

# Girl Guides

## Alberta Council

For Guiding in Alberta, Northwest Territories and Yukon

# 2020 Annual Report



## 2020 ....

2020 was a year to remember. The transition to virtual guiding and the resilience of our volunteers marks the year in our memories. In May, we thanked and said good-bye to our PC team of Kathy Batty, Provincial Commissioner (2017-2020) and her deputies Julie Perras and Laurie MacIntosh. Their hard work and dedication will not be forgotten. We then welcomed our new PC team led by Tracy Burton, and her deputies Sheila Morrison and Cyndi Williams. No matter the hurdles thrown at us, we continue to ensure that the girl is at the centre of our planning so that she can be *everything she wants to be*.



## Girl Engagement Committee

Girl Engagement Coordinator	– Liz Maki (ending May)
	– Bev Burton (term May to 2023)
International Adviser	– Melanie Murray (until October)
	– Vacant as of October
Program Adviser	– Dana Wagner (ending May)
	– Leslie Horton (term May to 2023)
Lones Lead	– Meribeth Barclay
AGP Lead	– Edie Jubenville
Camping Adviser	– Julie Kitz (ending May)
	– Leslie Jones (term May to 2023)

Unfortunately, we cancelled all the spring and summer events due to COVID-19. Special thanks to all the Guiders who planned to facilitate these events. We look forward to the time when we can meet in person and hold overnight events. The cancelled 2020 events were:

Alberta Girls Parliament	Ranger/Link Weekend	Arts Camp North
Arts Camp South	Sea to Sky Camp	Colour Your World
Pathfinder/Ranger Horseback Riding Camp	Backpacking Camp	Hodgepodge

The Coordinator, Youth Forum Coordinators and advisers held monthly virtual calls from March to May to discuss committee work and provide updates to coordinate protocol changes to ensure there were no unnecessary overlaps in work.

In early fall, advisers revised their 2020 budgets in accordance with the national spending guidelines. They worked on initiatives to find exciting new activities and ways of delivering programming to the girls and Guiders in Alberta Council throughout the remainder of the pandemic. It was amazing to see how this worked and the enthusiasm to continue Guiding despite the COVID-19 restrictions.

## Camping - Julie Kitz and Leslie Jones

This year challenged the Camping Committee when we abruptly halted plans for events then re-imagined camping initiatives by thinking outside the box. Early in the year, we completed work on two projects that we posted to the website. First, we uploaded the camping cookbook to the Publications webpage, after addressing recipe and product copyright issues. Thank you for the persistence of the committee who worked to prepare the new cookbook. The second project was updating the Camp Challenge and designing the crest centrepiece. When things opened again in the fall, the committee began work on a virtual camp-in-a-box for each branch for units to use. Moving from in-person camping experiences to planning virtual camps for units required all our agility and resilience.

In January, we selected the Alberta Council patrol for SOAR 2020 and approved 28 other patrols to attend; 23 from Alberta, three from Yukon, and two from Northwest Territories. Planning was in the final stages. Alberta Council collected payments from all patrols. Patrol Guiders booked flights and fundraised. The girls chose their program activities. Core Crew volunteers prepared to drive the gear from Alberta.

Then suddenly, in March, COVID-19 protocols put everything on hold. Like SOAR, ANY Council summer camp preparations were well underway in January and February when all planning stopped in March. The summer camps planned for 2020 included:

- Pathfinder and Ranger Backpacking Camp (August 16-22,) in Calgary with a trip to Banff National Park.
- Pathfinder and Ranger Adventure Camp (August 9-15,) in the Bighorn Backcountry to learn horsemanship skills including how to care for your horse, how to saddle and ride your horse.
- Guide Sea to Sky Guide Camp (July 12-19,) at Camp Vanier and Camp Coocinda, Cold Lake, AB.



By May, all overnight camps for 2020 were cancelled. These restrictions remained in place through 2020 and into 2021.

At the 2019 Grass Roots Huddle, Guiders identified they wanted more information about Girl Guide Camps to add to their SG4 forms. Guiders wanted the camps' accessibility and emergency information. Through the spring and summer, the committee confirmed correct contact information and descriptions; added accessibility information; provided emergency information for muster points and addresses for 911. The national office incorporated this work into the centralized property booking app that launched in January 2021.

Looking to the future, the Alberta Council camping advisers will host a rally-style day camp for all branches in May 2021 and will include a virtual campfire video for units to download. Plans are for each participating area to run a common program provided by the camping committee. The areas are to prepare activity kits for the girls of each branch in compliance with COVID-19 protocols.



### International - Melanie Murray and Bev Burton

Thank you to everyone who applied for the Alberta Council 2021 Sponsored Trip to Sangam. We notified selected applicants at the end of January. With the national restrictions on travel over 72 hours and increasing COVID-19 cases, the 2021 Sponsored Trip to Sangam was sadly postponed indefinitely. The Girl Engagement Coordinator, presented an Issue Brief to Alberta Council in November with options for possible activities for the selected members. Although, we are disappointed with postponing this trip, the health and safety of our members is the utmost importance, and we must plan accordingly. The International Committee chose the theme of the 2021 CWFF Challenge and developed the challenge.

