From the President

"A goal without a plan is just a wish."  
  — Antoine de Saint-Exupery

The year 2014 is well under way, and TEC is busily making plans!

- Our upcoming social and service project will be held on Wednesday, March 5. Look for more details about this informal gathering later in this newsletter. Attending the social is a great way to get to know other TEC members while helping to recognize our 2013 scholarship recipients in a meaningful (and enjoyable) way. *Bring a friend to share in the fun!*  

- Also in the works is the annual scholarship reception scheduled for Sunday, April 13. Come meet the amazing young women who will receive merit scholarships this year. Event details will be sent to all TEC members via e-Vite.com invitations by the end of March. Watch for yours and if you do not receive one or have questions, please contact us at our email address, EmeraldCircle@sjgs.org.

- While spring 2014 scholarships have been fully funded through foundation earnings, membership fees, and generous donations from our members, fundraising for 2014-2015 scholarships is in progress. In order for TEC to award the same number of scholarships or more each year, we rely on the generosity of our members and donors.

  If you have ever wondered if your donations make a difference, read further to learn more about a few of our past scholarship recipients. Meeting these outstanding young women, reading their notes of appreciation, or hearing about their accomplishments always reminds me that providing scholarships is a worthy goal, and it can only be accomplished with the support of our members. *Thank you so much for your support!* . . .  

And...
From the President—Continued

- Finally, to continue TEC's legacy of support, we need members who will step up to become leaders, working to set goals for TEC and make plans for coming years. Nominations are needed for several executive committee positions; continue reading below for details on the positions open for next year. Let us know if you are willing to serve as an officer or on a TEC committee. You'll be glad you did! It's a wonderful, amazing experience.

Join me in continuing to make scholarships and support for young women more than a wish.

Joanne Williams
President, The Emerald Circle

Executive Committee nominations sought

Nominations for the following positions on the TEC Executive Committee are now open.

- **1ST VICE PRESIDENT, MEMBERSHIP**: Develops the annual membership campaign and assists the president as requested
- **SECRETARY**: Prepares minutes of meetings and handles correspondence
- **HISTORIAN**: Creates a display board for use at TEC and Girl Scout events and maintains a scrapbook as a historical record of TEC accomplishments
- **FUNDING CHAIR**: Promotes the TEC Gold Award Merit Scholarship Endowment and annual scholarship fund; also implements approved goals and strategies to increase funding
- **OUTREACH CHAIR**: Works with Girl Scouts eligible to submit a scholarship application and maintains contact with scholarship recipients during their college years
- **TECHNOLOGY LIAISON**: Serves as a liaison with GSSJC information technology specialists, oversees the TEC website, and assists Executive Committee members with online communications and technology issues
- **AT LARGE MEMBER**: Attends meetings and provides input on matters of importance to TEC; may be assigned specific duties by the president

Those elected will serve for the June 2014-May 2016 term. Penny Harp is chair of this year’s Nominating Committee, which will accept nominations through the end of February. She may be contacted at pennyharp@sbcglobal.net or send nominations to her through TEC’s email, EmeraldCircle@sjgs.org.

All TEC members are eligible to serve on the Executive Committee, so to assist the Nominating Committee in its work, everyone is asked to complete the TEC Interest Indicator, which is at: http://resources.gssjc.org/Resources/EmeraldCircle/Emerald%20Circle%20Documents%20Public/TECInterestIndicator.pdf

Let us know your interests and skills! Return the completed Interest Indicator to:

The Emerald Circle, GSSJC, 3110 Southwest Freeway, Houston, Texas 77098.
The Emerald Circle is on track to have a productive year, thanks to all who renewed their membership for 2013-2014 or joined this year. Our heartfelt thanks goes to our Valentines!

We appreciate your generous heart and your unwavering support of scholarships for girls.

With this being my first time as 1st Vice President-Membership, I would like you to become a part of the TEC membership team. Let’s brainstorm ways to better reach your friends, colleagues, and the Houston community at large with information about TEC and its mission, and then extend an invitation for them to become members of The Emerald Circle.

