

Dear Girl Scouts of Takoma Park, Maryland. USA.

Thank you for sending us a letter telling us about your troop, we really enjoyed learning about you. In Canada we call our troop a unit. The name of our Girl Guide unit is the **1st Skaha Lake Sparks**. The reason we are called that is because Penticton (the town we live in) is located between two beautiful lakes. One is called Okanagan Lake and the other is called Skaha Lake. Below is a map of Penticton. All of the area between the lakes is the city of Penticton.



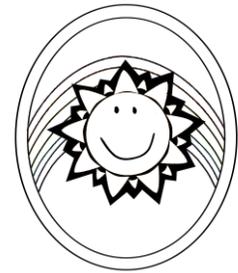
Many people think that everywhere in Canada is very cold all the time but it is not. In Penticton the summer weather can be really hot. It gets up to 40 degrees Celsius here which is the same temperature at 104 degree Fahrenheit. We spend a lot of time at the beach playing in the sand and swimming in the water with our families. During our summer months Penticton is very busy with tourists from all over the world. The regular population in our city is about 30,000 people but in the summer that doubles. Although we have many people living here our city is small. It takes

only 7 minutes to get from one lake to the other on our Main Street. Below are some pictures of Penticton.



There are 2 Sparks units in Penticton. Our unit has 12 girls. We started our guiding year on September 30th. We meet once a week on Thursday nights from 6:30 to 7:30pm. We have already earned our first keeper. It is called "Being A Spark" it looks like the picture below. To earn this keeper we learned about the history of Girl Guides, Girl Guides around the globe, what it means to be a Girl Guide and a Spark. We also had to learn our promise and learned our units traditions and songs. We think it is neat that you learn our song as part of earning your badge.

On October 22nd our 1st year Sparks were enrolled as official members of Girl Guides and received their first pins. The one on the left is a service pin that we get for every year we are evolved in guiding and the other is our enrollment pin that we get when we have completed "Being A Spark" and are ready to become a member of the unit.



Being A Spark

Here is a picture of our unit on enrollment night...



The Spark Program has 9 keepers in total, which are to be completed over a 2 year program. On top of the keepers we work on Challenge Crests. There are many different Challenges that we can choose from and crests that go with them. They change yearly. Together with our leaders we pick the challenges that we would like to take throughout the year. Here are some examples of what the challenges are called.

- The habitat for humanity challenge
- The love yourself challenge
- Zoe's Trek around the world challenge.
- The Bone's Challenge

We have not worked on any challenges yet this year.

Some of our Sparks have attended our first overnight camp this fall. It was really fun. Does your unit go camping? Sometimes we camp in cabins and sometimes we camp in bunkhouses or even tents. There are many beautiful Girl Guide camps here in British Columbia and near Penticton therefore we get lots of opportunities to camp with our unit as well as all of the Sparks in our district (which is about 150 Sparks !!!) Girl Guides in Canada love to camp. Do you?

We would like to know about your traditions. Girl Guides in Canada have lots of traditional things we like to do. Do you have traditional things or special things that you do every year in your unit?

Here are a few of our traditions...

Traders/Camp Hat Crafts: We trade things called "traders" everytime we go to camp or go to an event that we get to meet new members of guiding. They are items that we have made to exchange. They help us interact and make new friends. These items often get pinned to a girl guide camp hat or blanket. I have attached a picture of a girl guide camp hat with traders attached all over it. We love our crazy camp hats and some girls and leaders even have 3 or 4 full hats.



Name our Leaders: Each year Sparks get to name our new leaders. This year we named our 3 leaders Sunshine, Diamond and Jewels. They will carry this name with them as long as they are Sparks leaders. This is what we will call them too.

Campfire Blankets/Ponchos: We like to sew all of our "fun crests" to blankets that we use around the campfire while camping. Some people have no room left on their blankets because they have so many crests. We LOVE crests !!!

We have had an exciting first month of Sparks meetings and are really looking forward to our next letter from you. We would like to send you some drawings by mail. Would you like that?

To end our letter we would like to show you a picture of us all dressed up in our Halloween costumes. Last week we had a Halloween Party. It was lots of fun. We made a ghost craft and played lots of games...

What is your favorite game ??? Maybe you could tell us how to play it so we can try it out. One of our favorite games is called "Hide The Spark". This is how you play it...maybe you could try it.

Hide The Spark

Girls are in scatter formation around the room. The music starts and the girls move around the room to the beat of the music. When the music stops, all of the girls crouch down and cover their eyes. The leader covers one girl with a coat or blanket then invites everyone to open their eyes and decide who is covered up. This is also a great way to bring in and introduce a special guest.



your sisters in guiding...
the 1st Skaha Lake Sparks unit.