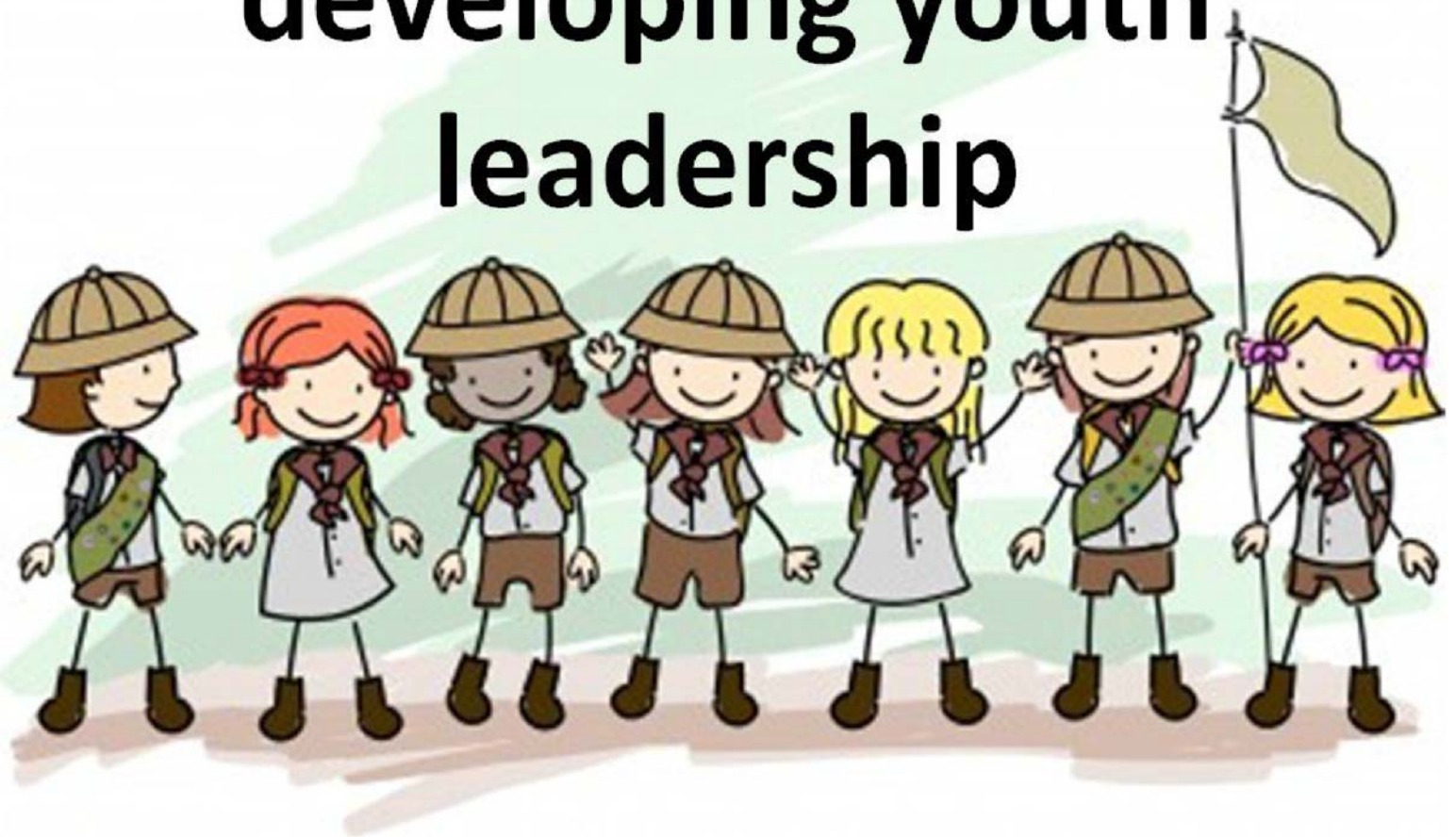


developing youth leadership



March 12, 2012 is a special day for many women in the United States and around the world – it marks the 100th anniversary of Girl Scouting. Another youth leadership organization that has recently celebrated its centennial is 4-H. Both were founded by women; and their founders, Juliette Gordon Low and Jessie Field Shambaugh, are the focus of our column during March. In March, we also celebrate both International Women’s Month and National Women’s History Month.

