On June 25, 2015, American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA signed a Memorandum of Ministry Alliance. This Memorandum is the highest form of relationship for each organization and was approved by both Boards.

While this is an exciting and significant step forward for both organizations, please remember that American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA are committed to maintaining their unique identities. Each organization has a special opportunity in cooperation to serve the needs of families that have members in both organizations. American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA are focused on developing a relationship of mutual support using the unique and separate programs in realizing the outcomes that each organization hopes to achieve.

American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA are each using the parallel components of their Programs and Missions to pursue positive character development in our nation’s youth. By sharing skills, talents, knowledge, and common goals, both groups will be able to empower and support their respective memberships to accomplish great things in our communities while growing God’s loving citizens.

American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA actively support one another in their shared missions for spiritual and character development of youth through Christ-centered Programming.

One way to leverage this relationship is in Troop and meeting structure. Troops can operate side-by-side sharing a Charter Organization and their meeting night, which encourages family involvement. American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA Troops should abide by the standards set forth in their respective organization’s Health and Safety Guidelines.

Although they can pursue ways to work more closely for mutual benefit, there are clear guidelines that should be considered.

What follows are common questions that may arise with this new relationship, and the answers provided by the respective organizations.

**Program**

**Can a Trail Life USA Member and American Heritage Girls Member work on the same Freedom Service or Stars and Stripes project?**

Each project should be planned by the individual boy or girl, needs to be unique, designed to stand alone, and should address a different need. However, a project could support the same agency or similar need with a different agency.

**Can my son/daughter count service hours they completed with their Trail Life USA/American Heritage Girls sibling?**

Yes. Provided the service meets the respective requirements of their program.
Facilities

Can Trail Life USA and American Heritage Girls Troops share facilities (i.e., Camp Aiken)?

Yes. Provided the policies of both organizations are followed.

Events

Can my Trail Life USA son(s) attend an American Heritage Girls campout/event? Or, my American Heritage Girls daughter(s) attend a Trail Life USA Troop campout/event?

For non-overnight events, it depends on the invitation. Overnight attendance is only permissible if the respective American Heritage Girls or Trail Life USA Troop is also attending, and that all American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA Health and Safety guidelines and youth protection policies are followed. “Day camp” events are permissible provided there is appropriate leadership and parental supervision present. Safeguards and best practices must be in place to ensure safety.

How can Troops build the life skills of girls and boys (i.e., one gender does ALL of the cooking at campouts but never gets to build fires, etc.)?

Joint campouts and outdoor activities can provide an unintended challenge in regard to life skills since the respective programs have unique approaches, some gender-related. All youth should be permitted to engage in all activities of their respective Programs. Leadership requirements of the respective Programs must always be met.

Can American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA Troops camp together?

Yes. But only if the camp/facility allows for separate sleeping areas in distinct locations (a distance away), separate shower houses, and a focus on ensuring appropriate modesty and privacy requirements are met – particularly with respect to sharing event updates or photos on social media. All American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA Health and Safety guidelines and youth protection policies, including the adult-youth ratios applicable to each Program, must be followed. “Day camp” events are permissible provided that there is appropriate leadership, adult-youth ratios, and parental supervision present.

Can Troops do events together?

If appropriate, but this should be limited in order to encourage the development of each child within their own Program. Special attention and preparation needs to be done with respect to privacy, adult-youth ratios, Health and Safety guidelines and child safety youth protection policies.

Can the Troops do everything together?

No. American Heritage Girls Troops and Trail Life USA Troops are strongly discouraged from completing all activities together because each Program is distinct and designed to be focused on a single gender. This is one of the strengths of the respective Programs.
Can American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA Troop meetings occur together (same room, time, agenda) on the same night?

Yes. If the Charter Organization approves and there is adequate space. Ideally, Trail Life USA Members and American Heritage Girls Members should be separated at some point (potentially after a joint opening ceremony and/or announcements), working within their own Program.

Do American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA have a model for how to run a joint flag ceremony or opening and closing ceremony for meetings or special events that involve both American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA?

Yes. American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA have collaborated on a mutually agreeable ceremony. It can be found in the American Heritage Girls Handbook Supplement and the newly revised Girl Handbook. It can also be found in the Trail Life USA Leader Docs on TroopTrack.

Pre-Area/Area

Are American Heritage Girls Area Coordinators (ACs), Ministry Expansion Leads (MELS), and Hometown Mentors (HMs) the same as Trail Life USA Point Men in terms of expectations, terms of service, accountability, etc.?

Not at this time. Trail USA’s Point Men are a close equivalent to some American Heritage Girls volunteer positions, but Trail Life USA expects their Point Men to develop “Area Teams” that will include individuals dedicated to performing the roles of AC’s, MELS and HM’s. Right now the roles and expectations are not the same. Standards and networking expectations are quite equivalent but the roles are not necessarily equivalent between the organizations at this time.

Fundraising/Finance

Can my children's fundraising efforts go into their “account”?

No, due to the IRS stance on personal inurement, there should be no individual boy or girl accounts in Trail Life USA or American Heritage Girls that receive any monies from fundraising efforts.

Can an American Heritage Girls Troop and Trail Life USA Troop operate out of the same bank account?