### Program - Dana Wagner and Leslie Horton

Throughout 2020, the program committee developed these initiatives for our members:

- Updated "Mouse Around the House" Challenge crest
- Posted Discovery Badge resources for both Brownies and Guides
- Worked with the Alberta Council Youth Forum to develop a PowerPoint for a Girl Assistants Virtual Info Session
- Met virtually with WISEST regarding developing an NSERC Promoscience Girl Guide Collaboration, for a STEM program / challenge. This will launch in May 2021.

### Alberta Girls Parliament

Registration for the 49<sup>th</sup> Session of AGP (March 2020) closed January 17, with 32 girls including: two Rangers from BC, two Rangers from SK, a Ranger from NS, two Rangers from MB, a Ranger from QC, a representative from 4-H, and two representatives from AJFWA (Alberta Junior Forest Wardens Association). Days before the event, Alberta Health Services shutdown all in-person gatherings. The

national office followed provincial health authorities shortly after, cancelling the 2020 Session of AGP. Our Guiders and girls are resilient and look forward to hosting the 49<sup>th</sup> Session virtually in March 2021.

### Lones

Unlike our other programs, Lones registrations increased substantially this year from 1 Spark, 2 Guides, 1 Pathfinder, 4 Rangers in January 2020 to 5 Sparks, 8 Brownies, 12 Guides, 6 Pathfinders, 3 Rangers, 11 Spark/Brownie Multi-branch groups by November.

### Events

- **A Link to the Future** registration opened on January 22. Quebec, BC, and Nova Scotia accepted invitations to send members. Although the event cancelled due to COVID-19 protocols, we are planning for a virtual event for 2021.
- **Arts Camp South** (July 5-11,) and **Arts Camp North** (August 9-15,) established Responsible Guiders and planning committees before cancelling due to COVID-19 protocols. We are proposing an online event for 2021.
- **Provincial Arts Challenge** –We collaborated with Membership on the new Meeting in a Box programming support and posted it for Sparks, Brownie and Guides on the website Membership page.
- Working on developing a **Challenge for a Brownie Revel** to celebrate Brownie's centennial. We are looking for archive resources.



### CYOC\_- Pat Guillemaud

- The Calgary Young Offender Centre remains closed to visitors and is not expected to open before spring 2021.

## Member Services Committee

Committee includes:

Member Service Coordinator

Membership Adviser

Awards Liaison

Link Liaison

Trefoil Guild Liaison

PR and Communication Adviser

Blue-Print Editor

Training Adviser

– Shannen Hoffman

– Bev Burton and Dana Wagner

- Henny Smit Neilson

- Lauren Gee

- Beverly Headon-Smith and Glenda Metro

– Rosemary Smith and Veronica Hoffman

- Sam Boys and Finley Rogers

– Rose Ward



Over the summer, the advisers quickly created some meetings for the youth in AB, NT, and YT (ANY). Additionally, our Training and PR Committees collaborated to post some virtual campfire and craft session videos for our Guiders to our YouTube channel. We extend much appreciation for all their efforts during that critical time.

Our Unified Banking and Training team successfully prepared ANY members for this transition. Kudos to all the ladies on these teams!

In the spring, Alberta Health Services (AHS) recommended that adults and youth belong to only one cohort outside their work/school and family groups. This restriction lowered our

registration numbers. To boost registration, the committees promoted the other opportunities for Guiding, such as, Lones and non-Guider roles like Trefoil, Link, and committees for adults.



## Highlights

- Worked with the PR Adviser to update workflow processes for publication submissions following the elimination of the Publications Lead and Website Coordinator positions.
- Worked with the Membership Adviser to activate her committee's many projects that paused due to COVID-19 protocols. We explored the possibilities available beyond the traditional methods to keep moving forward to our new normal.
- Supported the Training Adviser as she implemented new Training and Guider Learning Paths and reinvented training delivery methods. Truly a talented and resourceful team! They provided 304 training sessions face-to-face and webinar/ telephone trainings with 4366 participants.

## Membership - Bev Burton and Dana Wagner

The Membership Committee began 2020 by setting to work on the following initiatives:

- Getting copies of the Canadian Guider into libraries
- Resource lists for each Area
- Updated Pocket Pals
- Sourced I Promise Crests and postcards for girls
- Promoting Membership through school mail outs, career fairs, community events, and more.

By the year-end, they accomplished these projects:

- Collaborated with the Program Committee to release three Meetings in a Box for Sparks, Brownies, and Guides
- Following up with women on the Adult Inquiry lists
- Adding ideas/instant meetings to the Bring a Friend and Plus One Challenges
- Frequently Asked Questions/Cheat Sheet
- Brainstorming ways to recruit that does involve in person
- Assisted Areas in moving potential members into active members and helping Guiders update their PRCs
- Regular Friday Check-in posts with the committee

These projects remain on-hold due to COVID-19 protocols:

- School mail outs
- Taste of Guiding rallies
- University/College partnerships
- Welcome Wagon partnership
- Kindergarten registrations
- Library subscriptions for Canadian Guiders
- The CPR Team comprised many eager Guiders challenged by COVID-19 protocol logistics. They put these plans on hold.
  - a crest to give away at events
  - set up Area recruitment events
  - FAQ for new Guiders/new Units starting up in new communities on getting rental subsidy, new unit assistance, information on the online store, how to connect with their District
  - Working with the National Diversity and Inclusivity department to start ESL drop in units
  - Establishing new units in non-traditional places such as shelters



### Awards:

- Revised and posted Awards booklet
- Launched the Ivy Award
- Thank You card templates for use by girls/Guiders to adult
- Created an Awards Checklist to help with reviewing nominations
- Launched the Girl Assistant Award



### Trefoil:

- Shared the new Canadian Trefoil Guild handbook
- Cancelled the annual Round Up
- Launched the ANY Trefoil Guild's page on Facebook

### PR - Rosemary Smith and Veronica Hoffman

The PR and Communications committee had a busy year that included volunteer changes, infrastructure changes, and the need to streamline communications. The national office and our website coordinator began the year with website infrastructure upgrades which completed by the end of February. We created crests to thank first-time submitters to Blue-Print. Blue-Print moved online only by March. We recognized internet access came with challenges for some members. We did our best to support those without access, either because of the cost of hardware, or access to internet itself.