In 1911, **Juliette Gordon Low** was searching for something useful to do with her life. She was in England and met Sir Robert Baden-Powell, the founder of the Boy Scout and Girl Guide movement. On March 12, 1912, from her home in Savannah, Georgia, Juliette (whose nickname was Daisy) made her historic phone call to a friend who was a distant cousin and said “I’ve got something for the girls of Savannah, and all of America, and all the world, and we’re going to start it tonight!” Eighteen girls formed that first troop including Margaret “Daisy Doots” Gordon, her niece and namesake, who was the first registered member.





In developing the Girl Scout movement in the United States, Juliette brought girls of all backgrounds into the out-of-doors, giving them the opportunity to develop self-reliance and resourcefulness. At a time when women did not yet have the right to vote nationwide, she encouraged girls to prepare not only for traditional homemaking, but also for possible future roles

as professional women—in the arts, sciences and business—and for active citizenship outside the home. Also unusual at that time, from its beginning, Girl Scouting welcomed girls with disabilities. Juliette had certainly never let deafness, back problems or cancer keep her from full participation in life so why should disabled girls be excluded?

One delightful background fact that we love to share about Juliette is her hearty athleticism. One of her special talents was being able to stand on her head. She stood on her head every year on her birthday to prove she still could do it, and also celebrated nieces' and nephews' birthdays by standing on her head. Once, she even stood on her head in the board room at the National Headquarters of Girl Scouts to show off the new Girl Scout shoes.

From the original 18 girls, Girl Scouting has grown to 3.7 million members. Girl Scouts is the largest educational organization for girls in the world and has influenced the more than 50 million girls, women and men who have belonged to it. Approximately 70% of women leaders today were Girl Scouts during their childhood. Did your membership in the Girl Scouts influence your leadership? Write to us and tell us YOUR story. We are so pleased to be able to share the amazing legacy of Juliette Gordon Low!

Jessie Field Shambaugh also left a remarkable gift. Called the “Mother of 4-H”, Jessie Field started after-school clubs in 1901 while teaching at Goldenrod School in Page County, Iowa. When she became County School Superintendent in 1906, she organized Boys Corn Clubs and Girls Home Clubs in all 130 country schools. The clubs, as she saw it, would provide ‘friendly competition’ which she felt was a useful teaching device.





As a superintendent, Field was innovative in her emphasis on the practical value of education. Her goal was to make the schools more vital and useful to farm youth. In 1908, under her leadership, the Page County Boys Agricultural Club was organized. Her students won many honors including first prize at the International Corn Show in Omaha (1909). Also in 1909, she published *Farm Arithmetic*, a book of problems applicable to rural living. This book was widely used in Iowa schools. To educate youth about scientific and improved farming techniques, she enlisted the aid of colleges and Farm Institutes and asked them to offer their ideas and assistance.

While Field was superintendent, her schools served as models for exemplary rural education; they attracted national attention. To encourage student participation, she designed a three-leaf clover pin to represent technological, agricultural, and domestic science. The pins were first distributed as an award in 1910. The letter “H” was placed on each leaf symbolizing Head, Hands and Heart and the word “Page” was noted in the center of the pin. A fourth H, “representing Home and then Health was added later. The idea of the farm clubs, as symbolized by the pin, was the beginning of 4-H. The 4-H clubs evolved over the years into a national organization that was sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture.

In 1910, Jessie Field organized the first Page County Boys Farm Camp, where seminars on new farming techniques were held. A girl’s camp was added in 1911. Growing in popularity, these camps were later sponsored by 4-H. Shambaugh also wrote the Country Girls Creed. It was Jessie Field Shambaugh’s vision and pioneer spirit that led to 4-H clubs nationwide. 4-H has now grown to become the nation’s largest youth development organization. The 4-H idea is simple: help young people and their families to gain the skills they need to be proactive forces in their commu-



nities and develop ideas for a more innovative economy.

As we celebrate the legacy of these organizations during National Women's History Month, we salute the millions of people who have developed leadership skills and benefited from the "can do" attitudes of two outstanding women: Juliette Gordon Low and Jessie Field Shambaugh.



Charlotte S. Waisman, PhD, co-author of *Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America* (HarperCollins), is a national champion and advocate for women as a professor and keynote speaker. As an executive coach, Waisman coauthored *50 Activities for Developing Leaders* and *The Leadership Training Activity Book*. She is a principal with a consulting company specializing in leadership and workforce excellence initiatives.

Jill S. Tietjen, PE, co-author of *Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America* (HarperCollins), is an author, speaker and electrical engineer. Her other books include the *Setting the Record Straight* series. Tietjen is a top historian on scientific and technical women. She is President/CEO of *Technically Speaking*, a consulting company that specializes in improving career opportunities for women in technology.

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