



Character Development Towards Happy Citizenship

How Guiding grows girls into our Leaders... | Natasha Hendrick

For Natasha Hendrick, being a Girl Guide has had a profound influence in determining who she is and what she does today.

As a geophysicist and proud Girl Guide, Natasha links Guiding to the success she has in her career and to the wide range of life experiences and adventures she enjoys.

Natasha has worked across the world – throughout Australia, in the USA, the UK, Norway and across SE Asia. She has received national research prizes and conference awards, developed new technologies, managed company research programs, trained and developed new geophysicists, and led technical teams across multiple countries.

“I have had a rewarding and successful career, and one of the main reasons for this is because I have shared in and learned from the fun and adventure of Guiding.”

Starting in the Australian organisation some 30 years ago, Natasha talks warmly about how her formative experiences in Guiding – as a Brownie – shaped her character. “I learnt how to share. I was encouraged to try new things and meet new people.

“I came to understand the importance of respecting myself and others, and I started to work out how to set goals and achieve them.”



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“Who knew Brownies could be so much hard work!” says Natasha, “Actually it wasn’t hard work at all ... it was just me having fun with friends ... but an important foundation was being laid.”

Natasha continued growing as a Girl Guide, and reflects upon some of the important moments of learning.

“I remember stepping over the edge of a cliff for the first time as I learnt to abseil. I can recall having to abandon camp at 3am in the morning due to torrential rain - even though we’d dug trenches for hours to try to keep the tent floors dry! I learnt to cook outdoors and share songs around the campfire. With my Guiding friends we learnt the importance of giving Service to others at local aged-care homes and community centres. We stayed up all night to help newly-hatched sea turtles find their way to the ocean for the first time. I learnt of my sister Guides from other countries and tried to understand the worlds from which they came.”

“All of these experiences have shaped the adult that I have become. I learnt to be a seeker of challenge and adventure. I came to understand the importance of planning, team work, leadership, and shared fun ... and most importantly I developed a great belief in myself.”

“I can never repay the Guide Leaders who gave me this wonderful gift.”

It is Natasha’s experience internationally with Guiding that has provided her with the strongest memories, such as when she volunteered as a camp counsellor on a Girl Scout USA Summer Camp. “40 degrees Celsius, 90% humidity, teenage girls, tents, tornadoes, poison ivy and snakes ... not everyone’s idea of a restful holiday! But what a blast! Ten weeks living in tents, sharing, doing, exploring, and growing.”

Natasha is perfectly clear about how her experiences as a Girl Guide have developed her character and skills; “The ability to think on my feet - it’s hard work to occupy 20 girls at a moment’s notice when thunderstorms cancel an activity! The art of encouraging and mentoring others to do their best and try new things. The ability to set a goal, make a plan and take on a leadership role; and the skills to work with strangers - who soon became friends - to get a job done.”

As an adult volunteer, Natasha has also represented Australia at workshops and conferences internationally, and worked with Guiding organisations around the world to improve volunteer recruitment and retention.



“The spirit of community at international gatherings is overwhelming!” she says... “It reinforces what we are always taught through Guides – respect and honour people from all cultures and walks of life, and anything and everything becomes possible! This has been a great positive influence on my ability to join teams of professionals all over the world and achieve many goals.”

Closer to home, Natasha has enjoyed roles that have included training young leaders, teaching canoeing and kayaking skills, facilitating adventure based-learning activities, and volunteering as an Assistant State Commissioner and an Assistant Chief Commissioner.

“What stands out most from all of my Guiding experiences are things like laughter, friendships all over the country and around the world, the thrill of trying new things, the adventure of discovering the world around me, words of support and encouragement, and most importantly ... fun!”

Her message to any Guide is simple:

“Dare to be different. Dare to be a Guide! You will have the opportunity to do things and learn things and see things others won’t.”



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