The PR Adviser, in consultation with the national marketing manager, met with Rogers Entertainment (Radio) on January 24, regarding the price package for five weeks of radio advertisement/year to support our registration and cookie selling campaigns. We decided against paid radio advertising for spring cookies. We received fabulous free advertising resulting from the unusual circumstances we landed in due to COVID-19 -- no in-person guiding, only partial delivery of cookies, and the launch of online sales. Many local businesses stepped up to sell cookies for us. Media increased in March and April showcasing positive stories of Guiding. In the fall, we returned to promoting registration and the Chocolatey Mint Girl Guide Cookie campaign by sending out Public Service Announcements (PSAs), submitting articles to local community newsletters and newspapers, and creating social media posts. Through the spring and summer, the PR Adviser tutored the areas on maximizing free (earned) media opportunities and the best use of Public Service Announcements (PSA); writing submissions for newsletters; and preparing for media interviews.

Scheduled initiatives to reach girls and Guiders on all social media platforms successfully increased our followers at the beginning of the year. We took a brief intermission when the national office asked us to pause posting due to quickly changing circumstances due to COVID-19 complications. By May, social media was hopping again with internal contacts broadcasting our activities. Recent initiatives include:

- Wellness Wednesdays
- Women's History Month – Inspirational Women for the month of October.
- Alberta Council Archive Throwback Thursdays – working on this with Janet (Archives Lead)
- Membership Mondays – working on this with the Membership Committee.

**D**id you know that Alberta Council has four official social media pages?

- **Facebook page:** [Girl Guides of Canada, Alberta Council](#)
- **Twitter account:** [@GGC\\_ANYCouncil](#)
- **Instagram account:** [@GGCAAlbertaCouncil](#)
- **YouTube channel:** [GGC, Alberta Council](#)

## Training – Rose Ward

2020 began with Training events scheduled, speakers lined up, and plans for a new national community of practice, updates to the training stream. Pivoting quickly to virtual meetings, we held the annual Training meeting on April 4, 2020 with the training sub-committee and the ATAs representing all the areas. We ended the year strong.

For comparison, in 2019 we offered 463 trainings with just under 1,000 trainer-hours and approximately 6,300 participants. We only cancelled 8 sessions due to lack of registrations. In 2020, we offered a total of 304 training sessions including face to face, webinar, and by telephone, for 4366 participants at 921 trainer-hours. This is only a reduction of about 30% over the year. Given the personal and organizational challenges our Trainers experience and the time needed to prepare trainings on new platforms, this is an outstanding accomplishment.

Due to COVID-19 protocols resulting in no in-person Guiding, we cancelled six events: Trainer's Weekend, Multi-Faceted (held in conjunction with the AGM and banquet), OAL Weekend, OAL Adventure (Lakeland Canoe Circuit and Backpacking Expedition to Skoki Circuit), Hodge Podge, and the Commissioners' Workshop (which moved to a series of webinars).

While the impact of Covid-19 paused some activities, it accelerated others like nationwide unified banking. Trainers worked with the Alberta Council Treasurer and a team of Champions to train Unit/District treasurers. Area Training Advisers coordinated trainings and assigned a Trainer to support each Champion. Although trainings were optional for treasurers, they needed to complete the e-course, quiz, and a form to access their banking account.

Another opportunity that arose -- online training videos -- came from the strategic planning session held in February 2020. Trainers worked with PR, the website coordinator, and the Alberta Council Youth Forum to develop three five-minute "Did You Know" video trainings about Guiding traditions. The first video called 'Openings for Unit Meetings' launched in the fall. It included the Spark Opening, Brownie Opening, and Guide Horseshoe. Coming in 2021 are 'Knots for all Branches' demonstrating the reef knot for Sparks' and Brownies' ties; the clove hitch and sheet bend for Guides in a Colour Party; and the packer's knot used in a bed roll and the bowline also called the rescue knot for Pathfinders and Rangers. The final video planned for release in late 2021 is "Gadgets for all Branches".

## Youth Forum - Jacquie Ahern and Amanda Farkash

We had 10 girls in 2020. Applications opened in May which required girls to answer a series of questions on SurveyMonkey and attach their resume. We received nineteen applications which is nearly double the number of applicants received in 2019. The promotions posted on social media contributed to these high numbers. In August, we welcomed Annika Yee, Madeline Hawkins, Laina Gold, Katey Dambrowitz, and Ella Johnson. We said goodbye to four members who aged out this year, Emily Hayes, Skylar Johnson, Anita Roy, and Alex Bucknell.

### Secret Marathon - Calgary

Youth Forum members in Calgary participated in the Secret 3K event. The Running Room and Calgary Area Girl Guides collaborated to teach Guides and Pathfinders about the documentary film called "The Secret Marathon" about Afghan women running in a marathon in Afghanistan. Women in Afghanistan and their families faced threats for running.