Since growing membership and encouraging donations to the scholarship fund are such important keys in building a strong financial base for the future, we all need to work together to achieve those goals. It is critical to have a solid foundation to ensure The Emerald Circle’s capability to continue granting scholarships to outstanding GSSJC Girl Scouts. Contact me with your ideas, comments, and suggestions at jbm@seascape.cc or through TEC’s email address, EmeraldCircle@sjgs.org.

Maybe we can start by inviting a friend who isn’t an Emerald Circle member to the spring social and service project set for Wednesday, March 5.

We have fun visiting with one another, assembling care packages for scholarship recipients, and writing the girls notes of encouragement.

But I’d let Ida Pearl McDonald, 2nd Vice President-Events, you more about that!
By Ida Pearl McDonald

Spring is a busy time for The Emerald Circle, and we invite all members to be a part of two upcoming events. Watch your email for e-Vites for both.

The spring social and service project, set for **Wednesday, March 5**, from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm combines a time for casual socializing with other TEC members and a time to work together assembling finals care packages for the 2013 scholarship recipients. In addition to sending “goodies” to girls, members write notes of encouragement that are obviously appreciated as evidenced by the “thank you” notes TEC receives. The event will be at Program Place for Girls, 3100 Southwest Freeway; use the east entrance. We encourage all members to “Bring a Friend—the more, the merrier! Donations to defray the cost of packages are appreciated.

On **Sunday, April 13**, come meet this year’s Gold Award Merit Scholarship recipients. Hearing about each girl’s accomplishments, future goals, and what they learned from their Gold Award project is inspiring. The presentation and reception will begin at 2:00 pm at GSSJC.

Once you attend this special event, you’ll likely want to come every year to hear more amazing stories about the outstanding Girl Scouts that TEC honors with scholarships.

Autumn E. named fall scholarship recipient

Joining the other 25 young women who were awarded TEC scholarships in 2013 is Autumn E., who is this year’s recipient of The Emerald Circle’s fall Gold Award Merit Scholarship.

Autumn, a graduate of Atascocita High School, will use her $1,000 scholarship for the spring semester of her freshman year at Texas A&M University, where she is currently studying animal science.

At Atascocita, she was a member of the National Honor Society and the National Spanish Honor Society. She was also active in the school’s drama department, winning the Best Actress award twice.

For her junior year of high school, Autumn was an exchange student in Minas Gerais, Brazil. She lived with two local families, attended a Brazilian school and traveled throughout the country, learning the native culture and becoming fluent in Portuguese.

In Brazil, Autumn discovered a hospital that had a school for terminally ill children. As her Gold Award Project, she created a program for the children, teaching English, Portuguese, arts, music and photography. She also worked with their mothers, teaching crafts to lift their spirits. Autumn wanted to offer a positive image of Americans, believing that she may be the only one that the children and their mothers would ever meet. From her project, she learned “true leadership comes from commitment to a cause and passion from everyone involved.”
By Sharon Timmons

In the last TEC newsletter, three past Gold Award Merit Scholarship recipients were featured as part of The Emerald Circle’s “Where are they now?” project, which was a highlight of the fall 2013 luncheon program.

To answer the question, Emerald Circle President Joanne Williams spent last summer contacting as many recipients as possible to ask them what receiving the TEC scholarship meant to them and where life has taken them since college. Their answers were inspiring and proof of the value of TEC’s many years of awarding scholarships.

Here are stories of a few more past TEC scholarship recipients who are “becoming the leaders of tomorrow” and what they have accomplished since completing their college education.

**2000: Emily Deal, San Jose, California**

Emily now lives in California, where she is a Senior Scientist in the Research and Development Department of BD Biosciences.

**What is your educational background?** Stratford High School, 2000; BS, Biology, Emory University, 2004; PhD, Microbiology and Immunology, Stanford University, 2010.

**What was your Gold Award project?** I conducted three blood drives across the Houston area, collecting more than 110 units of blood from drives at Stratford High School, Baylor College of Medicine, and Casa Mare.

