



Girl Scout Troop 65321 consists of 11 girls from Beacon Hill and the Back Bay.

Since the troop's creation over a decade ago, they have achieved the level of 'Ambassador' within the organization, performed countless acts of community service, traveled internationally, and are currently pursuing the highest Girl Scout award, known as the Gold Award.

Troops are typically affiliated with schools. However, Troop 65321's neighborhood affiliation is unique, with the eleven members attending seven different schools in total and spanning multiple age groups.

Laura Fleming and Sofia Altenhoff are the only two leaders remaining from the original group who established Troop 65321.

"A bunch of moms got together and wanted to start a Girl Scout troop more than a decade ago, which didn't have anything to do with the schools because many of the kids all go to different schools... it was really to get to know the girls in the neighborhood that may not have otherwise crossed each other's paths," said Fleming.

Originally consisting of around 70 girls aged between kindergarten and early elementary, the eleven remaining girl scouts are now all in their early to mid- teens.

As the girls have matured, so have their activities, which are transitioning from crafts and selling cookies to travel and community service projects. Meetings that were once held weekly in local churches, now occur twice monthly at restaurants.

"It still has the same mission which is neighborhood girls coming together but now it's much more of a social thing," Fleming said. "As the girls have gotten older, their activities have gotten more sophisticated."

Fleming noted the intensity of the Gold Award, which several of the troop's members are currently pursuing. "They've done the Bronze. They've done the Silver and now they're going after the Gold Award. It would be likened to an Eagle Scout project. Although in my opinion, it's much more difficult because it has a learning component and the hours are much longer," said Fleming. "But it's 80 hours of commitment. A girl has to identify a [community] need and follow that over two years." With the gradual aging of the remaining girl scouts, Fleming explained, the fate of Troop 65321 seems bleak. "Our troop is going to die until the next group of moms come along and say, hey, can we take 65321. You do things for your children when they're that age and they run their course, and you're always looking for the next cycle to step up and do it for their children," she said.

Whether or not the troop continues, Fleming is sure that the impact of the last decade will stick with the current members throughout the duration of their lives.

"They will be leaders themselves.

Girl Scouts will be with them for a very long time," she said.

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