share with family and friends.”