**What did receiving a scholarship from The Emerald Circle mean to you?** The scholarship sent me to Atlanta for college with a profound sense of duty to make all the women who were so important in my upbringing through Girl Scouts proud, be it in the classroom, as an assistant troop leader, or "adult" mentor to a Senior planning board. Today, I bring up the scholarship when I'm encouraging a Girl Scout to stay in Scouting and consider getting her Gold Award.

**Do you have a favorite Girl Scout memory?** What an unfair question! As impossible as it is to pinpoint a single favorite memory, I'll say that it was warm evenings singing songs on the back porch at Casa Mare after a day of sailing and lobbing cabbage heads around the Bay. I've found that Girl Scout songs serve as a universal language that continues to connect me with girls (and troop leaders) of all ages throughout the country!

**Emily, what do you hope to be doing five years from now?** Hopefully, I will be looking forward to following in my mother's footsteps by serving as my (currently hypothetical) daughter's troop leader from Daisies to when she graduates as a Senior with her Gold Award.

**Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about yourself?** Thank you for all that The Emerald Circle does. You make a much bigger impact in the lives of the girls you interact with than you will ever know. I definitely would not be who or where I am today without my experiences with San Jacinto Girl Scouts over the years.
“Where are they now?” project — continued

2005: C. Nikole Saulsberry, San Francisco, California

Nikole is another Gold Award Merit Scholarship recipient who went away for college. After earning a BS degree in communications and rhetorical studies from Syracuse University, she moved to San Francisco where she is now a development officer for the United Way of the Bay Area.

Why did you choose Syracuse for college? When I was looking at colleges, I had three “must-have” qualities that I was looking for: a traditional college campus with 19th-century style buildings, a proactive and proud student body, and a strong diversity of academic programs. I started as a music major and the music industry program is ultimately what peaked my interest in Syracuse, but the campus, students and basketball team is what kept me there after I changed my major.

What was the title of your Gold Award project? “Strength For Christ: Teen Ministry.” I developed and led a summer ministry for youth at Clear Lake African Methodist Episcopal Church.

What is your most favorite memory from your days as a Girl Scout? Learning to ski on my first Wider Opportunity in Traverse City Michigan.

What did receiving a Gold Award Merit Scholarship from The Emerald Circle mean to you? Being awarded this scholarship was a huge help for me financially in my first year of college, but perhaps more importantly, it was nice to receive the support of an organization that helped shape me into the student I was going to become.

Where do you hope to be in five years? Five years from now, I hope to be back in Houston working as an attorney.

2007: Cynthia Vittone, Houston, Texas

Cynthia is putting her B.S. degree in Ocean Engineering from Texas A&M University to good use, working as a subsea product design engineer, and her goal is to become a lead engineer collaborating with a team on a subsea project in the next five years.

What was your Gold Award Project? My project, titled “He Lightens Our Load,” focused on the homeless in Northwest Houston where I grew up. I created learning kits to educate different age groups about the plight of the homeless and why it is important that we strive to understand and help them, not jump to conclusions. Using the kits, I held numerous educational sessions, and I distributed the kits to
Cynthia Vittone—continued

other local parishes in the Cypress area. Another part of my project was a collection drive at my church to gather backpacks, hygiene supplies, water, and snacks. The drive was such a success that I was able to stuff more than 100 backpacks with supplies, which were then distributed to local homeless who came to Bear Creek Assistance Ministries (BCAM).

What did receiving a Gold Award Merit Scholarship from The Emerald Circle mean to you? It was a huge honor. Besides having the satisfaction of completing my project and enhancing my compassion towards the homeless, I was rewarded with a generous scholarship! What more could you ask for? The Girl Scout Gold Award is already a wonderfully rewarding program, but earning an Emerald Circle Gold Award Merit Scholarship is truly special.

What is your favorite Girl Scout memory? Definitely my performances as a Council puppeteer. From Earth Day to Brownie Magic, I put on hundreds of skits for the enjoyment and education of the girls who watched, and the look of awe on their faces is unforgettable. My favorite puppet was the Juliette Low puppet, which I created in conjunction with Margaret Sheriff as part of my Silver Award to teach girls about the history of Girl Scouts.

