

*****NEWS RELEASE*****

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American Heritage Girls encourages service acts to break the holiday blues

AHG members accomplished 512,710 service hours throughout last program year

CINCINNATI, Ohio — With Christmas quickly approaching, [38% of people surveyed](#) by the American Psychological Association said their mental stress and strain increased during this season. The [top stressors](#) include lack of time, financial pressure, gift-giving expectations, and family gatherings. This additional anxiety can even filter down to children, with [some experts saying](#) that “many children experience a sense of loss, sadness or isolation during the holidays.”

American Heritage Girls (AHG, www.americanheritagegirls.org), one of the world’s largest Christian, scout-type organizations, is well-aware of this unfortunate trend in children’s mental health. With Bible-based programming that is rich in opportunities for girls of all ages and abilities, **AHG** is dedicated to equipping young women with the biblical background, leadership abilities, and life skills to be a well-rounded woman of faith.

AHG founder and executive director Patti Garibay commented, “There is such a stigma about mental health that makes people unwilling to be open about their struggles, but we have to remember that emotional well-being is just as important as physical health. Christmastime should be a time of joy and fellowship as we reflect on the gift of the Savior, but can be marred by the holiday blues. We encourage parents, guardians, and teachers to be open with their girls about this troubling trend around Christmastime and come up with solutions to help combat any lingering stresses.”

One way to combat the holiday blues in children is through volunteer work. [Many experts agree](#) that donating time to help others is a great way to promote healthy mental well-being around the holidays, especially for children.

For **AHG**, their members have demonstrated a huge capacity for volunteer work. **AHG** Troops regularly perform service of all types within their communities year-round. In the **AHG** Program Year ending May 30, 2022, girls performed 512,710 service hours across the country despite challenges brought on by the pandemic.

Garibay commented, “Volunteering can teach your child the importance of giving and expressing gratitude. Donating food to a local food bank, volunteering at a local animal shelter or soup kitchen — there are so many ways to get your girl out around the holidays to serve others. The act of serving others in your community helps refocus the heart to the real focus of the holiday season and break that negative mental state.”

American Heritage Girls was founded in 1995 when *Founder and Executive Director Patti Garibay* became concerned with the direction the Girl Scouts of America was headed. *Garibay*, along with a group of concerned parents, wanted a faith-based, scout-type character development program for their daughters, and *American Heritage Girls* was born. Today, there are [Troops](#) in all 50 states and girls being served in 15 countries around the globe. Girls can join a Troop at any time; if a Troop is not available nearby, they can become a [Trailblazer](#) and enjoy the *AHG* program alongside their parent. A variety of Christian denominations are also represented as [Charter Organizations](#) for Troops. Thousands of volunteer members across the country are helping girls grow in their faith, cultivate a heart for service, enjoy the great outdoors, and have more fun than they can imagine.

At *AHG*, girls ages five to 18 meet together as [a single Troop](#) at the same time and then break out into Units by Levels. This gives *AHG* girls the important social experience of interacting with friends and godly mentors of various ages; members also learn leadership skills within a group setting. *AHG* Troops are located in [local communities](#) across the nation. If none exists in a given area, families can bring the *AHG* Program to their own area. An *American Heritage Girls* Troop Development Coach is available to provide resources to potential Charter Organizations and other families to form [a new Troop](#). To hear more about the purpose, mission, and vision of *AHG* from *Founder and Executive Director Patti Garibay*, [click here](#).

AHG's "Raising Godly Girls" radio feature and [Raising Godly Girls blog](#) shares guidance and biblically based advice on many key topics affecting girls today — from bullying and identity to anxiety and body image issues. It gives parents, educators, and faith community leaders a set of tools, resources, and Scripture-based advice to assist in raising girls after God's own heart. The ["Raising Godly Girls Minute" with Patti Garibay](#) airs on 1000+ Christian radio stations across the country.

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To schedule interviews with spokespersons from *American Heritage Girls*, contact Media@HamiltonStrategies.com, Beth Harrison, 610.584.1096 ext. 105, or Deborah Hamilton, ext. 102.

To inquire about airing the ["Raising Godly Girls Minute" with Patti Garibay](#), contact [Michael Hamilton, 610.584.1096, ext. 101](#).