No. Finances of the Troops should be kept separate unless the Charter Organization requires otherwise.

Marketing

Can American Heritage Girls/Trail Life USA help to promote one another's events (nationally and locally in their city)?

Yes.
Can a Member of one organization speak on behalf of the other organization?

No. Only official spokespersons appointed by the respective National Organizations may speak on behalf of each organization.

Health and Safety

Can American Heritage Girls/Trail Life USA Volunteers’ CPR and First Aid Certificates count towards either organization? Is there one location online where I can upload my certificates for both organizations?

American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA do not have their own CPR or First Aid Certification, rather each organization relies upon outside organizations’ certifications. CPR and/or First Aid Certification applies equally to each organization. However, American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA have separate and distinct databases for uploading and online tools.

On a Troop trip, can American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA Volunteers (who are not registered in both organizations) count for ratio?

No. Neither American Heritage Girls nor Trail Life USA allows non-registered adults to serve in roles that count towards the child safety/youth protection requirements or required adult leadership ratio(s).

Can girls and boys ride together to events in the same car?

Yes. This is certainly permissible with respect to family members. However, it is otherwise highly discouraged. With respect to transportation to meetings it is permissible provided there are two adults (one male, one female) in the vehicle.

Are the guidelines for high adventure/restricted activities and non-high adventure activities the same for both American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA? Do both organizations allow the same activities?

No. American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA have distinct and separate Health and Safety regulations. Please refer to each organization for their standards.

Do Troops have to file a Troop Trip Notification Form with both organizations if they are attending the same event?

The standards for Troop Trips differ between the organizations. Therefore, American Heritage Girls Troops must file with American Heritage Girls and their Charter Organization and Trail Life USA Troops must file with their Charter Organization and, where applicable, Trail Life USA.

Training

Can American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA Leaders (Volunteers) review one general training session and that counts towards their organization specific Basic Training?

No. Each organization has its program specific training.
Can American Heritage Girls Adult Volunteers record Trail Life USA trainings on our accounts on AHGconnect so Volunteers get “credit” for them?

Yes. However, Trail Life USA trainings may not be used in lieu of American Heritage Girls mandated trainings.

Structure

Can Adult Volunteers have dual roles on both Troop Boards? (i.e., can I be a Troop Shepherd/Troop Chaplain for both Troops at my church?)

This is possible, but generally not in the best interest of the Troop. The COR (Charter Organization Representative) must be registered with each respective organization. However, there is nothing prohibiting the COR for the American Heritage Girls Troop also being the COR for the Trail Life USA Troop, provided that all membership requirements for the separate organizations are met.

What should I do if there is conflict between individuals in our Troop or between an American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA Troop?

The first course of action for conflict is to work with the Charter Organization in resolving the concerns/conflict as the Charter Organization owns the Troop and is most familiar with the individuals who are in the Troop.

What if one of the Troops (either American Heritage Girls or Trail Life USA) closes and the other does not?

It is the hope of both organizations that volunteers in both organizations help one another to maintain a vibrant, dynamic ministry that positively impacts families. However, each Troop is a separate unit and if one Troop does fail to thrive it is not required for the other Troop to fold.

My American Heritage Girls Troop currently operates alongside a Boy Scouts of America Troop. Is that still allowable?

Yes. Although American Heritage Girls feels strongly that there is greater alignment between American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA, primarily because Trail Life USA’s faith and values commitment significantly differs from that of the Boy Scouts of America, American Heritage Girls Troops may continue to operate side-by-side with a Boy Scouts of America Troop and/or attend events with other youth serving organizations provided that they are not in direct conflict with the faith, values and policies of American Heritage Girls and do not damage the brand or image of American Heritage Girls. Please note that all American Heritage Girls policies, especially Health and Safety, and other operational procedures/policies apply.

AHGconnect/Registration

Can I pay one Membership fee for American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA? Are there any discounts if I join both?

No. American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA are separate, distinct organizations that are reliant on membership fees for financial sustainability, it is important that volunteers register in each organization.
Will there be a family cap between American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA for siblings who are registered?

No. American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA are separate, distinct organizations that are reliant on membership fees for financial sustainability. Because of this it is important that volunteers register in each organization.

Can a background check completed for one organization “count” for the other organization?

Not at this time. American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA are distinct and separate organizations.

Can my Youth Protection Training/KEYS Training with one organization count for the other?

Not at this time. American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA are distinct and separate organizations and the requirements for Membership, including training, exist to meet the needs of each organization.

Do American Heritage Girls or Trail Life USA share member information?

Individual member information is considered confidential and is not shared with other organizations. American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA have separate and distinct database systems, and volunteers who may be registered in both and have access to both systems should first get permission from the individual organizations before sharing any roster or Member information – even if that roster information has been provided to them by one of the organizations.

Troop contact information is shared between Trail Life USA and American Heritage Girls in order to further the goals and the missions of both ministries, but should only be utilized for American Heritage Girls and/or Trail Life USA purposes. No commercial, marketing or other use is permitted.

Merchandise

Can American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA Troops bundle uniforms/merchandise for our son and daughter in order to reduce shipping costs?

No. Uniforms and merchandise for American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA come from different organizations and distributors and therefore cannot be bundled.