Participants at the Calgary event met Director Kate McKenzie who created the movie and Executive Producer, Martin Parnell, who also authored a book about his experience in Afghanistan. After seeing the film and discussing it with Kate and Martin, everyone ran 3 km. The Secret Marathon movie and discussion allowed the girls to explore issues of gender equality while thinking about setting their own health and fitness goals. The Secret 3K events and Facebook donation button raised \$20,703 towards Girl Guides of Canada in 2020.





The social media team tracked the monthly analytics for the Youth Forum Instagram account to learn the popular and most engaging posts. By improving the content quality, we increased the number of followers and engagement from their followers. We decided on a posting schedule and set goals for each month to help with our engagement levels. Kenzie, Skylar, and Emily created posts for Wellness Wednesdays. Ella created a “Full House” style video to showcase the forum members. Over the summer we used the story feature on Instagram for a Guiding Trivia contest. It was wonderful to see so many participants and we learned how to interact with our followers.



Our service project invited units to fill shoe boxes with items for girls of a similar age and donate the shoe boxes to a local shelter. Lucy, Anita, and Emily wrote an article for the Blue-Print and posted details on Instagram to promote the service project. A few people contacted the Youth Forum with their success stories regarding the project before the project was postponed due to COVID-19 protocols. With the project on hold, Ella, Katey, Madeline, Laina, Ainsley, and Krista designed a temporary alternative -- a gratitude project for girls directed towards their Guiders. In this project, girls created a written or video thank you note. Youth Forum shared the thank you notes on their Instagram.

Kaisha, Kenzie, and Skylar helped the Program Advisor plan and run an online session to increase the number of girl assistants. The information session included a slideshow, followed by questions. The webinar received a very good response, and more sessions are being considered. Miranda wrote an article about girl assistants for the Blue-Print.

Each of the forum members attend a committee of their choosing and assist with projects. In response to COVID-19, many of the committees worked on activities for girls to do either at home or with their units over video calls. Kaisha and Anita helped the camping committee create their girl



engagement activities, while Krista assisted with the International Committee, and Lucy provided content for Membership Monday social media posts for the Membership Committee.



Lucy, Ainsley, Anita, Kaisha, Emily, and Kenzie designed a challenge and crest titled “You in the World”. The challenge focused on friendship, communication, growing up, and community interactions. They wrote the activities in a format like the program platform. Alberta Council approved the challenge and crest in the fall. It is available on the website.

Other projects we accomplished included a 2019 year in review slideshow for the 2020 online AGM and a pre-recorded a campfire for all ages posted on You Tube in the summer of 2020.



## Operations

### Archives - Janet Allcock

Units toured the archives in January and February however when the COVID-19 shutdown occurred, we cancelled all visits and continued the work from home -- sorting, cataloguing, and scanning the many photo albums.

Donations arrived in January. One consisted of two large boxes of artifacts and memorabilia from a long-time Guider, including a dress uniform from the 1960's which required some research to authenticate. We determined the uniform was the first of two styles at that time. We did not know this version existed! The dress arrived in poor condition. It was accessioned, documented, and wrapped in tissue paper in an archival box.

We processed the remainder of the donations and stored the books from the collection in archival storage boxes. We updated our manual, repositioned display cabinets to accommodate the new staff at the office and assisted a research student. Shortly before the shutdown, we received a collection of Guiding gear and a collection of photo albums. The photos cover activities in some of the small communities to the east of Edmonton: Lamont, Bruderheim and Chipman. As we do not know when we can return to Guide House, these kept us busy at home.

While home, we also read past council minutes and compiled a data base of interesting developments in Guiding in Alberta. With all our materials recorded stored electronically, we responded to requests without going into the Guide House. Two requests came from researchers outside Guiding. The first inquiry requested information on early Guide camping in the Cooking Lake area; the second, from a professor at MacEwan University writing an article involving drill activities in Guiding. We had enough information to be able to give them considerable help. Another inquiry came from Margaret Utgoff for information on Guide camping in the Lac St. Anne region. We also had a request from a Guider in France.

### Cookies - Tanya Morin

2020 cookie sales preparations began in the usual manner then quickly spiraled into a tornado of challenges and changes that showed the strength and resilience of the women in Girl Guides. Unified banking transition complicated the process for some units. One advantage was the increased positive media attention we received for the spring campaign thanks to businesses wanting to help the girls sell cookies.

#### Spring Classic Cookie Campaign

As of January 9, Alberta Council had booked 238 spring cookie campaign delivery points: 217 homes, 15 businesses, 2 schools, 4 warehouses. We ordered 65,000 cases of cookies.

When COVID-19 reached pandemic levels across Canada in March, cookie sales halted along with all in-person Guiding. As of Thursday April 30, the national office implemented a reverse cookie collection process to collect 30,707 unopened cases of classic cookies from our Alberta Areas. Unsold cases remained with Units and District, which many local businesses helped to sell on behalf of units and girls. Girls who wanted to sell cookies were encouraged to do so once it was safe to do so as directed by the GGC protocols. More than 40 businesses participated in cookie sales across Alberta and NT in addition to London Drugs, Canadian Tire, Save On Foods, and Sobeys.

