

Leadership Development Weekend

The Future is yours - lead the way

9th – 11th September 2011

The aim of the leadership development weekend was to bring together young women from across the UK in order to help shape the future; to share with us the great variety of opportunities which Girlguiding has to offer and to actively promote young women into roles of responsibility.

All delegates stayed at the Tulliallan Police College in Kincardine, Clackmannanshire. The building itself was very grand as it joined onto a castle. The committee who planned and ran the event were brilliant. They were all very helpful, welcoming and enthusiastic.



On arrival everybody received a welcome canvas goody-bag. The local guides had made tags in the shape of shoes so that everybody's bag looked different, it was really cute. In the bag there was a notepad, stationary, plastic water bottle, lots of posh toiletries, a can of iron-bru and a fabric badge.

It was lovely to receive such a generous gift. There were delegates from every county in Scotland but only around five from England and two from Wales, a totally of about 120 people attended the event. As I did not know anybody it was great being able to talk to such a variety of new faces and learn about their experiences within guiding. Dinner was served from 7.30pm during which the Scottish Chief Commissioner sat at our table. It was exciting to meet and talk with Dinah. The food was brilliant – fish and chips. Amusingly the dishwasher in the kitchen had broken so we all had to eat off polystyrene plates – we should have brought our kit bags! Dinner was followed by a welcome talk from Pat Marwick, who is Deputy Scottish Chief Commissioner, and also Tricia Davenport, who is County Commissioner for Clackmannanshire.

Saturday was an early start with breakfast at 8am. The first lecture of the day was 'reflections' with Vicky Johnston Carter. She brought her 11 week old baby Alexander, who sat quietly at the front throughout the whole talk! She talked about different Brownie badges and how they represent a journey, for instance, the Pathfinder badge which she linked with the quote of 'a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step'. The Scottish Chief Commissioner, Dinah Folds, then talked to us about her fascinating journey through guiding. Her story is really interesting and she has some funny tales to tell.

All the delegates were divided into six groups. The first session I attended was called 'Go' and aimed to clear the mysteries of the 'Go' website. We all participated in a true-false exercise. I found this quite difficult as didn't previously know much about Go. Part of the aim of the weekend was to inform us of future opportunities, so in the Go session we learnt about the possible role of being a Go co-ordinator which would mean we would support guiders in our county when they used Go. This session was followed by a tea break and a visit to the guiding shop.

The next session I attended was 'Advisors' where we were informed of the roles of an advisor. I was amazed at the number of different types of Advisor. As part of this session we got to make a headpiece. We attached various cuttings from magazines and crafty bits to a headband so it represented what possible advisor roll we could take, I made my headband with a Brownie theme as I am a young leader for Brownies. It was really fun. In the future I might be a first aid advisor as

it would fit in well alongside a Medicine degree. After this session we had lunch, which was a lovely Lasagne.

The outdoor session was my favourite; the aim was to promote the use of the outdoors in guiding. We split into even smaller groups and rotated around the room on the various activities. One activity was making kites, a craft which I hope to do with the Brownies. We also had to work as a team to erect a tent, however two members were blindfolded and I had a 'broken arm' in a sling. I felt I did well in this task as even though I could not do much with one arm I could give clear instructions to the 'blind' people; this meant our team worked very well. We also made smores (chocolate digestives with a melted marshmallow in the middle) which was tasty!

The last session of the day was International, where we were informed on all the international opportunities and campaigns such as the 'gold' scheme and the millennium development goals. We also watched a moving video about the guiding 'Stop the violence campaign'. All the information is at http://www.wagggsworld.org/en/take_action including a section where we can add 'our voice' to the stop the violence campaign.

The sessions were followed by a 'down time' activity of our choice. There was cupcake making, cocktail making and zumba. I did zumba, which was like an exercise class that felt like dancing at a party, it was totally hilarious. After a quick shower and change we all went to the Gala dinner. It was amazing. The canteen had been transformed into a wedding-like dining room. Every place had a favour donated by the Trefoil Guild and half a bottle of wine. The favour was a box with a piece of 'tablet' in it. The meal was magnificent. For starters we had soup, followed by melon. Then the main was chicken stuffed with haggis. For desert we had a spicy fruit cake. The kitchen even hired in china plates as the dishwasher still was broken. The entertainment of the night was brilliant. We listened to a lady talk about the history of underwear, it was hilarious. I am really thankful to all the staff and the committee members who made the night so memorable and enjoyable.

The following day we had our final two sessions. Before the sessions started we had reflection again with Vicky, who this time brought all her six children! The first session of the day was Trainers where we listened to a presentation about the role of a Trainer and did group work on the desirable personality qualities a trainer has. The second session was about the role of a Commissioner. In this session we had to make a poster that was a 'job advert' for the role, it was really fun.

The event was closed by Gill Slocombe the Chief guide. She talked about five key points she believed are fundamental in guiding.

- 1) There is no blueprint to success.
- 2) You must understand your own passion.
- 3) Dare to be different.
- 4) Never underestimate individual power.
- 5) Don't give up.

The talk was really motivating and summed up well the entire attitude of the weekend. I have learnt that my future is mine and that I can lead the way within guiding. I am honoured and very proud to have had the opportunity to represent such a large proportion of members at a national event.

Anna Kane