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WISCONSIN STATE SENATE

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Ready to Help Wherever Needed

One of the things I enjoy most about being a State Senator is visiting local schools to talk with fourth graders about state government. I always try and include time for questions and answers. Fourth graders can be very curious. I get lots of questions about my family – do I have children, did I have brothers and sisters – and my preferences – what’s my favorite color, do I like dogs, cats, or lizards? (I like turtles.)

Sometimes you get a question you’re not expecting, a question that throws you for a loop. Earlier this month, after fielding questions about how old I am and if I know any famous people, a student raised her hand and asked “why do you do it?”

I must have paused long enough for her to realize I wasn’t sure what she meant, so she added “why did you want to be a Senator?” And the answer that immediately came to mind was to help. So that’s what I told her. “Like the Girl Scouts,” she replied. I didn’t have lots of time to think about it at the time, as other students had more questions for me to answer. But she was right.

This week offered me another opportunity to both think and talk about what it means to help. On Wednesday, Representative Mary Felzkowski and I hosted a “Troop Meeting” at the State Capitol in honor of 105th anniversary of the founding of the Girl Scouts of America. Over those 105 years, Girl Scouting has helped millions of girls and women build the courage, confidence, and character to make the world a better place.

The continued influence of Girl Scouting is evident by the strength of the Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Alliance, which represents 56,000 girl members and 17,000 adult volunteers. Girls from every part of the state came to Madison to celebrate and receive awards for their accomplishments. I was proud to join with Representative Felzkowski and other colleagues to welcome these young women to the Capitol.

As I was thinking about what I would say, I remembered the words of the Girl Scout motto that I recited as a young girl back in Cleveland. “Be Prepared. A Girl Scout is ready to help out wherever she is needed. Willingness to serve is not enough; you must know how to do the job well, even in an emergency.”

Ready to help out wherever needed. Those are good words to live by. Words that are just as important today as they were in 1947 when the Girl Scouts adopted the motto. I have often talked about my admiration for the men and women who got us through the Second World War and rebuilt our country after the Depression.

I learned this week that the Girls Scouts also helped the war effort. Instead of selling cookies, they sold special calendars and war bonds, tended victory gardens, and scrapped metals and fat to be reused.

We are lucky we live in much safer times. I hope you’ll join me in celebrating the Girl Scouts in some way on March 12th – support a local troop by buying an extra box of cookies, take a moment and encourage a young girl you know, find a way to help someone who needs it.

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