#### Fall Chocolatey-Mint Cookie Campaign

Initially in late spring, the national office cancelled the Mint 2020 campaign. When opportunities arose to proceed with the fall campaign, the spring and fall campaigns overlapped. While some units still sold the



classic cookies, on August 19 the national office requested mint unit cookie allocations from unit contact Guiders. While the process for transferring cookie between units was still being prepared, the national office approved mint 2020 cookie final allocations September 10. Alberta Council ordered 25,000 cases of mint cookies. From the national staff to unit Guiders, the whole organization demonstrated our agility to bring in revenue for the spring and fall cookie campaigns.

Mint cookie delivery was another opportunity to practice patience, innovation, and agility. With many units across Canada choosing online sales, cookie distribution relied on smaller delivery agents. Alberta Council bucked the trend; most of our units decided to sell cookies in person rather than online. As of November 6, only a small number of our units received their cookies. Many units reported damaged/missing cases before the processes to deal with damage were finalized. The smaller delivery agents did not provide tracking numbers for cookie deliveries to Guiders complicating the process further. Currently, the fall campaign remains open until March 2021. GGC's agility was demonstrated by moving forward while still working out the details. Most Guiders exercised patience, although noted the lessons learned.

### Property - Margaret Utgoff

Seven properties had outstanding ownership issues through 2020. The process to resolve the issues required communicating with government departments, submitting specialized forms and requests, and waiting for a response. This past year we were successful in selling Sandy Lake Camp in NWT, we are renewing the leases on Camp Okeekun, and Camp Elkwater. We resolved the issue of Silverland Camp and High River Guide/ Scout Hall. The Camp Noster lease ended, and we are successfully returning that property to the government.

We are sincerely grateful that Cheryl Ryan, Area Commissioner, and her husband went to the camp on Mother's Day to resolve the situation. As we previously learned that the use motorized vehicles could leave ruts/tracks and stall the process for the time for natural vegetation to regrow. Cheryl and her husband dismantled the outhouse and hauled, by hand, all the debris through the forest out to their truck. They carried in, by hand, 1,300 litres of earth to fill in the hole from the remaining outhouse and to top up the other outhouse holes. The inspector sent the final report to Disposition Maintenance Approvals. Now we wait for the Letter of Clearance from the Alberta Government stating we are no longer the leaseholders for Camp Noster.

The rest of our camps have been closed for overnights and are being maintained by a combination of paid staff and volunteers, and are anxiously awaiting the return of campers.

### Risk and Compliance

Coordinator	- Jen Dougherty and Betty Slater
Safe Guide Co-Advisers	- Chris Haydon and Twyla Jenkins
Girl Protection	- Donna Leonard Robb

### Safe Guide Co-Advisers - Chris Haydon and Twyla Jenkins

Thirty-six Safe Guide Assessors helped Guiders throughout Alberta, Northwest Territories, and Yukon (ANY) with their risk assessment for their events. In the first quarter of 2020 before the COVID-19 shut down, the ANY office received 443 files for events (430 yellow files and 13 red files). Additionally, the office received eight mislabelled or duplicate files, seven water files, nine cases where the Responsible Guider changed, and 23 cancelled or rescheduled events. Assessors denied one yellow event and accepted seven late yellow cases. The COVID-19 protocols between March and August impacted 77 files: seven red; 69 yellow; and one green; at least 55 of these were Third-Party Service Provider events.

Guiders jumped into action again in the fall when the COVID-19 protocols eased. They submitted 59 yellow level events in September; 69, in October; and three in November before protocols tightened again. All September events and most



October meetings were outdoors. Assessors acknowledged countless campfires and cooking events, five canoe days, a horse-riding event and a horse grooming session, numerous camp skills events, hikes, biking, and a day at the Wolf Dog sanctuary. A Ranger group built wooden stools and another group did woodworking at the Cold Lake base. As well we heard of many green level events such as, snow shoeing, community cleanups, and discovering parks in their town/city. The dedication, determination and creativity of Guiders shone through brightly as they took great advantage of this year's warm fall.

COVID-19 protocols affected units travelling in 2020 and 2021 due to the restriction on in-person meeting, fundraising/cookie sales, overnight stays, and whether the borders would be open for travellers. In addition, airline cuts affected both domestic and international trips. Guiders and participants decided either to postpone their trips to 2022 or to cancel the trip totally. The Travel Support leads received new SG.8 submissions for travel in 2022 and onward. The hope of travelling is on the horizon!

## Area Councils

Alberta Council encompasses Alberta, Northwest Territories, and Yukon and is divided into 10 unique areas comprised of rural, urban, and northern communities. The Area Councils manage the day-to-day operations of their area with the Area Commissioner being the senior volunteer and chair of their council.

### Area Commissioners

Aurora Adventures Area Commissioner -	Andrea Korpel (ending May) - Sheri Graham (May– May 2023)
Calgary Area Commissioner	- Michele Harding (term ends May 2022)
Chinook Area Commissioner	- Tracy Burton (ending May) - Tania Prucyk (May– May 2023)
Cypress Hills Area Commissioner	- Stephanie Lindstedt (term ends May 2022)
Edmonton Area Commissioner	- Kathy House & Cheryl Skorobohach (ending May) - Maren Bolstler & Rachel Foley (May– May 2023)
Parkland Area Commissioner	- Denise Cruz (term ends May 2022)
Peace River Area Commissioner	- Crystal Power (ending May) - Bev Lipon (May– May 2023)
Prairie Rose Area Commissioner	- Tracey Stagg (ending May) - Noëlle Brisebois & Lisa Penzo (May– May 2023)
Tamarac Area Commissioner	- Patricia Wilson (term ending May 2022)
Woodsmoke Area Commissioner	- Cheryl Ryan (ending May 2020) - Kim Higdon & Diana Szabo-Mansfield (May– May 2023)

### Aurora Adventures Area

In Aurora Adventures Area the beginning of 2020 saw plans being drawn up for a big renovation at Camp Sprucewind in Yukon, and an improvement being done at Camp Dechinta in Northwest Territories, as well as our traditional large-scale fly-up ceremonies and District Camp. Many units cancelled meetings due to cold (-30C or more) in January, but some Thinking Day Bridging was done, and units were out in the community doing activities like glass blowing.

