

Special Interest Volunteers

A resource for Girl Scout leaders and service unit team members

What is a special interest volunteer? A special interest volunteer wants to share their talents, interests and time with girls on a flexible, as needed schedule.

Why have special interest volunteers? This volunteer opportunity exposes more adults to the benefits of Girl Scouting thereby increasing our community partners and support. Special Interest Volunteers are a great resource for staff and volunteers – allowing you to offer programming outside of your skill set or get an extra hand for events and projects. Leaders don't have to do it all and girls benefit from interacting with other positive adult role models.

How can I use special interest volunteers? You can use a special interest volunteer to assist at an event, lead an activity with a specific skill, mentor girls for the Girl Scout Gold, Silver, or Bronze Award project as well as assist on a field or camping trip. Browse the list of skills offered by our special interest volunteers to get program and project ideas to bring back to the girls. Let the girls pick what interests them.

How can I find out what talents and skills River Valleys' special interest volunteers offer? River Valleys' Special Interest Volunteer Database can be found two ways. Service unit team members can access it on the service unit Intranet. Leaders can obtain access to the database by contacting a service center for the direct link URL (also listed in the newsletter *Connections*). Click the "title page" tab along the bottom of the screen for instructions on how to use the spreadsheet (sorting, etc). The "special interest volunteer" tab will bring you to the list of our current special interest volunteers. This list will be updated periodically as new volunteers are added.

What do I do if I find someone I'd like to contact? You may contact the individual directly. Please note: Some people do not check their e-mail regularly so a phone call or an e-mail followed by a phone call may be more effective. Provide the individual with as many details as you have so they can make a decision as to whether or not the opportunity will work for them.

Working with special interest volunteers: When a special interest volunteer agrees to assist you with an event or project please keep in mind that you may be their first experience with Girl Scouting.

- Provide the specific details and information they will need to best assist you with your request.
- Make them feel welcome. Remember to greet them and give them instructions. Introduce them to other adult volunteers involved.
- Thank the special interest volunteer for their time and energy. Addresses are not included on the special interest database to protect the individual's privacy. If you anticipate wanting to send a thank-you card please ask the volunteer for their address or arrange with the volunteer development manager to have the note forwarded.
- Special interest volunteers undergo the volunteer application process and are interviewed by phone but the skills listed are "self-identified." (For example if someone lists lifeguard, River Valleys does not verify certification). Discuss your activity with the volunteer and decide based on your conversation if they are the right individual to meet your specific need.
- Special interest volunteers are asked to reply back to all requests even if they are not available or interested in an opportunity, however, be aware that this does not always happen.
- If you have a concern with a special interest volunteer please call or e-mail the volunteer development manager.

How can we get more special interest volunteers to serve in my area? Pass out the [special interest volunteer flyer/application](#) to your family, friends, and contacts. Encourage other Girl Scout volunteers in your service unit to do the same.

Questions regarding special interest volunteers can be addressed to the
Volunteer Development Manager

763-971-4040

(800) 548-5250

wendy.walton@girlscoutsv.org.