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Girl Scout cookie sales benefit charities

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From left, Girl Scouts Katie Lacy, Caitlyn Hill, Taylor Curtis, and Taylor Goss make fleece tie blankets for Project Linus. Proceeds from Girl Scout cookie sales funded the project, a joint effort between Junior Troop 10032 and Brownie Troop 10141.

Handmade fleece tie blankets are on their way to children in need, courtesy of Sonoma Valley Girl Scouts and local residents who purchased Thin Mints, Trefoils and other favorite varieties of Girl Scout cookies.

The blanket-making project is just one of many charitable efforts funded by the 2011 Girl Scout cookie campaign. Junior Girl Scout Troop 10032 worked with Brownie Troop 10141 to make soft and snuggly fleece blankets for Project Linus, a nationwide non-profit organization that provides handcrafted blankets to children in crisis.

Daisy/Brownie Troop 10240 made blankets for the Glen Ellen Fire Department and planted a pollinator garden at Sonoma Charter School. Several troops will use cookie money to make holiday cards for U.S. soldiers serving overseas.

Proceeds from cookie sales benefit community service projects as well as Girl Scout programs and events ranging from camps to workshops that foster personal growth and public service – all meeting the Girl Scout mission to “make the world a better place.”

This year’s cookie program kicked off with a cookie rally hosted by Junior/Cadette Troop 10063, led by Jill Valavanis and a cookie walk-about around the Sonoma Plaza sponsored by Cadette/Senior Troop 10406, led by DeDe and Jessa Rank.

From that enthusiastic start, local Girl Scouts conducted a successful sales campaign that saw a 34 percent sales increase from the previous year. Sonoma Valley Girl Scouts sold 19,012 boxes of cookies, with Thin Mints, Samoas and Tagalongs placing as the most popular varieties.

The top sellers were Senior Troop 10020 members Alicia Garstecki and Aundrea Mallory with 579 boxes each.

The cookie campaign is the largest fundraiser sponsored by Girl Scouts. It teaches girls valuable skills such as public speaking, budgeting, cash handling, goal setting, time management and marketing and promotions.

“The cookie program teaches girls that they have the power and resources to achieve their goals,” said Tali Mallory, longtime Girl Scout leader and director of Girl Scout Service Unit 103 of Sonoma Valley. “They develop skills and knowledge that will serve them well for a lifetime.”

For more information about Girl Scouts, visit www.girlscoutsnorcal.org, or to purchase cookies, call Tali Mallory at 939-8265.