With the lockdown announcements, most of our units closed early for the year. Guiders tried to keep girls engaged with at home activities and porch drop-offs, but there was a definite lack of participation from many families. Many Guiders refused to use virtual meetings, due mainly to a lack of consistent internet availability and high costs for bandwidth in the North.

We had a slow start to the Guiding year, with many units (especially in NWT) choosing not to open right away. Our numbers were down by 33.62% (373 down to 241 girl members and 100 down to 73 adult members) which also influenced the running of our units.





Those units that did manage to start up in September with outdoor meetings took advantage of our wonderful community spaces to go hiking and bike riding, and spent time in parks, playgrounds, and school fields. Units learned how to build “one-person” fires, painted rocks and made shelters.

By October, it was getting colder and darker and both Territories received permission to move to indoor meetings. Units practiced their distancing and made pom-pom shooters, bath bombs and slime, and made holiday cards to donate to a local senior’s center. Units made up distanced skits, investigated bones from various local animal species and did a distanced fashion show.

Our Area is fortunate to be only lightly affected by COVID-19 cases compared to the rest of Canada, but each case announcement brings in a huge amount of worry and fear to our members and families, especially considering the risks for community spread in our close-knit populations. Here’s hoping that once vaccinations are complete, we will have a return to some of our more traditional Guiding events!

## Calgary Area

Calgary Area literally started 2020 with a bang when we celebrated Thinking Day with our first-ever private fireworks festival. Almost 2100 girls and Guiders gathered on the outskirts of Calgary for an outdoor dance party in the snow topped off by 20 minutes of super, amazing, incredible fireworks!

This was followed by Calgary Area’s participation in the Secret 3K on March 4. Calgary Area was proud to see their efforts to bring the two organizations together come to fruition and raise \$44,000 for GGC. Girls and Guiders participated in the run, provided volunteer help on the course, and cheered runners from the sidelines.



Other Area events in January and February included Winter Fun Day at Jubilee, and STEM Days for Sparks and Brownies, and skating at Olympic Plaza.

Then COVID-19 hit. All in-person activities were cancelled, and all camp sites and offices were closed as of March 14. In true Guiding form, less than two weeks later, the youth on our Calgary Instagram Team led the way and started hosting weekly online meetings based on badge themes as well as regular virtual campfires. These continued for two months and provided crucial inspiration and connection for girls and Guiders across Canada. In July, we were sad to say goodbye to all four of our Calgary office staff when economic challenges caused by COVID-19 necessitated layoffs across Canada.

Re-opening in September came with new challenges finding meeting spaces for units since many property owners did not allow external groups to use their facilities for 2020-2021. Luckily, the fall weather cooperated while units met outdoors in September and October. We re-opened our campsites in September for day use. Canoeing at Camp Westover was more popular than ever. Several Calgary Units took up CEO Jill Zelmanovits on her offer to participate in virtual unit meetings. During COVID-19, units got creative selling cookies using contactless methods such as cookie drive-thrus and creating promotional videos for social media.

In the fall, Area Committees also figured out new ways to run activities safely. The Camping Committee hosted Brownie Camp Academy for ten units by using ten different campsites. The Training Committee gained



national attention for their expertise hosting virtual trainings. Sessions were so popular that attendees joined from across Canada and even overseas.

It truly was a year of extreme highs and lows. There were times that were exhausting, chaotic and heart breaking but the year showed our perseverance and steadfast commitment to helping one another. The challenges of 2020 have increased our resilience and inventiveness to take us forward into 2021.

## Chinook Area

2020 was a year! We saw a lot of changes come due to the pandemic. We started off with an abundance of classic cookies that were both sold with local vendors and the majority returned for national vendors. This helped to keep our girls safe. We sadly have lost our local office, which brought a deep appreciation for what we had. Units have been meeting outdoors for many different activities. We have also pivoted to virtual meetings, which can be interesting for any branch of Guiding. The chocolatey mint campaign has taught us patience and resiliency. This was a learning year. Only way to go is up from here!

## Cypress Hills Area



We are rebooting GOTA: Guides on the Air. A few contacts in Texas and California were made, as well as learning about Morse code and practicing talking on the radios to each other. Winter Frolic, Winter Frolic Jr, and Winter Frolic Sr. were held in January and February at Elkwater. Elkwater Girl Guide Camp continues to await our return. Our spring Arts Event was supported by United Way and reached 85 participants with take-home craft packages.

We completed the Commissioners' Challenge in May 2020; there were 166 participants who helped reduce our environmental impact by recycling unusual items. One of our youth members helped redesign of the Mouse Around the House challenge crest. We were able to redirect our annual United Way grant to purchase program equipment. We purchased leather stamping tools, a 6" Dobsonian telescope, Snap Circuits kits, folding tables, sewing machines and supplies, and woodburning tools.

