



# A Friendship Chain

## Link Friends

BY JENNIFER WALKER

Friendship is a key aspect of Guiding, for both girls and adults. Link enables 18- to 30-year-old members to both maintain old friendships and make new ones, at a time of significant changes in their lives. Whether they are actively involved as Guiders or help out when they can, Link members are part of a friendship chain that keeps them in touch with each other through Link activities, Provincial and National Link newsletters and a number of e-mail groups.

**M**any Link members have friendships that began when they were girls in Guiding. Tirian Eynon, Calgary Area Link Adviser, found that Link helped her keep in touch with these friends. "I went through Guiding from Brownies, and was best friends with four other girls. When we went to university, Link helped us maintain contact with each other," she explains. "Now that we are working and travelling all over the world, Link continues to 'link' us together. And the chain is pretty resilient! It has also enabled me to make new friends and helped me to reconnect with women I met at provincial Senior Branches events."

Meaghan Finoro, a Guider and Link member in Silver Birch Area, Ontario, found an old friend via Link. "I met Erika as a Pathfinder at *Celebrate in Ontario* in 1995, and we became good friends and penpals," she says. "Imagine our excitement at both being delegates to Camp Blomidon in Nova Scotia the following year! We both went on to Senior Branches, and we were together again at Aggie in 1997 and 1999. After that, our lives became busier with university, moving around and working, and we seemed to have lost touch. Earlier this year, I saw her name in an e-mail to the National Link e-mail group. I wrote to

her, asking if she was the same Erika, and she remembered me right away. It turned out she was a Link member in the area next to mine, so we ran a joint winter camp, at which we saw each other for the first time in four years! Link has given us the opportunity not only to make new friends, but to rekindle old friendships forged throughout our Guiding lives."

Jen Costello found that Link helped her find friends at school with similar Guiding interests. "When I started university, no one in any of my classes or my new friends was involved in Guiding. I found out about Link and met other girls in various programs at the University of Waterloo," she says. "We were able to share the university experience from different angles, and still have Guiding and school in common. Occasionally I would see another Link member walking across campus and I would smile, knowing that I wasn't the only one on that campus who believes in Guiding. Also, I get to see women at important milestones in our lives (later years of a school program, at graduation, in the working world, or as we start families), and learn how they also keep involved with Guiding."

Therese Lynch made new friends through Link after moving. "I moved to Calgary four years ago to go to school and

find work. I quickly dropped by the local Guides office to join Link, since I had been a Link member in Nova Scotia," she explains. "Over the past four years, I have become particular friends with a couple of the other Link members. Last summer, I went to camp with Tirian's Guide group and she talked me into taking over a Brownie group. A number of us are talking about starting up a young Trefoil Guild, as we approach 30. Link in Calgary has provided contacts, friendships, and opportunities that I would never have from work."

Did you know that there are also Canadian Link activities overseas? In winter 2002, there were four Canadian Link members working at Our Chalet, including Rosemary Smith of British Columbia. "During our three months at Our Chalet we had two Link events," she says. "Our first event happened by coincidence, when we all ended up with the same day off and took the eight-kilometre sled run on one of the ski hills. The other was our gathering during the men's gold medal hockey game at the Olympics. I'm now a member of the Pot Luck Link in Victoria, forming new friendships and having new experiences. My Link life has been varied in the three years I've been a member, and my group of friends just keeps growing."

Such friendships through Link help keep these and other young women involved in Guiding, enabling them to offer their valuable time, energy and leadership skills to our organization today and in the future. Let's keep the chain growing, longer and stronger, by encouraging more young women to join us! ☀

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