



Girl Scout Council of St. Croix Valley  
400 South Robert Street  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55107  
651-227-8835 or 800-845-0787 Voice/TTY  
651-227-7533 Fax  
www.girlscoutscv.org

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Contacts: Dawn M. Short, Communications Specialist, 651-251-1218 or  
dshort@girlscoutscv.org  
Lisa Hiebert, Director of Marketing and Communications, 651-251-1275 or  
lhiebert@girlscoutscv.org

**AFRICAN AMERICAN TEENS PURSUE HIGHER EDUCATION DREAM**  
*Girl Scouts to Tour Historically Black Colleges and Universities*

**(St. Paul, Minn.)** For many girls, including African American girls, going to college is a dream. According to a June 2006 report in Education Week, a national education news publication, while Minnesota retains one of the highest graduation rates for white students at 83 percent, it has one of the lowest rates for black students at 44 percent. The national graduation rate average for black students is 52 percent. Despite statistics, members of the Girl Scout Council of St. Croix Valley’s Beta Gamma Girl Scouts (BGGs) group, are focused building their education and leadership skills for the future which will help them determine their own destiny. On March 31 – April 6, nearly 40 African American Girl Scouts from St. Paul area high schools will visit some of the nation’s top Black colleges and universities in Atlanta, Georgia.

The annual BGGs college tour serves a dual purpose for Girl Scouts. It’s an introduction to the opportunities that await them after high school, and it highlights inspirational examples of African American culture through visits to historical sites and interactions with college staff and students.

BGGs members chose Atlanta because it is home to the largest consortium of Black colleges in the world, including Clark Atlanta University, the Morehouse School of Medicine, Morris Brown College, and Spelman College.

Como High School sophomore Abigail, who has aspirations of being a lawyer said, “I’ve wanted to go to a Historically Black College since I was young.” She added that her favorite television show is *A Different World* from the late 1980s and early 1990s. The television series dealt with the life of students at the fictional Historically Black College, Hillman College and portions of the series were filmed at Morehouse College.

“For many members of the BGGs group, the tour is one more step toward fulfilling a dream,” said Deidre Gayden, BGGs program manager. “BGGs has opened their eyes to options after high school. It’s been a source of support to motivate girls to do well in school, graduate, and pursue higher education.”

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**Where Girls Grow Strong.**

Through BGGGS, girls learn self-respect, life skills, and sisterhood. “They are in more school and Girl Scout activities, and they think about how their education today will affect their future aspirations,” said Gayden.

For Abigail, that is definitely the case. Her advice to other girls is, “Don’t let anyone tell you what you can’t do. You have to believe in yourself and you can make it. I’m on my way!”

While in Atlanta, the girls will also visit landmarks and museums that focus on the contributions of African Americans to America, including the Apex Museum and Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site.

Over the last nine years, the BGGGS college tour has traveled to other cities throughout the country, including Baltimore, Washington, D.C., and New Orleans.

Each BGGGS member pays a portion of her trip by fundraising and participating in the annual Girl Scout Cookie Program.

For more information about the Girl Scout Council of St. Croix Valley’s BGGGS tour of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, call 651-227-8835, 1-800-845-0787, or visit [www.girlscoutscv.org](http://www.girlscoutscv.org).

### **About the Girl Scout Council of St. Croix Valley**

In partnership with 7,100 adult volunteers, the Girl Scout Council of St. Croix Valley helps more than 17,000 girls grow strong in 11 counties of eastern Minnesota and western Wisconsin. Girl Scouts is the world’s preeminent organization for girls, building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.