Welcome to Spotlight. I’m Liz Waid. And I’m Joshua Leo. Spotlight uses a special English method of broadcasting. It is easier for people to understand - no matter where in the world they live. A group of girls stands together. They wear white shirts. Each girl wears a brown sash of material over one shoulder and across her chest. The sash is covered with small badges. These small pieces of cloth show numbers, letters or pictures. The girls are each holding up their right hand. Each girl holds down her smallest finger with her thumb. Each stands with their three middle fingers pointing up. Then all the girls speak together: “On my honor, I will try: To serve God and my country, To help people at all times, And to live by the Girl Scout Law: I will do my best to be honest and fair, friendly and helpful, considerate and caring, courageous and strong, and responsible for what I say and do. and I will also respect myself and others, respect authority, use resources wisely, make the world a better place, and be a sister to every Girl Scout.” These girls are part of a large organization called the Girl Scouts. They teach skills and values to girls all over the world. Today’s Spotlight is on the Girl Scouts. The Girl Scouts call the year 2012 ‘The Year of the Girl.’ It is their 100th anniversary. In the year 1912 an American woman named Juliette Gordon Low created the Girl Scouts. Low felt that girls needed opportunities to grow mentally, physically and spiritually. Low saw that many girls were in their houses all day. They were often alone. She wanted them to be outside, spending time with friends. Soon, the girls became involved in community service. They learned new skills. The Girl Scouts went on long hikes - walking and learning about nature. They played sports and went on camping trips. They learned to tell time by the position of the stars. They studied first aid - emergency treatment for people who are sick or hurt. But the Girl Scouts do not just teach skills. The Girl Scouts also teach good values. These values include respect for other people, protecting the earth’s environment and serving the community. They teach girls to accept and love other people - even if they are different. The Girl Scouts teach girls to see themselves and others in positive ways. Girl Scouts everywhere learn these same things. Each Girl Scout group usually meets once a week. They have adult leaders. At the start of the meeting they say the pledge that we heard at the beginning of the program. Then the girls practice skills, learn lessons and work in their community. As the girls gain skills and experience they get awards. These awards are badges. They attach these small pieces of cloth to their sashes. Then they proudly wear it to show the many things that they are learning. Girls can join the Girl Scouts from age five. Every two or three years, as they learn more skills, they move up to a higher level. The highest level is Girl Scout Ambassador. These girls are usually between the ages of 16 and 18. However, Girl Scouts of all ages are often connected with one thing - cookies! Girl Scouts have been selling these round, sweet treats for many years. Laura from the United States was a Girl Scout. She grew up to become a successful business woman. She explains what she learned from selling Girl Scout cookies: "When I was a girl I walked from house to house selling my Girl Scout cookies. Doing this every year helped teach me how to run a successful business. I learned two things that stayed with me for a long time. Firstly that all money made in business is not personal profit - I had to turn in all my money. And, that if I eat my own product then I have to pay for it!" Starting in 1917, girls baked cookies at home. They then sold them to make money for the Girl Scouts. People loved to buy and eat Girl Scout cookies! It grew into a big business. By 1948 professional bakers made the cookies and the Girl Scouts sold them. This tradition continues today. The Girl Scouts gain awards for selling many boxes of cookies. But the girls also gain experience in business and using money. And all the money goes to expand and improve the Girl Scouts program. Today there are over ten million girls and women involved in the Girl Scouts. There are Girl Scouts in 145 countries. This was part of Juliette Gordon Low’s plan. She wanted to spread Girl Scouting around the world. She wanted children to have relationships with children from other countries. She hoped that this would encourage them to work for peace in the world. In the United States alone, over 59 million women have been involved in the Girl Scouts. Many Girl Scouts went on to become famous and successful. Girl Scouts grow up to be presidents of big companies, government officials and scientists. They play sports, act in films and write books. Many women who were Girl Scouts say that the experience changed their life. Kristin Jendras is from the United States. She became involved with the Girl Scouts as an adult. Jendras spent six months volunteering in England. She talks about what she learned from this experience: “I met so many wonderful people. Now I have new friends from around the world – Australia, Brazil, Japan, Korea and Ghana. I learned about compromise and having an open mind. Also, I gained skills in customer service, cleaning AND cooking. I can take these skills with me. I used to be a shy, quiet person. Now, I am more confident. I voice my thoughts and opinions as a fully independent woman. My experience also made me a more understanding person. This will make me a better friend, daughter and sister. As for the future, I would love to work for the Girl Scouts to promote Girl Scouting or Guiding. Then new generations can have the same great experiences that I did!” The Girl Scouts’ goal is to “build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.” After one hundred years, they are still doing exactly that. The writer and producer of this program was Rena Dam. The voices you heard were from the United States and the United Kingdom. All quotes were adapted for this program and voiced by Spotlight. You can listen to this program again, and read it, on the internet at http://www.radioenglish.net. This program is called, ‘Girl Scouts: Changing Girls’ Lives’. You can also leave your comments on our website. Or you can email us at radio@radioenglish.net. You can also find us on Facebook - just search for spotlightradio. We hope you can join us again for the next Spotlight program. Goodbye.