



Bellevue Office and Store Update

Hello, Girl Scouts of Western Washington Membership--

[As we communicated last July](#), the Bellevue Program Center was sold because of ongoing concerns raised from membership and staff that its location and layout did not best serve the needs of girls and volunteers across the eastside of our council. Moving from this property gives GSWW the opportunity to answer the question, “How do we best utilize program center facilities to meet our members’ needs?”

The sale closed in late October 2019. GSWW is leasing back our former space to support operations through the spring. Under terms of the lease and due to our own business cycle, we've planned to vacate in the May to July timeframe. We recognize and are planning for contingencies given the likelihood of COVID-19 shut downs impacting this schedule. Activities from this center must be moved to support every facet of membership—troop, product program, events and retail. The original strategy was to open one site farther north and another farther south, each with program and staff space and a significant bricks-and-mortar retail presence.

As we began the search, though, several key facts became apparent:

- The eastside market is saturated with limited options that met our financial, building, and neighborhood criteria.
- Bellevue property usage and retail declines in 2019 and 2020 have raised questions regarding our initial strategy.
- Realistically, we didn't have time to accomplish two moves in the available timeframe given the constraints posed by lease negotiation, space planning, permitting, and tenant improvements.

We need to take the necessary time to thoughtfully consider these changes in our Girl Scout operation before we make long-term property commitments, while most importantly still meeting the needs of our membership. Consequently, GSWW is taking to heart GSUSA's call to be a Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader in our next step to serve our eastside membership. We'll be located in the [Bellefield Office Park](#), at 1300 114th Ave SE, in Bellevue. There'll be a dedicated 2,100 s.f. GSWW Program & Retail Center in the Madrona Building, with staff located in The Riveter's adjacent co-work space. This flexible arrangement represents an annualized savings over our prior mortgage costs of approximately \$36,000, while also putting our commitment to membership squarely at the forefront, where it should be. Directly across from the Madrona Building, staff will be based at [The Riveter](#), with a range of services and potential to grow new community partnerships.

Moves are challenging under the best of circumstances. Having to plan and implement this one, as we're all navigating through the COVID-19 crisis, makes this one particularly difficult. I also recognize the fact that this is a new way for us to operate and, as with all new approaches, there'll be some aspects that are stellar and others that need fine-tuning. Experience—especially in recent weeks—has shown me that our girls, families, volunteers, and staff will work in partnership to explore this innovative tactic to successfully bring Girl Scouting to our community.

Warmly,
Megan Ferland, CEO