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# Girl Scouts is 'fundamental' for many women leaders, says new CEO



Image: Melissa Ostrow

Monica Roberts is the CEO of the Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts.



By [Grant Welker](#) – Projects Reporter, Boston Business Journal  
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When Monica Roberts became CEO of the Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts last fall, she noticed a common theme when talking to mentors about the job: Many were once Girl Scouts, and said it set them on their eventual career path.

“Women who are in senior roles say it’s how they knew they wanted to be a business leader,” Roberts said. “I’m not sure people know how fundamental the organization has been for a number of women leaders.”

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## Monica Roberts

- **Title:** CEO of the Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts
- **Hometown:** Boston
- **Age:** 48
- **Education:** Bachelor’s degree from Brandeis University in sociology and African and African-American studies, and a master’s in political science and government and an MBA from Boston College

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For Roberts, who worked in leadership roles for Boston Public Schools and the nonprofit City Year before starting the Girl Scouts job last November, that fact was reassuring.

The Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts includes 20,000 girls and about half as many volunteers across 178 cities and towns. This time of year, they’re best known for selling boxes of cookies – something that helps with fundraising, but also teaches girls a few things about teamwork, planning and entrepreneurship.

"You're learning all these very fundamental skills. Some are technical skills," Roberts said. "But on the other end, you have to learn how to do a sales pitch. You have to learn how to network .... You have to learn how to persevere when someone tells you no, and some people do say no."

Roberts, who grew up in Boston, was not in the Girl Scouts growing up, but two of her younger sisters were. She grew up thinking she'd get into medicine but after college worked for a construction company.

"But I wanted something more mission-driven," she said.

With that goal, Roberts served in a series of leadership roles in Boston Public Schools, starting as a grant writer. In her continued tenure in different roles – under seven superintendents – she always prioritized having a direct involvement with kids.

Before joining the Girl Scouts, Roberts was the executive director of the Boston office of the educational nonprofit City Year. She succeeds Barbara Fortier as Girl Scouts leader.

Roberts said she sees her new job as perfectly combining her desire to have connections with young people while bringing about change more broadly. As she's served in leadership roles, she's taken on more of a mentoring role to others, too.

"That has just always been a part of what I do. I still have some of my mentees," she said. It's also important to her because of her own background, she added.

"As a woman of color who came through Boston Public Schools, a lot of my own career pathway and my own professional development and personal development is due to people who invested in me and mentored and mentored me, particularly some women," she said.

Many might know Girl Scouts best for their cookies – especially when sales are going on early in the year – but Roberts also emphasizes the soft skills and career development that girls can learn while being part of a troop. It's a



mission she hopes to spread through an effort to expand outreach in underserved communities across the area.

"There's a saying that 'talent is universal, opportunity is not.' All of our young people have talent but it's, where do we provide opportunity? I think Girl Scouts is a place where talent and opportunity can meet for many of our girls."

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Total assets

Rank	Prior Rank	Organization/Prior rank (*unranked in 2024)/
1	1	Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston Inc.
2	2	Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
3	3	American Student Assistance (ASA)
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