Area Council meets virtually.

Most of our units did not start until the end of September or beginning of October. Those units who were meeting before we could meet indoors were derailed by the weather at times. They still managed to work on program activities, host a costume parade for the residents of South County Village Care Center, have an outdoor paint night, play outdoor games, explore some community parks, carve pumpkins, have a drive by visit with Santa, and pick up litter. There was a multi-unit effort to make Christmas cards for the stuffed bear program, as well as many groups having Halloween dress ups. One adventurous Unit went canoeing in the fall, and a couple went snowshoeing and on a night hike.

Many Units switched to a virtual meet up style instead of a structured online meeting, with the activities from the program being dropped off for the girls by our dedicated Guiders. Pathfinders and Rangers have led meetings that included personal health and wellness, winter celebrations, and the Being You badge. One project they were able to complete was packing hampers for the food bank and they had a cookie drive thru in the bitter cold.

The Guiders have also been full supporters of each other in our ongoing quest to sell cookies and figure out the new financial system. Our two Trefoil Guilds, Mad Hatters and Adventure Owls, continue to meet periodically and support each other through this unpredictable time.





## Edmonton Area



Like other areas under Alberta Council, Edmonton Area started the New Year full of excitement for planned activities, spring camps and summer adventures, unaware of how drastically our year would be changed. Hundreds of participants attended Light the Bridge for Thinking Day, marching from ReMax Field to Kinsmen Park for an evening of friendship, songs, and games while the High-level Bridge sparkled in Guiding colours. Edmonton Area also managed to squeeze in one friendship camp for Pathfinders and Rangers where lifelong memories were made by all those participating.

As we moved into April and a new virtual format, Guiders embraced the challenges and kept on meeting, creating fun and engaging meetings, often with surprise porch drops for their girls. Craft nights, talent shows, games nights, paint nights and virtual sleepovers all helped everyone keep everyone connected over the early days of the pandemic.

In the fall, Guiding remained in Outdoors 1/2 but thanks to our incredibly committed leaders, the Guiding Light kept on shining through the longer nights. Fire building, knife safety, compass skills, and sliding kept the girls warm and active and girls across the Area got to experience unique, outdoor enrolment ceremonies. Edmonton Area also embraced technology and offered many virtual events, such as How Does University Work?, Path to Medicine, My Healthy Relationships, and Science FUNdamentals.

The end of the year saw our members embrace their community spirit as the Commissioners challenged everyone to Random Acts of Kindness. Our members made us proud making cards for seniors, sending letters to our Armed Forces, shoveling sidewalks in their neighbourhood and donating items to those in need. We continue to be in awe of the commitment and enthusiasm of our Guiders to ensure that Edmonton Area guiding can thrive, even in the most challenging of times.



## Parkland Area

2020 has been a different year for guiding, and not without its challenges. Parkland Area has done its best to roll with these changes. Off to an amazing start in January, Parkland's annual training weekend TNT (Try New Things) was held and offered a diverse selection of trainings new and traditional... encompassing everything from financials to royal icing. Members had a great time connecting over coffee and sewing machines. Many laughs were had, and friends were made.

February saw the closing of the Parkland office after many years. Just one small step towards the goal of nationwide optimization.

In March many units moved over to a virtual platform as we transitioned into a form of guiding, we'd never seen before. Camps and sleepovers became virtual tours and activities. Summer was quiet, which allowed families and Guiders to relax and recharge. Usually so busy with events and camps, I was told there were many previously neglected gardens that got a little extra love this year.

Fall kicked off with outdoor in person meetings and Guiders made the most of these events: parks and skating, snowshoeing and campfires. Units were thinking outside the box to offer the girls new and rewarding experiences. Canoeing and horseback riding even rounded out events in places this year. And 8 became 9 as Parklands largest district Goldenfields became, YankeeValley and NoseCreek.

As we moved indoors, ever so briefly, we saw a return to traditional guiding activities. Winter brought us back to the digital world but better prepared for it than we were before.





With the many virtual trainings and program elements we have received, we have been able to offer a diverse and enriching program for our girls. Training members in Parkland Area have stepped up to offer support to Guiders who may be struggling with the feelings of disconnect that 2020 has brought about. Virtual meetups called the "Parkland Partyline" have allowed adult members to connect online over a wide variety of themes. These hangouts have only gained momentum, and we are excited to see what 2021 will bring.

It may not be the Guiding year we wanted or expected, but it is the one we were given, and Guiders have done their best to make the most of it, for the girls at the centre of Parkland Area.

## Peace River Area

The year 2020 started out with a flurry of camps for units of all ages in Peace River Area. February brought Thinking Day and many units worked on the WAGGGS Thinking Day Challenge. Units in Grande Prairie participated in a bridging activity with local Scout troops to celebrate the day and partake of a little friendly competition with Beaver Buggies, Kub Kars and Scout Truck races.

With the move to virtual meetings in March, things slowed down in the Area. Guiders came up with creative ways to keep the girls and themselves connected and involved in Guiding: a trefoil hunt, virtual craft nights and Guiding "care packages" just to name a few.

