



Girl Scouts Lisa Rangel, 6, and Chloe Gelin, 7, recite the pledge of allegiance Sunday at the South Norwalk Public Library where the Norwalk Girl Scouts celebrated World Thinking Day.

Hour photo/Matthew Vinci

Girl Scouts 'Connect' at this year's World Thinking Day

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NORWALK — Members of several local Girl Scouts troops gathered at South Norwalk Branch Library Sunday to celebrate World Thinking Day.

In a conference room at South Norwalk Branch Library, high-school aged Girl Scouts led younger members in craft activities and team-building exercises.

One of the activity leaders, Girl Scout Mia Ribellino, prepared to lead an activity involving an exchange of bracelets and beads.

"You have to try to get 12 different-colored beads, and learn something about somebody that you don't know," Ribellino told *The Hour*, describing the activity.

Ribellino's mother, Heather Ribellino — who serves as Norwalk Girl Scouts Service Unit co-manager and organized the event — said that having the older Girl Scouts lead the younger ones is an important part of all Girl Scout activities.

"It's important for us as adults to step back a little and let them do it," Ribellino said, noting with a laugh that the scouts usually learn most effectively from one another anyway.

The annual World Thinking Day event, started in 1926, is designed to make Girl Scouts members aware of the organization's global reach.

According to Ribellino, the Girl Scouts



Jaclyn Zerrusen, 11, takes the Girl Scout pledge Sunday at the South Norwalk Public Library, where the Norwalk Girl Scouts celebrated World Thinking Day.

Hour photo/Matthew Vinci

have chapters in almost every country in the world.

Girl Scouts "may realize that they're part of something in their city, but they may not know that they're a part of something global," Ribellino said.

According to Ribellino, the Girl Scouts organization owns properties in Switzerland, Mexico, India and England.

Each year's World Thinking Day has a theme. This year's theme is "Connect," so the group leaders chose activities in keeping with this theme.

"The idea is that (the Scouts) need to connect with themselves, they need to connect with each other and they need to

connect with the world," Ribellino said.

The Scouts glued rhinestones and feathers to masks in order to connect with themselves, Ribellino said. They participated in the bead exchange to connect with one another. And they folded paper fortune tellers printed with facts about the Girl Scouts organization's global properties in order to "connect with the world."

"It's a great reminder that Girl Scouts is a pretty

big and empowering organization," Heather Ribellino told *The Hour*.

World Thinking Day has been celebrated in Norwalk for about eight years. Activities vary year to year — in 2011, the event was held at Lockwood-Mathews Mansion and included a mock-séance that conjured Girl Scouts founder Juliette Gordon Low, who founded the Girl Scouts in 1912.

"It started in 1912, and I'm very pleased with how Girl Scouts has come along, as they have spread around the world," said Jeanette Hamilton, then a Norwalk High School sophomore, impersonating Low at the 2011 event. "I started Girl Scouts with just one girl — my niece, Daisy — and I started it in my early twenties."

Heather Ribellino said that about 120 girls are currently registered in the Girl Scouts citywide, ranging from kindergarten- to high school-aged.

This figure does not include Girl Scouts of adult age.

"Girl Scouts continues into adulthood," Ribellino told *The Hour*.

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