



Scouting Across Generations

by Girl Scout Troop 80847

"They just didn't want to have one more meal alone."

The Harwich Council on Aging Supper Club is a bi-monthly event that allows single senior citizens to enjoy a family-style meal and interact with their peers in the community. These dinners were started to help prevent the rising rates of depression and loneliness in single elderly people.

The program began with seven people, and after four years it has increased to an average of 30 diners per meal, with a record high of 42 participants.

Student volunteers serve dinner, to allow the seniors to interact with the youth of Harwich. Currently the two groups of volunteers that serve dinner at Supper Club include members of the Cape Cod Bible Alliance Church youth group and Harwich Girl Scout Troop 80847.



"Soup, anyone?"

At the beginning, Supper Club started as a once-a-month event. Currently it happens twice a month, with hopes for it to increase to a weekly dinner. When this happens, the Girl Scouts hope to increase their participation as well. The Council on Aging would like to make the dinners available to an increased number of participants. They also hope to increase the variety of entertainment offered during dinner.

Currently the assortment of entertainment provided ranges from informational speakers to belly dancers and everything in between.

In a survey posed by the Girl Scouts in Troop 80847, regulars at Supper Club were asked what their favorite part of going to Supper Club was. The results they found were very similar to their own opinions. Everyone enjoys the social aspect, such as eating with others around a larger table, having companionship, and meeting new people.

Many enjoy the ride in the Cranberry Coach with the driver Dan. For their part, the Girl Scouts have always enjoyed chatting with the seniors and hearing the tales they have to tell.

When they first began serving at Supper Club, the Girl Scouts figured their thoughts and ideas would differ greatly from people decades older than themselves. After three years, they've come to realize they aren't so different after all. The girls even found similarities to their own lives within the answers to some of the survey questions.



"Dinner is served."

When the girls read the answers to one survey question, about the elders' first job, the leaders giggled at the blank expressions concerning the term "5 & 10" and had to explain what that meant.

The girls found that both then and now many people baby-sit as their first job. There were exclamations of, "Oh, cool!" when they read about one person being a "popcorn girl" at the local movie theatre. One man was a bellhop, which made the girls wonder where one could find a job like that here on Cape Cod.

One big difference they found is that today's minimum wage is eight dollars per hour, which is far cry from the meager 25 cents per hour some seniors earned back in the day by rolling newspapers for delivery.

The girls also asked about important life lessons the seniors had learned in their youth.

The responses included "Saving money," "Keep your eyes open and your mouth shut," and "Not fighting with siblings." These lessons are some of the same ones that the Girl Scouts also learned early on. "How to survive" was a lesson quickly learned by a senior who grew up in a family of nine. The girls' favorite "lesson" was "Don't get caught," but their leaders were not too thrilled with this sentiment.



"Coffee, Tea, or Milk?"

Eating supper alone? Not anymore, thanks to the hard work and dedication of the Harwich Council on Aging, the Harwich Girl Scouts, and the Cape Cod Bible Alliance Youth Group.

Seniors can enjoy a family style healthy meal at a reasonable price with great companionship. Transportation is provided to the seniors' door.

If you are interested in finding out more about this program, please contact Barbara Ann Foley at the Harwich Council on Aging, at 508-430-7550.

**LETTER FROM ANNE GALLAGHER, A REGULAR DINER
AT THE HARWICH COUNCIL ON AGING SUPPER
CLUB**

"I attend the Monday evening suppers provided by the Harwich COA. The charge is a donation and the time for socialization is pleasant.

In this day and age when so much attention is to the negative of our teenagers I feel that it is important for the public to appreciate the young ladies in Girl Scout Troop #80847.

These young ladies serve the drinks and food, and clean up at the end of dinner. They are so very polite, helpful and busy all the time. They get no reward except for the satisfaction that they are helping the older generation.

They always have a smile on their face and are agreeable to all requests. When asked questions about their schooling and other activities, they stop and provide answers with a smile. I feel that they deserve a big public THANK YOU from the seniors."

Anne W. Gallagher



Harwich Senior/Ambassador Girl Scout Troop 80847 consists of eight girls in grades 9–12 who attend Chatham, Harwich, and Sturgis East High Schools. Many of the girls have been Girl Scouts since kindergarten.

All combined, the troop has shared more than 50 years of Girl Scout experiences. That's a load of fantastic memories, hundreds of hours of community service, dozens of badges earned, and thousands of boxes of cookies sold! Troop members in photo pose at their 2012 cookie sale kickoff booth sale.

From L to R are Emily Fisetto, Olivia Swenson, Yasaelie Figueroa, Heather Gallant, Anastacia Athas, Mollie Bunting, Sarah Peninger, and Meghan VanHoose.

**All photographs courtesy of
Girl Scout Troop 80847**