Anything else you would like to share with Emerald Circle members? There isn’t a day that goes by that I don’t think to myself: Girl Scouts prepared me for this. I attribute all of my successes to the lessons and skills that my 13 years in Girl Scouts gave me. I hope to one day be able to share these experiences and benefits with my own Girl Scout troop.

Did you see the GSSJC 2013 Annual Report? Two Gold Award Merit Scholarship recipients were featured in the report—our newest recipient, Autumn E. and Michelle Sheena, a 2012 scholarship recipient and now a Girl Scout alumnae!

Two museum docent trainings scheduled

GSSJC invites adult Girl Scouts or Girl Scout adult/girl pairs to serve as docents at the Goodykoontz Museum of Girl Scout History, housed in Program Place for Girls, 3000 Southwest Freeway. Volunteer docents lead tours of the museum and assist the Council History Committee with activities and projects.

Upcoming trainings will be held from 10:00-11:00 am on Tuesday, March 18, or Thursday, May 22, at the museum. If those times are inconvenient, an individual training may be arranged with the Council Docent Coordinator. Shifts can be weekly, every other week, or once a month. Saturday shifts from 9:00 am-1:00 pm are also available.

For information on the training sessions, check out the flyer at: http://resources.gssjc.org/Lists/Council%20Information%20Network/Attachments/892/MuseumInternTourGuideDocent.pdf
Diana Norstrom is one of The Emerald Circle’s new members for 2013-2014. A busy mom, she is a Brownie troop leader for her 3rd-grader and troop cookie manager for her older daughter’s troop. She wasn’t a Girl Scout in her younger years, but as an adult member of GSSJC, she has become a dedicated volunteer. She is a facilitator and newsletter chair for the Volunteer Experience Department team. Last year, she earned a GSSJC Key Award for her work on the B.I.G. Event Core Committee.

Diana, what fills up your day? Are you currently employed? None of my current jobs are paid ones! But I am the designated Learning Coach for Texas Virtual Academy for my two daughters. I also chauffeur them to their Houston Children’s Chorus practices/concerts, Girl Scout meetings/events, and art lessons. I stay busy as a Girl Scout volunteer at the troop, region, and Council levels, too.

My previous paid positions were as a school counselor, special education teacher, rehabilitation counselor (vocational/medical), and computer programmer.

What was your first job? I worked at JC Penney when I was 16. My first professional job was as a COBOL computer programmer with a hospital software company in Dallas.

Why did you decide to become a member of TEC? The Emerald Circle not only connects with families who have traveled the parenting path and raised outstanding daughters, it also continues contact with the young women, which is a real positive in my opinion.

I am always seeking educational resources for the girls in my daughters’ troops, and I see TEC scholarship recipients as role models. I want to know what girls could/should be doing in junior high and high school to prepare for their future. From my perspective, we can learn a lot about that from TEC scholarship recipients!

“Bee” helpful—send TEC your new contact info!

It may not seem like it now, but spring is coming! Won’t you “bee” helpful in keeping the Emerald Circle membership roster up to date, so we can all help with the work?

Send any changes in your contact information—a new name, address, phone number, or email address—to Jennifer Donovan at jdonovan@sjgs.org or write to her at:

The Emerald Circle
Attn. Jennifer Donovan, Development Dept.
Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council
3110 Southwest Freeway
Houston, Texas 77098

You can use the same address to make donations to support the spring social and service project or to make a contribution to The Emerald Circle Scholarship Fund.
What has been your most memorable experience as an adult member of Girl Scouts? In December, 2010, taking the Lego Leaders robotics team to compete in the Southwest TX FIRST LEGO League Championship at the University of Houston.

What are you reading now? In order to understand what my oldest daughter and her friends were talking about, I just finished reading the Divergent trilogy by Veronica Roth. Now we label each other’s mood and actions. She says I am mostly Erudite. I want her to be a little more Amity towards her younger sister! Of course, we are both Divergent. To understand it, check out the first movie of the trilogy; it is scheduled to come out this March.

Do you have a personal motto or favorite saying? My daughters would say it is, Look with your eyes before you ask.

