



# Burlington County, New Jersey



Pauldale circa 1900.

## Day (and Night) at Paulsdale:

*Honoring Her Legacy,  
Preserving Her Home,  
Developing Future Leaders*

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In Mount Laurel, New Jersey, a 200-year old Quaker farmhouse, tucked among trees on a 6.5 acre lot, conveys the feeling of solitude. But inside, twenty-five pre-teen girls let out squeals of excitement as they compete in teams to untangle a yarn maze around the house. This is just a typical day—rather night—at Paulsdale.

Donning PJs, with sleeping bags and yoga mats in hand, these girls join over 500 other girls who have taken part in GOLD (Girls Overnight Leadership Development), a program which takes place inside this historic home. GOLD is one of twelve programs offered by the Alice Paul Institute, whose offices occupy the second floor bedrooms of the home.

### An Iron-Jawed Angel

The Alice Paul Institute (API) is a non-profit organization, founded in 1985, dedicated to educating the public about the life and work of New Jersey's most famous suffragist, Alice Stokes Paul (1885-1977). Paul was the author of the Equal Rights Amendment, founder of the National Woman's Party (this is the party that picketed the White House in 1917), and a lifelong activist for women's equality.

With a modern twist, HBO recently depicted Paul's pivotal role in the American women's suffrage movement. Starring Hillary Swank, as Alice Paul, the

movie portrays the efforts women went through for the right to vote, including a year long White House picketing campaign in 1917, numerous prison sentences and forced feedings, all in the name of women's suffrage. The star studded cast also includes Anjelica Huston, Julia Ormond, Francis O'Connor and Patrick



**Alice Paul toasts (with grape juice) the passage of the 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote, August 26, 1920.**

Dempsey.

Paulsdale, Alice Paul's birthplace and family home, is one of less than 4% of National Historic Landmarks dedicated to the work of a woman. In 2004, API completed a 1.2 million dollar restoration and rehabilitation of Paulsdale. However, API's mission goes far beyond the preservation of Paul's historic home. A humble Quaker, Alice Paul would likely be upset to learn her home was a museum in her honor. Instead API decided to make Paulsdale a

center dedicated to women's history and girls leadership.

API's motto, "To develop new Alice Pauls," takes place through a unique combination of programs that use women from history like Paul, to demonstrate leadership skills with the overall message that one person can make a difference. Here are just a few of the programs that occur during a typical week at Paulsdale.

### Meeting Alice Paul

Ask any Mount Laurel fourth-grader and they should be able to tell you a thing or two about Alice Paul. On a typical weekday at Paulsdale, fourth-graders flock to Alice Paul's house to take part in Meeting Alice, a two-hour, history program. Fourth-grade classes from Mount Laurel, Cherry Hill and Cinnaminson schools visit Paulsdale in fall and spring.

At Meeting Alice, students become history detectives the second they enter the large double doors of the home. They look for clues in old kitchen where they see photographs from Alice Paul's life during a presentation, "Children in 1900." In the double parlor, they work in teams, again looking for clues to help them organize a photograph timeline. Students have a chance to let their voices be heard through a voting activity (chocolate or vanilla ice cream?) and proudly wear their, "I Voted!" stickers that they earn afterwards.

Outside, students embark on a tour of the farmyard, with eyes and ears still perked for clues, followed by a team scavenger hunt where those clues really come in handy. Eighteen kids scrambling outdoors looking for clues at the well, ice house and Copper Beech Tree is certainly a sight to behold in this otherwise calm landscape. And you might be surprised by how much they love the fall leaves!

After her program, one appreciative Mount Laurel fourth-grader excitedly wrote, "Alice Paul is very interesting!!! I learned a lot about Alice Paul and had fun at the same time!" Her teacher agreed, "Thank you- I felt this was a great learning experience and a fun way to learn about an amazing woman!"

Program facilitator, Lorraine

Misek (a retired teacher and school counselor) concluded students leave thinking that Alice Paul's childhood was ordinary and we think that's great! We want students to identify with her, to believe that like her, they can go on to make a difference in the world. We want them to remember that one person, no matter how ordinary, can become extraordinary if they believe in something strong enough.

### **Jersey Girls**

Would you like to vote for your favorite Girl Scout cookie in "Cookie Vote 2008"? Or perhaps dress as a suffragist and picket with Alice Paul? Girl Scouts who take part in the Celebrate New Jersey Women program do just that and more.

On a Saturday or Sunday

program at Paulsdale you might see teams of girls on the porch or lawn, scurrying to different activity stations that have them doing everything from the Women's History Hustle (no, not a dance, but a musical chairs type game), the Follow Her Footsteps obstacle-course and a Homegrown Heroines bingo game. They become suffragist (donning a long skirt, suffrage sash and hat) and picket with Alice Paul, become registered "Cookie Vote" voters and get their passport stamped along the way. By the end of the day, the girls have also enjoyed an art activity, won prizes, eaten cookies and even had a chance to talk with Alice Paul.

One enthusiastic participant declared, "I had a lot of fun! We learned about lots of New Jersey



**Friends enjoy a game of Homegrown Heroines Bingo at a Celebrate New Jersey Women program.**

women. My favorite activity is when I dressed up!” Her leader added, “wonderful program!—perfect for Girl Scouts. Thank you for your time devoted to our girls and their education.”



A team conquers the human knot at **GOLD**.

Girl Scouts go home with a new patch and maybe some prizes they won along the way, but more importantly, they now know about over twenty New Jersey women they learned about throughout the day. The ultimate goal of the program, beyond making history fun, is that participants find new role-models they can be inspired by.

### **The Nighttime G.O.L.D. Rush**

If you are in the neighborhood on a Friday evening, you might think there's a party going on at Paulsdale. In fact, you are

probably hearing the commotion that twenty-five 8 to 12 year-old girls make during a sleepover.

At API's G.O.L.D. (Girls Overnight Leadership Development) sleepover, you do get popcorn, but you do much more than sit around gossiping and watching movies. Until midnight, girls are doing everything from a snowball fight, human knot, yarn maze, art expressionism, journaling, yoga and more. In addition they see a presentation on Alice Paul, take a behind-the-scenes tour of the house and enjoy snacks, discussion and true bonding time.

Leadership Program Director, Dana Dabek-Milstein explains the overall goal of this program, “we hope when they leave our program, they realize that they are leaders in every sense of the word and go to school on Monday with a little more confidence than they left with on Friday.”

So day and night, there is always a history and/or girls leadership program at Paulsdale. It is said that when Alice Paul was working at her headquarters in DC, her office light stayed on as she worked through the night. I think that Alice Paul would find solace in knowing that at her home, the lights also stay on as the house busily churns out the



Students participating in *Meeting Alice* gather at the 200-year old Copper Beech tree looking for their next scavenger hunt clue.

next generation of leaders.

Children are not the only ones who have fun at Paulsdale. Throughout the year adults enjoy group tours, presentations, events and programs too! Check out the Alice Paul Institute's website at [www.alicepaul.org](http://www.alicepaul.org) to learn more about us and find out about upcoming events.



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