



Disability Awareness

Girl Scout Brownies, Juniors, Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors

Have you ever wondered how it would feel to be blind, or deaf, or spend your waking hours in a wheelchair? Maybe you know someone with a disability. Maybe you will someday consider a career working with people with disabilities to find ways to make their lives easier or to make environments more accessible for everyone.

The Disability Awareness program provides an opportunity for girls to better understand the daily lives of people with disabilities as well as explore careers in relevant fields. This experience may lead to a rewarding career.

Brownie and Junior Girl Scouts can earn the Disability Awareness Badge by completing the number of activities indicated in each section. Cadette, Senior and Ambassador Girl Scouts must complete at least eight of the activities listed in addition to the four required (starred*) activities marked as required to earn the Disability Awareness Badge.

PURPOSE: To help Girl Scouts better understand the world of the people with various disabilities and to build their awareness and expose them to career opportunities in relevant fields.

CONNECTIONS TO GIRL SCOUT LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE (GSLE):

- Discover: Girls develop positive values.
- Discover: Girls develop critical thinking.
- Connect: Girls advance diversity in a multicultural world.
- Connect; Girls feel connected to their community, locally and globally.
- Take Action; Girls are resourceful problem solvers.
- Take Action: Girls advocate for themselves and others, locally and globally.

KNOWLEDGE

(Brownie and Junior Girl Scouts - choose three activities, including at least one of the required items)

1. * Required. Learn the characteristics of disabilities below (Brownies-2; Juniors 4). The activity should be age/level appropriate. Share the information as a troop.
 - a. Physical, mental or emotional impairments
 - b. Autism



- c. Seizure disorders
 - d. Learning disabilities
 - e. Visual impairment
 - f. Hearing impairment
 - g. Speech and language impairments
2. For each of the disabilities you learned about in #1, list at least two things which would be helpful to remember when interacting with a person who has that disability.
 3. For each one, list the adaptations you might make in your regular troop surroundings to include a girl who had that disability.
 4. Read a book about a person with a disability. How did he/she deal with his/her disability? Share what you read with your troop.
 5. Learn how to identify a car driven by a person with a disability. Learn about the laws that provide accessible parking.
 6. * Required. For one hour, perform your normal routines (study, make a sandwich, television, cleaning your room) under each of the following conditions. Document your limitations and how you adjusted your activity. Share your responses and reactions with your troop.
 - a. Muffle your ears with bandages or ear plugs.
 - b. Blindfold your eyes.
 - c. Immobilize your writing arm so it can't be used as you typically use it.
 - d. Immobilize one leg so it can't be used as you typically use it.
 7. * Required. Visit an agency that works with people who have physical, sensory, or mental disabilities. Collect their publications about their activities
 8. * Required. Volunteer with an agency working with young people with disabilities, or help with a program for a Girl Scout troop that has girl members with disabilities.
 9. Make up an appropriate activity.

AWARENESS

(Brownie and Junior Girl Scouts - choose two)

1. With a partner, take a "trust walk."
 - a. Put on a blindfold, and let your partner lead you on a walk. Have your partner talk to you, telling you where you are, describe the landscape, what obstacles may be in your way, etc.
 - b. Have your partner walk a few steps behind you, and guide you with only verbal clues.
 - c. Have your partner lead you by the hand without speaking.
 - d. Change places and repeat the three steps above.
 - e. Discuss your feelings and experiences with the troop.
2. Watch a television program with the sound off.
 - a. How much of the television show were you able to understand?
 - b. Wear earplugs, but do not let people know you are wearing them. How did people react to you?
 - c. Discuss your feelings and experiences with the troop.
3. Find literature for public and private places. Does the literature discuss accessibility or non-accessibility? Observe the accessibility or non-accessibility in the following places:
 - a. Five places with good accessibility.
 - b. Five places with poor accessibility.
 - c. Your school or church.
 - d. Your camp site.
4. Make up an appropriate activity.



SERVICE

(Brownie and Junior Girl Scouts - choose one)

1. Make a developmental toy or book that can be used by a child with a disability. Donate your toy or book to an agency or child.
2. Volunteer for an organization that teaches and cares for children with disabilities. Work with a Girl Scout troop that has members with disabilities in your area.
3. Identify and discuss accessible parking areas. Develop community awareness program posters.
4. Take part in a disability awareness program or present a display or program concerning disability awareness.
5. Learn sign language and/or to read Braille.
6. Be a true friend with a person with a disability. Exchange letters or communicate regularly with him or her.
7. JUNIORS ONLY: Learn how to care for a wheelchair. Create an obstacle course. Using the wheelchair, time each girl as she goes through the obstacle course.
8. JUNIORS ONLY: Learn skills needed to babysit for a child with a disability.
9. JUNIORS ONLY: Teach a group of younger girls the skills needed for babysitting a child with a disability.

CAREER EDUCATION

(Junior Girl Scouts- choose one – not for Brownie Girl Scouts)

1. Visit an agency that works with people who have physical, developmental, emotional, sensory or mental disabilities.
2. Find out what kind of education is required for someone who works with people with disabilities and where that person received their education. Write to a college or university to get information about this course of study.
3. Interview a person who works in treating and preventing conditions related to disabilities. Suggestions are: Orthopedic surgeon, geneticist, prosthesis technician, prosthesis engineer, orthopedic appliance manufacturer, pediatrician, obstetrician, neonatal care nurse, and ophthalmologist. Record what this person does and the impact that career has on people's lives.
4. Make up an appropriate activity.

RESOURCES & LINKS

Check out your community library, community center or go online. Check out the web for more volunteer opportunities. Sites to get you started:

Websites

ray-graham.org
marklund.org
nichcy.org
ldonline.org
irsc.org
cec.sped.org

seriweb.com
ldaamerica.org
nectas.unc.edu
nod.org
thearc.org
kidstogether.org

schoolnet.ca
ndss.org
ericec.org
nfb.org
fcsn.org

When you have completed the requirements, you can purchase Badges at any of our six Gathering Places, www.girlscoutsgcnwi.org or our online shop, www.shopgirlscouts.com and go to "Uniquely Ours".