What type of music do you enjoy? My choice is soft rock, but my 6th grader tries to educate me on current bands. We have tickets to see the English boy pop band One Direction in August. It will be my first stadium concert with thousands of screaming girls.

Do you have any hobbies? Right now I am trying gardening. I have egg cartons, pots, and bowls either waiting for seeds to sprout or full of tiny plants all around the house. I also collect Girl Scout resources from the Internet—primarily adult training and girl program documents and manuals from other Councils.

Any pets? Two cats—Mia and Cuddles. Cuddles brings us at least twenty gifts a day. We hear muffled meowing which means she has dragged out a sock, toy, underwear, shorts, or some other treasure into the hallway.

Do you have a favorite color? Well, my printer has a sign taped on it with the formula to make Girl Scout green. (In case you’re wondering, it’s Red=0, Green=169, Blue=79!) My personal favorite color is cornflower blue.

You’re a cookie mom, so I have to ask—what’s your favorite? Lemonades!

What is your proudest accomplishment? First, I am extremely happy and blessed with my family—my husband Dave and our two daughters. Secondly, I am proud of getting my masters degree in rehabilitation counseling from the University of North Texas in my 30s. Education opens your mind and doors.

How has your life been changed by your involvement with Girl Scouts? Girl Scouts has helped give me peace as a parent. Peace through knowing my girls are growing as they participate in girl activities. Peace through knowing my girls have an active dad who takes them door-to-door each year to sell cookies and takes part in everything from troop meetings to camping. And peace from knowing that my girls are exposed to many excellent women role models through my involvement in organizing events, participating on committees, and the friendships I’ve made through Girl Scouts.
Girl Scout Cookie Sales are underway, but if you haven’t bought yours yet, just call the Cookie Referral Line at 1-888-GS-COOKIES. In fact, as a registered adult Girl Scout, you can be the voice on the end of the Cookie Referral Line any Monday-Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm through March 28! To volunteer, contact Linda Betts at lbetts@sjgs.org or call her, 713-292-0239, ext. 1239, and submit the form found online at: http://resources.gssjc.org/Lists/Council%20Information%20Network/Attachments/900/CookieReferralLine-ADULT.pdf

Cookies are $4 per box, and more than 2/3 of the cost goes to programs and services for girls. Eight varieties are available this year: Thin Mints, Caramel deLites, Peanut Butter Sandwiches, Peanut Butter Patties, Shortbread, Thanks-A-Lot, Lemonades and an all-new Cranberry Citrus Crisp, made of whole grain, with tangy cranberry bits and zesty citrus flavor.

PLUS, from February 21-March 30 selected troops will be selling a new gluten-free Chocolate Chip Cookie for $5 a box as part of a pilot program. To locate a troop selling the gluten-free cookies, call the Cookie Referral Line, 1-888-GS-COOKIES, after February 21.

Want to support Girl Scouts but don't want cookies? Donate your cookie purchase through the Cookie Share Program, and your cookies will be distributed to local non-profits.

TEC Spring Social and Service Project, Wednesday, March 5, 6:00 pm–8:00 pm, Stage area, Program Place for Girls, 3000 Southwest Freeway

2014 Gold Award Merit Scholarship Presentation and Reception, Sunday, April 13, 2:00 pm-4:00 pm, Girl Scout Center, 3110 Southwest Freeway, Rooms 107-109

2014 Adult Recognition, Saturday, April 26, 2014, Camp Agnes Arnold, Conroe. To register, look for the event link on GSSJC’s home page, www.gssjc.org

Annual membership in The Emerald Circle runs from September through August of the following year. Categories: Bronze—$150; Silver—$250; Gold—$500; Platinum—$1,000; Emerald Lifetime Endowment—$3,000

Donations to The Emerald Circle Scholarship Fund or the TEC Endowment are accepted at any time, may be in any amount, and may be made in honor or memory of a loved one, family member, friend, co-worker, Girl Scout leader, individual Girl Scout, or troop.

The Emerald Circle’s mission is to provide scholarships and support, inspiring girls to aim for excellence while becoming the leaders of tomorrow.

The Emerald Circle, Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council
3110 Southwest Freeway, Houston, Texas 77098