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Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways Awarded Grant to Provide Youth Mental Health First Aid Training to Staff and Volunteers

Syracuse, N.Y. (July 11, 2023) – The Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways (GSNYPENN) Council serving 24 counties in New York and two in Northern Pennsylvania was recently awarded a grant by charter organization Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) to assist its efforts to train council staff and adult volunteers as they support the mental wellbeing of youth members.

Grants awarded in 2022 and again in 2023 have supported GSNYPENN staff to become Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) instructors with training administered by The National Council of Mental Wellbeing. YMHFA is designed to teach adults who regularly work with young people how to help an adolescent (ages 12–18) who is experiencing a mental health or addiction challenge or is in crisis.

An early intervention public education program, YMHFA teaches how to recognize the signs and symptoms that suggest a potential mental health challenge, how to listen nonjudgmentally and give reassurance to youth who may be experiencing a mental health challenge, and how to refer a person to appropriate professional support and services.

YMHFA training is available for selected staff from Girl Scout councils and takes place virtually, over three days with eight hours of required pre-work. Council staff instructors must then teach a minimum of three courses per year to maintain certification.

Currently, GSNYPENN has two YMHFA instructors on staff. These instructors will offer YMHFA training to council adult volunteers later this month.

“Through Youth Mental Health First Aid training, our council can help adults who regularly interact with our youth members to recognize the warning signs. Studies show that adults who are YMHFA trained have greater confidence in providing help to youth, a greater likelihood of advising them to seek professional help and decreased stigmatizing attitudes on adolescent mental health,” says GSNYPENN CEO Julie Dale.

GSNYPENN serves girls in K-12 across 26 counties: Allegany, Broome, Cayuga, Chemung, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Ontario, Oswego, Otsego, St. Lawrence, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins, Wayne and Yates in New York and Bradford and Tioga in Pennsylvania. Annual membership is just \$25; financial assistance is available. To start her adventure, visit gsnypenn.org/join. To become a volunteer, learn more at gsnypenn.org/volunteer. To help make Girl Scouting possible for girls in your community, visit gsnypenn.org/donate.

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About Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways, Inc.

Girl Scouts is the preeminent leadership development organization for girls in grades K-12. Our extraordinary journey began in 1912 when our Movement was founded by Juliette Gordon “Daisy” Low. Today, we continue the Girl Scout mission of building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the

world a better place. We offer every girl the chance to practice a lifetime of leadership, adventure and success. GSNYPENN is chartered by Girl Scouts of the USA to administer the Girl Scout program in 24 counties of New York and two in Pennsylvania. Learn more at gsnypenn.org.