The fall brought new challenges: planning outdoor meetings in unpredictable weather and virtual meetings with unpredictable internet. There were also new opportunities: walking dogs at the SPCA, community scavenger hunts outdoors and many outdoor winter activities. The year 2020 was unique. Throughout all the challenges, our Guiders and girls dealt with things with ingenuity, perseverance, and a lot of patience. "Keep on Guiding."



## Prairie Rose Area

It has been a very unique and busy year in Prairie Rose Area. We saw a rollercoaster of growth in our membership with Guider and participant numbers for the first half of 2020, followed by a significant decline in our membership numbers in the fall. Here are some of our 2020 celebrations and highlights...

During the first quarter of the year, many districts and units in our area worked to complete badges and challenges and participated in Valentines for local seniors and Veterans, overnight camps, outdoor activities, the Prairie Rose Area Winter Challenge, WAGGGS Thinking Day challenges and activities.

In late March 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic we saw the world of guiding shift. Prairie Rose Area paused all planned activities and events including their very popular "Girls in the City" event, camps and rally days. Although some units chose to pause and put activities on hold, we had many units shift to on-line platforms to connect virtually with their units and continue to deliver the guiding program, including special events, guest speakers and host virtual sleepovers!

We had several 3<sup>rd</sup> year Pathfinders complete and receive their Canada Cord Award and several Rangers achieve their Bronze, Silver or Gold Trailblazer Leadership Awards with distinction. We had two Rangers submit photographs and guiding memories to be included in the ANY Council Grade 12 Graduation video



congratulations and celebration. We ended the Guiding year on a positive note with a lot of hope for what the fall would bring.

Our districts and units got off to a good start in the fall. Units and Guiders embraced the pandemic health and safety measures and found creative ways to embrace the new meeting requirements as they move outdoors for their meetings, getting back to nature, outdoors and exploring their communities. Learning and adapting to the in-person guiding and COVID-19 guidelines. As winter approached, we were able to return to indoors meetings and in late November, quickly found ourselves transitioned to online/anytime guiding meetings which carried us through the December break.

Although it looked very different this year and despite some of the challenges of the past year, our members are as enthusiastic about being a part of Girl Guides as ever.

In our area and districts, guiding continued to serve our local and greater communities with good deeds and service projects. We had districts and units participate in community clean ups, write seniors and Veterans for Valentine's and winter holiday messages, sang with seniors, collected food for Veteran and local food banks, participated in virtual Remembrance Day services, collected items for a winter clothing drive, women's shelters and more. We learned our Guiding promise and laws virtually and found creative ways to host virtual enrollment celebrations.

It has been a year of adaptability, creativity and resilience. We worked hard this fall to keep our girls, guiders and units connected, and help them to know that we are all in this together. We are looking forward to what the new year brings!

## Tamarac Area

Tamarac Area has had a very busy and productive year. Our units started the year meeting outdoors and taking the opportunity to enjoy all that mother nature has to offer including hiking, snow crafts and badge work. All our units have now successfully transitioned to virtual meetings. Our members have developed new online skills and completed virtual sleepovers, crafts, great baking and cooking opportunities and have continued to grow the sisterhood of Guiding virtually.



Our Guiders have proven their resourcefulness and their commitment to GGC and the members of their units, by looking for fun and exciting ways to continue to deliver the GGC program to our members in a brand new way.

Tamarac has a number of units who are continuing to work towards 2022 international trips and are looking forward to these great opportunities to travel the world with GGC.



## Woodsmoke Area

Woodsmoke Area had a challenging 2020. Battle River, Lloydminster, Lakeland, Sak-A-Guna, and Veg-an-Milion, like other Alberta Districts, spent the majority of 2020 having virtual, any time and outdoor meetings while following COVID-19 public health measures. We are amazed by our brilliant Guiders and how they overcame the multiple challenges of ever-changing procedures, hunting for meeting places that met restrictions, learning how to deliver our program online and in general being a support to our girls and each other. It was a steep learning curve but in the end our





Guiders and girls persevered and have had some great activities, completed program work, earned badges, and carried on with the fun of Guiding.

Some units have met virtually with other units and resource people that they might not have had the chance to “meet” otherwise. Virtual meeting game nights, sleepovers and bake offs are just a few ways we have adapted. Outdoor meetings included games, nature studies, hikes,

messy crafts, and campfires. Some of our older girls continue to work on their Duke of Edinburgh Awards. Unfortunately, the girls who had national and international trips have had to make alternate arrangements but will be ready and raring to explore as soon as they can.

Area Winter Wonderland Camp was a blast with skating, a movie theatre visit and the girls also decorated mugs and then made cake in them. A few units were able to celebrate Thinking Day with the community before the shutdown. We have been reaching out to our members through mail, in-person drop offs and virtually to stay connected and to show support and appreciation for everyone’s efforts. We look forward to returning to our amazing Area events, camps, trips and just enjoying our Guiding adventure face to face.



### Gone Home

Nona MacPherson (Edmonton Area)

Melva Blood (Calgary Area)

Evelyn Neave (Aurora Adventures Area)

Colette McGowan (Calgary Area)

May Waymen (Edmonton Area)

Patricia Coward (Tamarac Area)

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Girl Guides of Canada, Alberta Council extends our appreciation to all supporters of Guiding in Alberta, Northwest Territories and Yukon for the contributions so she can be everything she wants to be.

# A better world, by girls.



## Girl Guides Alberta Council

For Guiding in Alberta, Northwest Territories and Yukon



*\*All photos were taken with COVID-19 precautions in place, or taken prior to COVID-19*